

(John) the Sinfulness of Man

by Willie Mullan

The sermon highlights the sinfulness of man and the submissiveness of the Master, as seen in the trial of Jesus before the Jewish leaders.

Duration: 1:10:25

Scripture: Matthew 26:34, John 18:7, John 18:10-13, Acts 4:1-3

Topics: "Sinfulness Of Man"

Description

In this sermon, Peter and John are preaching to the people in the temple when they are interrupted by the priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees. These religious leaders are upset that Peter and John are preaching about Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The religious leaders arrest Peter and John and put them in prison overnight. The sermon then shifts to discussing Jesus' arrest and trial before Pilate, highlighting the wickedness of man and the love of Christ in willingly going to the cross to pay for our sins.

Transcript

Shot for by John, chapter 18, and we're going right through from verse 12 tonight, right through to verse 32. You'll notice that there are at least eight facts and features that I want to underline for you this evening, but I've lined them up in two, not because that they're very intimately connected, but because they stand together in the chapter. And although they stand together, these facts and features, yet in reality they are poles apart.

You see, in our very first verse tonight, verse 12, we'll be looking up the sinfulness of man again, and yet at the same time we shall see the submissiveness of the Master. And of course, the sinfulness of man and the submissiveness of the Master, they are indeed poles apart, but they're standing together in the verse and in the portion this evening. Then we'll go on from there to look up the wickedness of Annas.

This was one of the high priests in Israel, and I think I can underline for you his wickedness. And standing side by side with that, we have the wickedness of the Apostle. How Peter failed in that last dark dread hour, we'll have to look up in the chapter of this evening.

Then we shall go on to look up the crookedness of Caiaphas, and I honestly believe that there was no more crooked person in Israel at the time than Caiaphas. What a character is before us in this very page this evening. Then we shall look at the calmness of Christ.

Then we shall finish the portion tonight by having a good look up the blindness of the priest. And then we shall finish with the bluntness of Pilate, just as the Roman trial is about to start. You see, our Lord Jesus Christ had to go through what we might call the ecclesiastical trial.

That is, he's being tried by the priest of his own nation. Some of the scholars have called it the Hebrew trial of Christ. But afterwards, he had to go through the Roman trial under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

Tonight we shall only be dealing, of course, with the ecclesiastical, the Jewish or the Hebrew trial. And then, next week, we shall go in through the Roman trial of the Savior under Pilate. Now, last week, when we were dealing with John's Gospel, in the first eleven verses, I pointed out to the class that John does not touch the agony of Christ in the garden.

That's something, I think, that any of you who missed last week through the frost should get into your mind, that John did not touch the agony of Christ in the garden. John doesn't talk about the blood-like sweat, John doesn't take us to the spot where Christ fell on the ground and cried again and again and again to his Father, if it be possible, let this stop fast from me. John doesn't touch the agony.

And really, that's a wonder, isn't it? Because, of all the writers of the Gospels, John was nearer to that agony than any other one. You see, Matthew was left away at the gate, Luke wasn't there, nor Mark, but Peter and James and John had been taken right into the outgroves by the Master, and there they were within sight of the awful agony of the earth. And yet, John doesn't touch the agony.

But what John does, John touches the glory of the Lord. It's not the agony of the Master that's brought before us in John's Gospel in the garden, it's the glory of the Lord. Of course, that just fits in with what John was sent to do.

He was writing a Gospel that was bringing forth continually the glory and beauty and wonder and majesty of our wonderful Lord. And he keeps out that even in the garden. I pointed out to the folks last week that we see the fearlessness of Christ.

When the great crowd marched down the road with torches and weapons in that midnight hour through the garden, Christ came out of the outgroves and faced the crowd and said, Whom seek ye? Absolutely fear. And then when he looked at the whole crowd and said, I am, just who were, John tells us that the crowd fell backwards to the ground. Christ was just displaying His power, His almighty power, letting the few disciples beside Him see again the wonder of His power, making this crowd that had come to arrest Him understand that He was still in command of the situation.

Yes, John brought before us the glory, the glory of the Lord. Now, although the Lord displayed His power wonderfully in the garden, Peter, when he drew his sword, look at verse 10, just to get the proper connection. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and smote the high priest's servant and cut off his ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath, the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? And the moment that the crowd saw that the master wasn't going to struggle, and the moment that they saw that he wasn't going to fight, the next word that we begin with tonight is Then. Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews took.

Now, the word in the Greek is a very strong word. Actually, I read five or six commentaries today, and they all have this word. Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews seized Jesus.

They made a ground for Him. You know, I want you to try to get this into your mind. I want you to see the wickedness.

Although the master has just a moment before displayed His power and showed them His grace, put up your sword, although the glory of the Lord is shining, yet man, it's a commentary on the heart of man. It's wicked beyond all knowing. My, the whole band seized Jesus.

I wish I could paint this for you. There He stands calmly. Yes, put up your sword, and get the band up and grab Him.

Put His hands behind Him, and they bound Him, the scriptures say, bound Him. I believe they put chains round His arms and round His wrists. They have them now.

Takes them back, and it makes us think about the ram caught in the thicket by the horn. That was the ram that was to save the promised child. Takes us back, and it makes us think about the ark of the Lord, a perfect type of Christ.

It makes us think about the ark of the Lord in the hands of the Philistine. It makes us think about the twenty-second psalm, because the sufferer in the psalm says, the bulls who bash Him have come around me. They gipse upon me with their mouth like a ravening and a roaring lion.

But we remind ourselves tonight that the one who was in the thicket was able to deliver, and the one who was typified by the ark of the covenant, the ark, why the ark broke to pieces the enemy's gods. And the man who is suffering in the twenty-second psalm, he finishes the psalm in triumph. He appears as all the antitypes here.

He's caught now and seized by the cross. It shows you the wickedness of man. You would hardly believe it if our Lord Jesus Christ came to Oregon, that in the park some night a crowd from our own town could feed Him and bind Him with chains and lead Him away to crucify.

Well, I'm telling you they could. That heart is still in the human breast tonight. The wickedness of man.

Well, side by side with that, watch the whole verse now. Verse twelve, then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him and led Him away. I want you to get that bit, you know.

They led Him away. He was led away. They didn't need to drag Him.

It wasn't a scene like last Saturday, you know, with the hundred and one committee or the hundred committee. There was no trouble. These men that grabbed Him, there was no fight.

There was absolutely no resistance. He was led as a lamb. You see, right beside the wickedness of man, you've got the submissiveness of the Sages or the monks.

Tremendous thing, you know. When you really think that a moment before He displayed His power, it would have been ten times easier for Christ with the chains on His arms to burst them asunder than it was for Samson to burst His band. All power was His, you know, but He's going submissively down the road.

Led as a lamb to the slaughter. You ever preach in the Jets, you can teach on it this way, the submissiveness of the Saviour, led. Led as a lamb, the uniqueness of the Saviour.

Led as a lamb to the slaughter, the awfulness of the death of the Saviour. What a tremendous touch, you see. Now, that's quickly, that little bit, the submissiveness and the sinfulness.

Now, let's get a hold of this. Read it over again. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him and led Him away to Amos first.

Now, why the first? Have they something else in their mind? Indeed they have. Indeed they have. Now, why the Amos? First of all, I think we shall need to face the great fact that the whole Jewish nation was in confusion at this very moment.

There were two high priests in the land, a thing that ought not to have been. According to the old Jewish law, there could only be, and there should only be, one high priest in the nation. But at this moment there were two high priests in the land.

Now, this is something that Jews don't like you to point out. I remember arguing with an old Jewish rabbi one evening on the Antrim roads, and when I pointed out the confusion that was in the nation at this time, he said, not at all. He said, there was only one high priest, it was Caiaphas.

And he said, you fellows are very quick in saying that the Spirit speaks through Caiaphas when He said that one man shall die for the nation. And if the Spirit speaks through him, he was a recognized high priest, a recognized high priest. I said, you know, God can choose to speak through whomsoever He will.

On one occasion He chose Balaam's donkey, and on several occasions He chose Balaam. And I don't know which one was the darkest. Just because the Spirit speaks through Caiaphas proves nothing.

But here's what does prove something, and when I turned him back here he was staggered. Have a look at Luke's gospel, chapter three, and you younger students just mark it for some time again. Luke's gospel, chapter three.

And there's a trying factor given here that you would need to take notice of if you were ever in an argument. Chapter three, verse one, now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, that's giving you the actual date, and you can go on from there and make the other dates yourself even though you're not a chronological scholar. Now in that very year, see verse two, Amos and Caiaphas being the high priests, and there's an acid priest.

That was too bad for him, you see, when he went into the New Testament to argue, you have to take the rest of it. You see, there were two high priests in the land, and that shows us the confusion that the Jewish nation was in. But I don't believe that that's why the scriptures say they led him away to Amos first, of course, I don't believe any such thing like that.

I believe that it was a plan. That's where he was to go first. You see, I believe this.

The high priests and the Sanhedrin of the Jews, and I'll show you this in a moment from the scriptures, they had already made up their minds long before this that they would put Christ to death. They had their minds made up. And they longed for the time when they could seize him.

And in fact, they were prepared to give anyone a reward who could lead them to him at a spot where they could easily arrest them. And of course, that's where Judas came in, and he was prepared to betray the Savior. And he took his chance on that night when he knew the Master would leave the upper room and go to the garden.

That's what we went through last week. Judas knew the place. The Master went to the very place where they could get him.

Oh, he didn't run away, you know. I pointed out to the crowd last week that Jerusalem was full of people, all dressed the same as the Savior. All thousands came from Galilee, dressed in Galilean robes, Galilean peasants.

The Master, you know, had no pontifical role. Nobody went before him with a mare. No, he hadn't a chain around his neck.

That poofy's nonsense wasn't praised in the Gospels. He'd got a beard and a robe like all the rest of the Galileans, and you would have had trouble picking them out that night in Jerusalem. And the Jewish priests needed somebody to lead them to him, and there somebody was Judas.

Vile wretch, I love he was. But they had a plan, that if Judas could lead the crowd to him, let them bring him to Alice first. You see, the two high priests dwelt in the palace in Jerusalem, one of them at one wing of the palace and the other at the other wing.

And the idea is this, let them bring him to Alice first so that Caiaphas can get the whole Jewish Sanhedrin gathered together in the middle of the night. I'll hold them as a minor court, just like the Majesty holds the prisoner and then sends him forward to the higher court. I'll hold them so you get the whole Jewish Sanhedrin together.

But the thing that violates this, the Jewish law on that occasion and still on this occasion, was that they could not try or question any prisoner in the middle of the night. And they break their own law. They had no right to try a prisoner, and in this land of ours, they have no right to try a prisoner.

You can't try the prisoner while the world sleeps, you know. You can't do this thing in a corner. I'll show you a spot where they kept their law.

Have a look with me, it's Acts chapter 4. It's the same crowd and the same palace, but what's the difference? Acts chapter 4, verse 1, to get the proper connection. And as they speak unto the people, who's the they? Peter and John. If you look at the chapter before, you'll find Peter and John preaching in the porch of Solomon.

And as they speak unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in home, in prison, in the common prison, the proper interpretation. In the common prison unto the next day, for, for, for, for, it was now even time.

Oh yes, they've got to lock them up all night. They're not allowed to do it. But they break the law when they try your Saviour.

They break their own law, and I shall prove tonight, without any hesitation, they break a few of them. My, I tell you, the way they treated my master was awful. And Annas started the course in the middle of the night.

I believe it was almost midnight when they arrested the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane and took him to Annas first, and he had no right, no right to try the Saviour in the middle of the night. But let's get down to this now, come back to chapter 18, and you'll find this. Verse 13, And led him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

But remember that both of them are recognized as high priests. Now, there is some argument as to whether, in verse 19, the high priest is asking the question to Jesus, whether it's Annas or whether it's Caiaphas. Now, with many of the other scholars, I'm absolutely persuaded that it's Annas.

I'll tell you for why. After the interrogation, and this court is over, in verse 24 it says, No, Annas. And several scholars say that the word hard should not be there.

Bullens are absolutely dead on on this. Now, Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest, so that I believe that the interrogation that's here before us comes from Annas. And when it got to a certain spot, we have the emphasis on the word no, no.

Just when it came to that spot, no. Annas sent the Savior to Caiaphas. Now, what I want you to notice in this trial here before Annas is this.

Look at verse 19. The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Now, he had no right to do that.

That, again, is wicked. You see, if you arrest a man, and I believe that they needed a warrant for his arrest, and I believe that the high priest had the right to write the warrant, I believe that when Paul went down to Damascus to arrest some of the believers, he had letters from the high priest, Acts chapter 9. He had actually warrants. But when you arrest a man on a warrant, you've got to charge him, to charge him with the offense.

And in our land and in our law, thank God, that when they arrest you and charge you with the offense, you can sit still and never speak, let them prove it. He had no right to put the prisoner in the dock, immediately in the witness box and ask him questions. If he had arrested him and charged him, the onus is on him to prove the offense.

He had no right to ask questions. You see, the thought stirs you in the face that he had no charge to make, and he's going to interrogate the prisoner to see if he'll blunder in speaking and say something that will condemn him. And you can't arrest a man and then look through him for the offense.

I hope you see that. Because that's law, and it's law today. Policemen here ought to know all about that.

But our Lord Jesus Christ knew. And watch his answer. You see, they immediately arrested him and took him to onus, and he asked the question about his disciples and his doctrine, verse 20.

Jesus answered him, I speak openly to the world. I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple where the Jews always resort. And in secret have I said nothing.

Now watch this question. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them. For behold, they know what I say.

You see, the Lord Jesus knew what he was about. Do you see what he's doing? He's telling the man on the bench how to run the business. That's what he's doing.

Have you no right to ask me? If you have arrested me and you're going to accuse me, then put the man in the dock that knew what I've done. He had no merit. What's the use of asking me questions? Do you want me to come here and say something that will condemn myself? And even if the Lord Jesus had said something to condemn himself, they couldn't have tried him, for they can't try a man on his own words.

Oh, it was a muddle. Let me say this carefully. The Jewish nation is showing more grace and more understanding and more wisdom to every man than they did to Christ.

And don't ever forget it. There's a man in the dock these days that without a doubt is guilty of a million lives. And the Jewish nation will show pity and grace and everything they can show which they never gave to Christ.

...condemned by the very trial that's going on now. But the Lord putting the man on the bench in the tight spots, he had no right to ask him questions. And the Lord knew that.

Now watch what happened now. The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I speak openly to the world.

I have a thought in the synagogue and in the temple whether the Jews always resort. And in secret. Have I said nothing? You know, that's a great rebuke for all believers here.

I hope you don't belong to some secret society where you plan things in the dark. Because if you do, you're not following your master. For in secret, he said nothing.

Go to the following end now. Don't forget that. If you're a follower, you'll follow closely.

Not only we bitch, we have to run past them. Verse 21 Why askest thou me? Ask them which have me. What I have said unto them, behold, they know what I have said.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil. But if well, why smitest thou me? You know, I want you to get the hold of this. I want you to see the wickedness of Amos.

You see, he knew right well, deep down in his own heart, that he had no right to set up this court in the middle of the night. He had no right. He knew that only too well.

And secondly, he knew he had absolutely no right to question the prisoner before charging them. On the top. And what is more, he had no right to sit there and let somebody fight him before he could know.

You can't let the policeman bottle the fella in the dock, you know, before the case is over. But can't you see, our Lord Jesus, knowing all that lies before him, standing calmly before this wicked man in the middle of the night, I hope you can hear the ring of the smack in the face that he got. Mind you, he went through a lot to be our savior.

Some officer came over, smacked him across the face, and he had no right to do it. Do you see the wickedness of Amos? Now, let's turn at the same moment and try to see the wickedness of Peter. You see, Peter, when our Lord Jesus Christ was arrested here in the garden and they led him away, do you see verse 15? And Simon Peter followed Jesus.

My friend, I'm going to say something that will shock you now. It's a great pity he did. It's a great pity he did.

You say, aren't we supposed to follow Jesus? We're supposed to do it, that's all. You know, there are three pities here, and I would like you to get them. And the first one is this, that when our Lord Jesus was arrested in the garden, it's a great pity.

It's a great pity that Peter did not remember the word of warning. Just a few moments before that, the Lord warned this night before the cross, O Christ, thou shalt deny me sight. It's a great pity he didn't remember the word.

But it's a greater pity he didn't remember the words. What did the Lord say to him? Now, you watch it again and see if you can get it. We're in the same chapter and we're back at verse 10.

We're back at verse, a bit before that, verse 7. The Lord's coming out of the shadows to the clouds. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And the cloud said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he.

If therefore ye seek me, now watch this, read that, let these go their way. See what he's doing. He's putting his wings of love.

He's acting as a shepherd of the sheep. He's shielding these few sheep. He's shielding.

He says, All right, keep me. Keep me if you want me. But let these go their way, away to Peter and John.

You should have listened to him. Sometimes the Lord guides you, you know, by a wee short phrase. If you had only caught your spiritual ears.

But some of us never hear, you know. Let these go! Go! Man, he was looking sideways and say, go! Go! Although he followed on. Great pity he didn't.

Great pity he didn't obey the words. But there's another pity here that's a terrible one. Now watch this, verse 15.

Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. That's what I told you.

The high priest dwelt in the palace. But Peter stood at the door without him. The door was shut in his face, you know.

No notion of letting him in. And you know it's a great pity that he didn't see the way was closed. It's a great pity he didn't heed the word of warning.

It's a great pity he didn't keep the words that Christ had spoken. It's a great pity he didn't see the way was closed. It would have saved him a lot of trouble if he had heeded the warning and obeyed the word.

And when the door was shut in his face, if he'd gone away, he'd still have been all right. But he didn't, you know. And there's a whole lot of Christ followers just like him.

They don't heed the word of warning and they don't listen to the word. And when the door's shut in their faces, my, they'll try and open it. And God pity you if you do, you know.

Because God may allow you to. You'll find out that you're going to get yourself into trouble. You know, I never read this portion, but I think of a young woman that I knew when I was just a young believer.

I'm thinking back now, I'm thinking back 23 years. I was just a young believer then. And in our meeting at home, there was a lovely young girl in the meeting who could sing like nobody I've ever heard.

She really sang for the Lord. And you know, she was an inspiration to the whole crowd of us. She would go to the open air with us and she would bear the open air through for us.

But you know, she got her eye on a man who was a real wretch. He was no good. And while I was just like some of the young fellas here, and she was like some of the young girls here, I could go to her and I said to her, I said, you know, Maisie, you're going after a fella that's no good and he'll wreck your life.

That fella's no use. Just the way a young fella would talk, you know. I didn't know much, but I knew that much.

It was the word of warning. She was like that. Took it very gently from me.

And soon after she came and she said, you know, the Lord has spoken to me. I shouldn't be connected with Him at all. I said, I'm glad to hear you say that.

So you get clear. But she didn't. She never heeded the word of warning nor the words.

And then something happened. It came out into the open that he destroyed several girls' lives. And you know, the door was shut in her face.

But she didn't run away, you know. She went through the door and she married him. I can hardly tell you this, you know, because I could weep at this.

I never go to Newtownards for to go round and give her a pound or two. She's sitting at this very moment with a little fire in the grease, with five or six wee children round her, naked. She's sitting yonder without a penny, a broken-hearted lot, her life is wrecked.

The young woman listened. Dear, you heed the warning, boy. And if God speaks to you, obey it.

And if the door is shut in your face, go away from it. The Lord will open the mouth. Don't stand there till you get through.

But he didn't heed the word of warning. It's a pity he didn't heed the word. It's a pity he didn't see the way shut.

They got in you. Just watch twice in the chapter. I must be quick.

You see this? You see Peter, verse 16? He's standing at the door. But Peter stood at the door. I'll go off to paint that picture for you sometime.

But here's a worse one. Verse 18. And the servants and officers stood there who had made a fire of gold, for it was gold.

And they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them. It was dreadful to see him standing outside at the door.

But it's horrible to see him standing inside at the world's fire. Trying to warm himself at the world's fire. At the world's fire.

All around that fire were enemies of the Lord. My, they scorned the Christ he loved. But here he is.

Trying to warm his hands at the world's fire. Pity any believer that gets there. What a crowd.

And what a coward among them. And do you know what happened? My poor Peter failed. And denied his Lord.

And stood and looked into the coals. And cried and said, I don't know. I don't believe he ever lifted his head.

I think he just looked at the coals and the fire. Mind you, when the Lord was bringing him back to his senses, he made a fire of coals. And I believe when he looked in again, he remembered it.

And maybe till his dying day, every time he saw a fire of coals, he remembered it. Oh, we'll not go on with the weakness. But let's get down to this bit.

Now we come to another character in this little portion tonight. And his name is Caiaphas. Do you see verse 12 over again where we started? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him, led him away to Annas first.

He was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now, Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. Remember that.

I think you should look at it again. It's in John 11. Shall we look at it because it will refresh your memory.

It's John 11, and that's the chapter where our Lord Jesus called Lazarus from the grave. What a wonderful moment that was when he called him out from the grave. John 11, and look at verse 45.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then governed the chief priests and the Pharisees a council.

That was the old psalm he drew. And said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him us alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

They were afraid of the Romans taking away the temple, and the nation that they thought was really their own, our place and our nation. And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should die for the people.

This speak he not of himself. But being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. You see, he said this.

And it just shows you how a man can plan something, and even come out and say something. And yet, you know, the Holy Ghost had another meaning in it altogether. For he didn't know the depth of what he was saying, you know.

He was only wanting rid of Christ. But the Holy Ghost was making a prophecy, even through the man as he'd talked through the donkey long ago. And watch what happened.

See verse fifty-three? Then from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death. Say, I want you to get that. Because, you see, honest, honest only held the Savior in the middle of the night, until that counsel had got doubled.

Well, I have to go around Jerusalem and get some of the most Well, I have to go around Jerusalem and get some of the most See verse fifty-three? Then from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death. Say, I want you to get that. Because, you see, honest, honest only held the Savior in the middle of the night, until that counsel had got doubled.

Well, I have to go around Jerusalem and get some of the most and get the whole counsel set. And in the early hours of the morning, they flipped him over from that part of the palace across the yard to that part of the palace, and the whole counsel is set. And before he comes in, you know, now, their minds made up, the very next thought before the prisoners put him to death, determined to kill him.

You can see, you can see how crooked this is. But I want you to get into the depths of this. Now, go back with me to Matthew's gospel for a moment, and it's twenty-six, Matthew twenty-six.

And I think you'll get the whole thing from here without going through all the other passages. It's clearer here to me. Matthew twenty-six, fifty-seven.

And they that had laid hold in Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. That's what I'm telling you. But Peter followed him afar off onto the high priest's palace, and went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

Now, the chief priests and elders and all the counsel sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death. And see, the whole court seeking false witnesses to put him to death. But found none.

Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses and said, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days. The high priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? Here's a lovely rephrase, But Jesus held his peace.

The high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God. And that was an old phrase in Israel, and that just simply means that I'm putting you on your oath. And when a prisoner was so spoken to and put on his oath, he was compelled to answer.

I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes. That's terrible. Because that was something that the law taught him he should never do.

I can hardly believe that these men acted like this in the middle of the night. I don't know if you know Jewish law, but have a look at this one. This is Leviticus 21.

Now have a look at it. I spent many a long, long day and hour studying Jewish law. I studied Jewish law for about 14 months once, until I thought I had it all off.

Now here is one of the laws for the high priest. It's Leviticus chapter 21, and it's verse 10. Leviticus 21, verse 10.

And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garment, shall not uncover his head, nor rent his clothes. That was something he was never to do. He must have known that.

No high priest ever came into the office who didn't know the law of the high priest. But he got so mad that he tore his garments. A thing that he was never to do.

He was breaking his own law. Breaking his own law. But I believe there was more to it than that, you know.

I believe the moment that he tore the garments of the high priest, the Aaronic priesthood was finished forever. But he didn't know that. In a moment or two, God is going to rend the veil and finish the temple worship too.

And in a moment or two, the rocks are going to rend. And all hell is going to know who the Lord of glory is. But the high priest did something he should never do.

He broke the law. But he did more than that. Go back to 26 again.

Matthew 26. And watch this bit. Matthew 26 and 65.

Then the high priest rent his clothes saying, We have spoken blasphemy. And what further need have we of witnesses? Well, he knew to the opposite. You know, there is another law.

It's in Deuteronomy 17. I'll not take you back. I'll put it to you.

That under the mouth of two or three witnesses must every word be established. And under the mouth of one witness, nothing can be established. My dear friend, he knew the law.

He can't condemn a man on his own word. Nor could he condemn him with one witness. He needs two or three witnesses.

But here he is. You know, he's so mad that he rents his garments that we don't need witnesses. He was determined to put him to death.

Oh, the truth. And right through this scene, oh, the calmness. Why, he could look at Annas and say, Why are you asking me these questions? And he can look at Caiaphas and hold his peace.

And when a man's struck upon the face, there's not even a flash of anger. There's not a good word. Dear friends, we have a great Savior.

But I want you to notice this. Let's get back now to where we are in John 18. There's something here that always touches me.

You see, in verse 24, when Annas was trapped and the Lord spoke so wonderfully to him, it says, No. No, at that moment. No, Annas sent him bound onto Caiaphas, the high priest.

And then we have noticed exactly what Caiaphas was doing. And you see, when they arrested Christ at about midnight and took him to Annas, and then over again to the other part of the palace, and Caiaphas had questioned him for quite a time, then it was coming to the early hours of the morning. Now, here's verse 28.

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas onto the hall of judgment. That's different again. That's out of the palace now altogether.

That's away from the high priest. And that's over to the Roman judgment hall. That's where Pilate was.

They were taking him across the way now to Pilate's judgment hall. And it was early. Do you see the little touch there? The early hours of the morning.

That shows us that he'd been there in the midnight hours under these mock trials. And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, see this wee word, lest they should be defiled. The hypocrites.

What are they talking about being defiled for? That they might eat the parcel. You know, this is a verse that has come down the years with me. I can see this scene.

I can see the high priest. And I can see the priest. And I can see the scribes and the Jewish leaders and the Pharisees and Sadducees.

I can see them. They're coming down the road. I'm in paradise.

There'll be nothing all night. And they're bringing him from Caiaphas now. And they're bringing him to the hall of judgment.

And when they get to the Roman hall, not the Gentile hall, you see, they don't go in there. They push him in through the door. Lest they should be defiled.

These are religious fellows. Clad in robes of religion. You know, they were anxious about acceptance with God.

They wanted to be acceptable to God. And all the time they're being led by the devil. There's a crowd of them in Logan, you know.

A crowd of them in Logan. Don't stand with your religious robes on and push Christ away from you, you hypocrite. So many people are anxious about ritual and formality and empty, dead, Christless religion.

And the crowd were looking up now. Neither were anxious, you know. Anxious to be acceptable to God when they were being led by the devil.

Did you see the note that they put at the bottom? Have a good reader, because I'd love you to get it. See it? The blindness of the priest. Anxious about acceptance, yet led by the devil.

Zealous for religion. Of course they were. Yet no time for Jesus.

Contentious for tradition. Oh yes. Yet blind to the worst.

Jealous for ceremony, but rejecters of Christ. That's who they were. Then I'm here.

There are a man and a woman here tonight. Oh, you would fight for your old tradition. Would you? There's somebody here, and you're sucking dead, empty, religious formality.

But you have no time for Christ. You push them away from you. You're on your way to hell, dear friend.

I love to think you're a hypocrite of the deepest dire. They taught it this long ago, you know. Man and woman, you'll never get to heaven apart from faith in Christ.

You never will, you know. Ritual and formality and ceremonies apart from a living faith in Christ will take you to hell. I hope I'm getting it all.

A powerful text. It's a tremendous thing that high priests and Sadducees and Pharisees could be so blind, could be so blind, that they could cry out for the blood of God's Son, and they could do these atrocities in the middle of the night, and they can break their own law, and they can put the most perfect soul that ever breathed to the cross of Calvary and yet talk about being acceptable to God. How crooked can people get? My God smite you old Pharisees in this place tonight.

My God smite you. But did you notice how blunt Pilate was? You see, we're just about to commence the Roman trial, but here's how Pilate met them. Verse 29.

Pilate then went out unto them and said, Of what accusation bring ye against this man? You know, he wasn't so soft. If you're going to put a fellow in my dock, he said, you've got to charge him with something. That's the proper way, isn't it? He's facing this card, you know, he's putting him in the right corner.

Of what accusation bring ye against this man? I'm not going into the Roman trial tonight, I'm just using the phrase for this meeting. I want to face every unseen person in the building, and I want to ask you, what charge do you have against Christ? What accusation? You could say a lot against his followers. I know that.

I'll stand with you there. And you could say a lot against the doctors. I'm sorry you can't, but you can't.

Friends, can you say anything about Christ? I defy you. Thank God we have a Savior that we can present to the world. And the world can't do anything about it, you know.

Thoughtless, faultless, crimeless, harmless, sinless, son of God. Hallelujah. The pilot did more, didn't they? Watch him again.

New South Street pilot. Twenty-nine, then went out pilot unto them and said, what accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, if he were not a malefactor, if he were not a criminal. That's not saying anything.

We would not have delivered him up unto thee. Pilot's not going to take that nonsense. Then said pilot unto them, take ye him and judge him according to your law.

Take him away. You know, that's where I'm stopping tonight. And I want you to get this.

I want to talk to all the unsaved in the last moments of this meeting. And I want to face you with this. Men and women in this meeting, unsaved, I want you to face this.

What accusation have ye against Christ? All right, then. Take ye judgment. Go on ahead, you're in the dock now.

Judge him. Get on the bench. Pass your judgment on him.

You know what you'll have to say to yourself? What shall I do then? But Jesus, just a minute. You saw what Judas did, didn't you? Take a look at this. And you saw what Annas did.

Sold him for so many pieces of silver. Annas stood there while the world smacked him in the face. You saw what Caiaphas did, didn't you? Why, he broke the very word of God and the law of God.

He turned the Christ of God to the cross. I'm not asking you what Judas did, or what Annas did, or what Caiaphas did. I'm asking you, what will you do? What will you do? Unsaved man and woman in the meeting, what will you do with Jesus? Will you stand by where the world spits in his face and smack him? Will you be so mad at the truth tonight that you'll break the very word of God on your way to hell? You know what you should do? You should crawl to his feet, fall in the dust, praying for him, for loving him so much that you go through your entire life.

Let's just be still now. Not sing any more tonight. Blessed Master, we fall very humbly before thee.

Lord, none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed or how dark was the night that thou didst pass through ere you found the sheep that were lost. We can only see little glimpses of this, Lord. We just don't understand it all.

We cannot fathom it all. Lord, we realize that they spat in your face and plucked the hairs from your cheeks and battered you, Lord, with a rod and put the crown of thorns upon your head. But, oh Lord, that was only the beginning of sorrow.

There's a way outside on the cross. Thou didst bear our sins and the curse that was due to them and thou didst die for us. Oh, blessed Savior, we come to your feet humbly now and we just want to take claim and say thank you.

Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. And, oh Lord, if thou hast been speaking to some rebellious, pharisaical, hypocrite who's got nothing but ritual and tradition and would push thee out of their lives, Lord, will you speak to them yet once more before they go? Will you draw them tonight to thy feet for salvation? Lord, bless the saints as they think upon thy majesty at all times. And bless these sinners and draw them to you for salvation.

Now part us in thy fear and with thy touch for thy holy name's sake. Amen.

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