

## JESUS WAS TRIED AND CONDEMNED FOR US

Luke 22:63-23:25

Key Verse: 23:69-70

“‘But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.’ They all asked, ‘Are you then the Son of God?’ He replied, ‘You are right in saying I am.’”

In the last passage we learned Jesus’ prayer on the Mount of Olives. When Jesus had to decide to take the cup of suffering and death, he prayed until his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. Through prayer Jesus overcame his human desire to live and gained spiritual strength to obey the will of God for world salvation. We thank Jesus for his prayer. Also, we want to learn the life of prayer from Jesus. Of course, we cannot suddenly begin to pray like Jesus did on the Mount of Olives. Rather, we can suddenly sleep. But we can learn the life of prayer little by little with God’s help. An English lady has usually prayed for a few minutes in the morning after eating Daily Bread. But last week, the prayer of Jesus moved her heart to really pray. Then prayer was not a burden for her. It was a joy and a season of refreshing for her soul. She confessed that she prayed for one hour and a half without knowing that time was going by. By God’s help, we can learn the life of prayer little by little. May God help us to do so.

Today’s passage is Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate. At first glance, it seems that Jesus is on trial. But in fact, mankind is on trial before Jesus. Though Jesus came as a man, he is the Son of God. During his trial, he revealed his identity clearly based on the promise of God. We want to learn Jesus’ faith in the promise of God. We also want to learn the meaning of this trial. Jesus was tried in our place for our sins. May God help us to accept Jesus’ grace through this study.

First, Jesus was mocked, beaten and insulted (63-65).

After Jesus was arrested, he was taken to the house of the high priest. Without any formal charge being filed, Jesus was held as a prisoner. In America, it is a great violation of human rights to arrest someone without a charge. But Jesus was held prisoner with no charge against him. While he was there, the men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. No one likes to be mocked. No one wants to be beaten. But Jesus was mocked and beaten by the cruel soldiers again and again. They even blindfolded Jesus and then hit him, demanding, “Prophecy! Who hit you?” mocking that he was a prophet with the knowledge of God. And they said many other insulting things to him. Jesus bore the mocking and insults without saying a word. It was for us. The prophet Isaiah wrote about Jesus, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isa 53:5).

Second, Jesus was tried and condemned before the Sanhedrin (66-71).

At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. This council was the Jewish Sanhedrin. The high priest had arrested Jesus without any specific charge against him. So he gathered the Sanhedrin for an emergency session to have a trial and fabricate a charge against Jesus. Since it was unlawful for the council to meet at night, they gathered at daybreak. Both the chief priests and teachers of the law were there. The chief priests were Sadducees. The teachers of the law were Pharisees. Usually, they were adversaries. For example, the teachers of the law were happy when Jesus had exposed the error of the Sadducees of not believing the resurrection. But now these two groups of religious leaders were cooperating with each other. They must have worn their official priestly garments and arranged the trial setting to put Jesus in the worst possible position. It might have been like a modern hearing in which party members sit on raised platforms and look down on the accused, who has many lights glaring in his eyes. With all the official bravado they could muster, they said to Jesus, “If you are the Christ, tell us.” What did Jesus answer?

Look at verses 67b-69. “Jesus answered, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.’” Jesus knew their hearts so well. They were not interested in the truth. If he told them he was the Christ, they would not believe it. And if he asked them what they believed about him, they would not say. This is what they had done when Jesus asked them if John’s baptism was from heaven or from men. They thought they were trying Jesus with their political power and authority. They thought they could manipulate Jesus as they desired. With their small amount of political

power, they hardened their hearts and refused to consider the truth. What a tragedy it was. They were called to be shepherds for God's people and stewards of God's work. Jesus came as the long-awaited Messiah according to God's promises. They should have welcomed Jesus. Instead they wanted to put Jesus on trial. When they did not repent before the truth of God and ignored Jesus' words repeatedly, they became liars and they became as evil as the devil. Now they were so hardhearted that they were committing an unspeakable crime against the Son of God.

Look at verse 69 again. "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." Jesus was not emotionally upset. Jesus was neither angry nor afraid. Jesus spoke to them on the basis of God's word. Jesus predicted the fulfillment of God's promise regarding the Son of Man. As God planned, the Son of Man would suffer and die for the sins of the world. That was happening. But that was not the end. On the third day he would rise again. Then he would ascend into heaven and be seated at the right hand of the mighty God. This would fulfill the words Jesus had already quoted from Psalm 110:1: "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" In this verse, God Almighty invites the Christ to sit at his right hand, welcoming him into eternal glory with all power and authority given to him. Then God Almighty promises to put all his enemies under his feet. Included among his enemies would be the Sanhedrin members who did not believe in Jesus. They thought they were judging Jesus. But Jesus would judge them soon enough. They could sentence Jesus to death physically. But Jesus would send them to eternal punishment in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Although Jesus was in the most adverse situation, Jesus held God's word of promise in his heart. Jesus stood only by faith in God's word. We also must learn from Jesus how to stand only by faith in God's word. During the Disciples' Seminar last week, Shepherd Paul Ridge shared a report on God's work in England. He testified that missionaries to England stood only by faith in God's word. The first time he attended a prayer meeting at England UBF, he was surprised by the poor meeting place. It was like a shed. Everything looked shabby and there were only a few people gathered together for the meeting. But when they opened their mouths to speak, they prayed for God to raise 1,000 Bible teachers and to pioneer 100 English campuses and send missionaries to many other nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was shocked and came to the conclusion that they were crazy. But at the same time, he wondered if he was one of the Bible teachers they prayed for. In fact, he became one of them. A similar thing happened when the first missionaries to Chicago prayed at the old Clark Street center. The building was like a box. Only a few Korean missionaries gathered there. It looked like nothing in the vast land of America. But when they opened their mouths to speak, they prayed to pioneer 561 American campuses with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Several Americans felt that these missionaries had already taken over America with their faith. So they joined them. In this way, Chicago UBF has grown.

When Jesus held God's word of promise in his heart, he had a clear identity before the wicked religious leaders. He clearly testified that he is the Son of Man, the promised Messiah. The religious leaders understood what Jesus meant. They should have trembled before Jesus and repented. But in their depraved minds, there was no room for truth. They only wanted to manipulate the words of Jesus. Look at verse 70. "They all asked, 'Are you then the Son of God?' He replied, 'You are right in saying I am.'" Jesus clearly declared that he is the Son of God, the Christ. Jesus had claimed all along that he was the Christ. He had done the work of the Christ. He wanted his followers to confess him as the Christ. Now, when his life was hanging in the balance, he made the good confession that he is the Christ, the Son of God. We praise Jesus for making this confession. Jesus gave his life willingly for the sake of sinners by making this confession. Jesus showed his absolute integrity as the Son of God through this testimony. Jesus always told the truth, even when his life was hanging in the balance. Jesus is the Truth.

Fallen men are different from Jesus. When the situation is good and it seems safe, they say many big words to impress others and to gain recognition. But when the situation becomes dangerous they are not so willing to make their opinions known. For example, when Peter was in the presence of Jesus and the other disciples, he boldly claimed that he would lay down his life for Jesus. But when he was seated by himself in the enemy camp, he denied Jesus three times. He was not on trial, or under arrest. But he was gripped with fear. Fear drove him to deny Jesus. Anyone can be like this without the promise of God. The famous scientist Galileo espoused the Copernican theory, including the teaching that the world was round, not flat. This conflicted with the official position of the Roman Catholic Church. So Galileo was arrested and put on trial. If he recanted he could live. If he defended Copernican theory he would be killed. He recanted, saying, "I was wrong. The world is flat." After coming off the judgment seat, he said, "Anyway, the world is round." He was not willing to die for scientific truth.

God wants us to grow in faith to make the good confession like Jesus did. St. Paul urged Shepherd Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12-14, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." We remember Cassie Bernall. She was huddled in a classroom while teenage gunmen were rampaging through Columbine High School shooting people at random. One of them pointed a gun to her head and said, "Do you believe in God?" She said, "Yes." Then he shot her. She made the good confession in Jesus and gave glory to God. Now she enjoys eternal peace and rest in the kingdom of God.

After Peter denied Jesus three times, he remembered Jesus' word, "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." Peter realized that his strong human idea was not the truth. Jesus' word was the absolute truth. Then Peter witnessed that Jesus suffered, died and rose again just as he said he would. Peter accepted this gospel as the absolute truth of God. The truth made him free. The truth made him a powerful servant of God. Then he began to preach the gospel boldly. Peter proclaimed to those who had crucified Jesus, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:36b). That day 3,000 people repented and became members of the body of Christ.

Through this part, we learn a very important lesson. As disciples of Jesus, we must accept the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus as God's absolute truth. We must have the word of God's promise burning in our hearts, "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." The Risen Christ is at the right hand of the mighty God. He has all authority and power. He will come again to establish the kingdom of God. We have true victory and eternal glory in the gospel of Jesus. Soon, Missionary John Peace will go to Ukraine to preach the gospel to college students. May God's promise burn in his heart. May God help each of us to see ourselves in light of God's promise and have faith to overcome the world.

Third, Jesus was tried and condemned before Pilate (23:1-25).

After getting a charge against Jesus, the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. They needed Pilate because as the Roman governor, he was the one who had authority to carry out capital punishment. Although they charged Jesus with blasphemy in their religious court, they changed the charge when they talked to Pilate. Look at verse 2. "And they began to accuse him, saying, 'We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king.'" Actually, Jesus did not oppose payment of taxes to Caesar. Rather, when asked about paying taxes to Caesar he said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" (20:25). But Jesus did claim to be Christ the Lord. Mixing lies with the truth, the Jewish leaders manipulated Jesus' claim to sound like a political claim to be a king who was a threat to the Roman Empire.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus could have defended himself. Jesus could have tried to explain that the king of the Jews was not a political king, but a spiritual king. But Jesus said, "Yes, it is as you say." Jesus confessed clearly that he is the king of the Jews. Jesus was willing to give his life for the truth. Jesus was willing to give his life to obey the will of God.

Pilate realized that Jesus was not a political threat. So he announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." This was the declaration of the Roman governor and should have settled the issue. But the Jews insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." When Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied Jesus with many questions. But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. They wanted to have a good time and be entertained by something. When Jesus did not show them miracles, they used him as an object of mockery for their sadistic joy. Jesus was mocked again for us.

Finally, Jesus was sent back to Pilate. Look at verses 13-16. "Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, 'You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release

him.” But the crowd shouted for him to be crucified. They would rather have a rebellious murderer named Barabbas released than Jesus. Pilate wanted to release Jesus. But they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” For the third time Pilate spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.” But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. Jesus was tried and condemned.

Pilate, an objective judge, realized that Jesus was innocent. Pilate did his best to release Jesus. But the religious leaders and the Jewish people became a violent mob. Verse 23 says, “...their shouts prevailed.” There was no basis for a charge against Jesus. Still, Jesus was surrendered to the will of an evil mob. Why did this happen? Isaiah 53:7 says, “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” Jesus could have saved himself with his wisdom and power. Why didn’t he? Jesus bore trials and condemnation that we sinners deserve. Because of our sins we should be mocked and beaten. Because of our sins we should be tried and have all our evil deeds exposed in a court of law. Because of our sins we should be treated with contempt and vehemently accused before the throne of God. But Jesus took these things in our places. Jesus took all the trial and condemnation that we deserve.

St. Paul said in Romans 8:1, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” St. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:23-24, “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

Oftentimes we suffer from a sense of condemnation. We feel condemned because of the things we did not do, or because of the things we did do the day before, or even because of something that happened when we were in grade school. Because we are sinners with consciences, this cannot be avoided. But we do not have to dwell in condemnation. Jesus was tried and condemned in our place. Jesus sets us free from condemnation.

Today we learned that Jesus was tried and condemned before the Sanhedrin and before Pontius Pilate. In that terrible situation, Jesus had absolute faith in God’s promise and testified that he is the Son of God. Jesus took all the condemnation without defending himself. It was to save us from condemnation and to restore us as children of God. May God help each of us to come to Jesus and accept his grace. May God help each of us to confess our faith in Jesus in this sinsick world.