

THE MISTREATMENT OF JESUS

Mark 14:53-65

Intro: This is my fifty-third message in this series on the Gospel of Mark, and my sixth message on the fourteenth chapter – and I still have another message to give next Sunday before we get out of chapter 14. As we all know, or should know, none of the books of the Bible were written in chapters. The chapters and verses were added later to help us find our way around in the Bible. But obviously chapter 14 was made as long as it is because the events which it records are all related to the last events in the life of our Lord which led up to his arrest by the Jews. The chapter begins by tell us that they were after Him, and the chapter ends by telling us that they got Him.

During this last week of our Lord's life before His arrest He spent His days in Jerusalem, but He spent His nights in Bethany.

The chapter begins by telling us of that delightful event Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, when Mary came with some very precious ointment and anointed the feet of our Lord. Judas objected, saying that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. In another Gospel we read that Judas was not really concerned about the poor, but he was the treasurer of the group, and a thief, and he wanted to get his hands on that money.

After the Lord rebuked Judas, he went out and agreed with the chief priests of the Jews to betray the Lord into their hands.

These events were followed by the Lord and His apostles observing the Passover. And it was while they were eating the Passover dinner that the Lord suddenly instituted what we call the Lord's Supper by which all future generations of believers were to remember the death of the Lord Jesus until He would return to them.

After the Lord's Supper was observed, the Lord and the disciples sang a hymn together, and then they went to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. Here the Lord took Peter, James, and John with Him into the inner part of the Garden where he then left them and went farther into the Garden after asking them to watch and pray with Him. He left them three times, and each time came back only to find them, not praying, but sleeping. None of the disciples understood how important that time was,

not only for the Lord, but also for themselves. They didn't know, as the Lord did, what testings were ahead for all of them.

But at that point Judas came with the Jewish leaders, and they took the Lord into custody. Peter tried to protect the Lord by pulling out his sword and attacking the group. But he only succeeded in cutting off his ear. We learn from Luke that the Lord told Peter to put up his sword, and then He healed the ear of the man whom Peter had attacked. Then the Lord rebuked His captors, asking them why they had come to take Him with swords and spears when every day that week He had been in the Temple teaching the people, and they had been there listening to Him.

Not all of the details I have mentioned are in the Gospel of Mark because I have freely taken truth from the other Gospels in order to fill in some of the details which Mark did not include. Actually quite a bit more happened took place in addition to what Mark recorded, but he has given us the basic things that took place and many of the words that were spoken.

As we come to our text for the morning, Mark tells us first about Peter. Remember that John Mark was not present with the Lord during those days, but it is generally believed that the information contained in this Gospel, was given to him by the Apostle Peter (of course, under the sovereign direction of the Holy Spirit.)

Then Peter related about how the Lord was tried and charged by the Jews. Actually we probably should think of these chief priests and all the council as a reference to the Sanhedrin, the group of Jewish leaders which would compare in many ways with our Supreme Court. They were the most powerful group of Jews in Israel during the days that our Lord was here on earth. It does not appear from Mark's account that all of the Sanhedrin were there when our Lord was arrested, but enough were there to make our Lord's arrest official.

It was after the trial that some of the Jews mistreated the Lord terribly.

The chapter ends by telling us of how Peter denied three times that he even knew the Lord, or had anything to do with Him. The Lord willing, we will consider that sad event next week.

But as our text begins in verse 53 we learn that the Jews took the Lord away to the high priest where the entire Sanhedrin had gathered. It is

thought that the Sanhedrin originated with the seventy men who were selected to assist Moses in leading the children of Israel. The number of the Sanhedrin is usually given as 71, why the difference from the number of men who worked with Moses, I do not know.

But after we are told that the Jews led our Lord “away to the high priest” (v. 53), we are told about:

I. THE RETURN OF PETER (Mark 14:53-54).

All four of the Gospel writers have recorded that Peter came back. In John 18 we are told that another apostle accompanied him, but his name is not given. This is usually the way that the Apostle John referred to himself.

But let me follow what Matthew and Luke, as well as Mark, have recorded about Peter. He had forsaken the Lord, “and fled” with the others, *but he came back*. Why did He do this? We are not told, but I would like to make some suggestions. And remember that they are my suggestions.

I think that Peter went back to the Lord *because he loved the Lord*. I don’t think that there is any question but that Peter loved the Lord, really loved the Lord, loved the Lord deeply and genuinely. We must not let Peter’s self-confidence and his impetuosity, his impulsiveness, keep us from seeing that Peter’s heart was filled with a real love for the Lord. The Lord Himself seemed to recognize that when He questioned Peter after they had had breakfast together with the other apostles after our Lord’s resurrection. “Simon, son of Jonas, lovedst thou me?” The Lord never questioned that. Peter’s problem was not that he didn’t love the Lord; it was that he didn’t understand how weak he was, and how he would fail when in his life was in danger. This is the main reason that he came back.

But I think that there was another reason that he came back. I believe that he came back because he wanted to prove to the Lord that he loved Him. He had told the Lord that he would die rather than forsake the Lord. And I believe he meant it. But he didn’t understand how weak he was, and how easily he would fail when in mortal danger.

Furthermore, there is another thing that Peter did not understand. He didn’t understand how much he needed to learn to pray. As most of you know, I am teaching 1 Peter in our Tuesday Bible Class. It has helped me

to appreciate much that Peter wrote some thirty years later (which is when he wrote 1 Peter) when I remember what Peter was like before. One verse especially is full of history, Peter's history. You will find it in 1 Peter 4:7. Let me read it to you.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

These are almost the very words that the Lord had spoken to Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Watch and pray."

Let me tell you something this morning that is very, very important, and I am telling myself as I tell you. I hope you will never forget this. Listen to me. The extent to which you and I recognize our own weakness, and how much we need the Lord, is measured by the place that prayer has in our lives. (Repeat.)

Let me give you a couple of other verses from 1 Peter which take me back to Gethsemane. They are in the last chapter of 1 Peter. Do you remember what the Lord said to Peter before all of this in Mark 14 happened? I am referring to the Lord's words in Luke 22:31-32. This is what the Lord had said to him:

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Do you remember this? Now let me read to you what Peter wrote for us in 1 Peter 5:8-11. Listen carefully.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Peter learned in a very sad experience what can happen when we trust in ourselves instead of trusting in the Lord. And we show that we are trusting in the Lord by the place that prayer has in our lives.

There used to be a Gospel song that we sang in church. I haven't heard it for many years. But the first words of the song I am thinking about, were these: "Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?" Do

you and I start our days with prayer, then end them with prayer, and pray all day long as we are told to do, “without ceasing.”

Peter did a very foolish thing, and it was what turned out to be a very disastrous thing, by putting himself in harm’s way when he followed the Lord even afar off before he had learned how weak he was. Paul said that when he was weak, he was strong. The opposite is also true. When we think we are strong, that’s when we are the weakest.

But now let’s turn from Peter to take a good look at the religious leaders who had come to take the Lord into their custody.

II. THE CHIEF PRIESTS, ELDERS, AND SCRIBES (Mark 14:55-65).

This must have been a sight to behold. Verse 44 tells us that Judas came, “and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.” The saying goes that “birds of a feather flock together.” The fact that the chief priests and scribes and elders could be quickly identified by their robes and other religious regalia, they were no different in their hearts from the mob with swords and spears who had come to do their dirty work. They were a bunch of hypocrites! They had no regard for the truth because they got a bunch of false witnesses, and probably paid them well. But their carefully planned deceit was exposed when their witnesses didn’t agree with each other.

Then there were others who took the very words of the Lord Jesus and tried to make Him say something that He didn’t say at all. You will find the Lord’s words in John 18:18-22. The Lord had driven the money changers out of the temple, and the Jewish leaders wanted to know what right He had to do what He had done. This is what you read in John 2:18-22:

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the

scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

These Jews were unregenerate and did not have the ability to understand spiritual truth. And so they were blinded as to the meaning of the Lord's words. His authority to do what He did was in Who He was, and what He had come to do, which was the Father's will – for the salvation of sinners. The Lord was actually speaking to them about the Gospel, and they turned His words to mean that He was encouraging them to destroy their temple.

But their witnesses did not get that straight either. See verse 59.

The high priest stood to his feet, angered because the Lord did not speak up in His own defense. The Lord was not interested in defending Himself against the false witnesses and the lies that they were telling about Him.

But then there was a change in the Lord. The high priest asked Him if He were the Messiah? “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed.” One commentator has pointed out that the word which is translated here as “Blessed” [εὐλογητός] is never used in the NT “except as a predicate [that which belongs to] for θεός in doxologies. It means the One Who is worshiped” (Gould, Ezra, *ICC on the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 278,279). So the high priest was asking the Lord if He were the Messiah, the Son of God. And the Lord responded immediately, and very clearly, “I am.” And then Dr. Gould made a very interesting comment about the remainder of what the Lord said. He believed that the words which are added in Matthew and Luke which mean *from this very time on* and *from now on* indicate that the Lord was speaking of the manifestation of the Lord's sovereign power from that time on. But it seems to me that when the word “coming in the clouds of heaven,” it anticipated our Lord's return to heaven, and His eventual return in glory.

So see what an amazing amount of truth the Lord was giving to the high priest. He claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed that He was the Son of God, therefore, Deity. He claimed total sovereignty, and His ultimate return to rule and reign on the earth. And the high priest had already heard the Gospel, but did not recognize it in the Lord's words that in His body he would die, but He would raise it again in three days. That was the Gospel. But most people who heard it did not believe it, nor did they ask the Lord to explain it. The truth was hidden from them because they were not numbered among the elect of God.

But instead of listening to the Lord, accepting what the Lord said, and

rejoicing in these wonderful truths, he charged the Lord with blasphemy. Now it would have been blasphemous, making the Lord a terrible sinner and worthy of death *if it were true! But it was not true. He was not a blasphemer. He was the Messiah, the Son of God, Who died to save sinners, and Who rose again, having finished the work that the Father sent Him to do.*

With the charge of blasphemy placed upon Him by the high priest, then we see the outrageous behavior of some in the crowd. See verse 65.

It is amazing that the Lord did not strike His enemies dead in response to what they had done to Him. But Peter also remembered that, and commended the Lord to us as our Example. I read to you from 1 Peter 2:21-25:

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Concl: Remember also that in Peter's message on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 he had charged many who were listening to him with having had a part in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. This is what he said. You will find these words in Acts 2:22-24:

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

But we learn after Peter had finished his message that 3,000 of his hearers were saved. So it probably was that some who spit on Him, and some who slapped him in the face, some who tore part of His beard from His face, were among those whose eyes and hearts were opened by the Holy Spirit so that they understood for the first time Who Jesus Christ was, that He was not a blasphemer, but that He was the Son of God Who had come to die for those whom the Father had given to Him.

How could it be that they would be saved? They were saved the only way that anybody can be saved: by the sovereign grace of a loving God, Who, while we were yet sinners, sent Christ to die for us. Cf. Eph. 2:8-9 and John 3:16.