

Mark 14:53-72

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles, go into the Gospel according to Mark. Mark chapter 14. Mark chapter 14. We will pick up in verse 53 and we will read to the end of the chapter which gets us down to verse 72. Mark 14 verses 53 through 72.

If you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together? We're going to open in prayer and then we'll read the Word. Lord, we need you. We need you to speak to our hearts. We need you to speak to our minds. We need you as our only hope in life and our only hope in death.

We need you in this life to declare your Word to us for it is the Word of life. It alone conforms us and shapes us and molds us to live the lives you've called us to live in Christ Jesus.

We look to you as our confident assurance and expectation in the life to come. But at this moment, we need to hear a word from you, O Father.

So we pray that you would open up your Word to us. That what we have before us would be more than words on a page of paper or words coming out of the mouth of an individual.

[1 : 28] That it would be the very God-breathed words of the Almighty. That it would penetrate to the very depth of our being. That it would mold us and conform us to become more and more like you, Lord Jesus.

May we be attentive. May every distraction, every hindrance, every encumbrance of the mind be removed. May our focus and our longing be upon you.

And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. The Word of God says, It says they led Jesus away to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put him to death, and they were not finding any.

For many were giving false testimony against him, but their testimony was not consistent. Some stood up and began to give false testimony against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.

[2 : 46] Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent. The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, Do you not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you?

But he kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning him and saying to him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? And Jesus said, I am.

And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, What further need do we have of witnesses?

You have heard the blasphemy. How does it seem to you? And they all condemned him to be deserving of death. Some began to spit at him and to blindfold him and to beat him with their fist and to say to him, Prophesy!

And the officers received him with slaps in the face. As Peter was below in the courtyard, One of the servant girls of the high priest came. And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.

[3 : 50] But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you are talking about. And he went out into the porch, And the servant girl saw him and began once more to say to the bystanders, This is one of them.

But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too. But he began to curse and swear, I do not know this man you are talking about.

Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, Before a rooster crows twice, You will deny me three times. And he began to weep. You may be seated. In the text before us, in Mark 14, starting in verse 53, We see the end result of when Christ was led away captive from the garden of Gethsemane. Mark tells us that in that hour all forsook him, all left him. We are even given the strange account of a young man wearing nothing but a linen sheet, fleeing from the presence of the angry mob who held Christ in their hands naked.

[5 : 02] We see here the reality that it is Christ and Christ alone who could bear the oncoming judgment, the judgment that would be the guilt and the weight and the burden of our sin. We see that he is now positioned to be forsaken of the Father like none have ever been, to have the sin of the world laid upon his shoulders, that it is the hour of his suffering.

It is the hour for which he has come. It is the hour that has been appointed since before the foundation of the world was laid. It is the great purpose and plan of God long before man took of the garden of Eden and ate from it.

It was the foreordained plan of the Almighty for the redemption of mankind so that what man distorted through his disobedience, God may restore through Christ's willing obedience. We have seen that he was not captivated, he was not captured, he was not led away. Rather, he willingly surrendered and walked with them. For any given moment, he could have called down legions and legions of angels.

At the very declaration of his name, when he said, Who do you seek? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. And he declared, I am. They all fell to the ground. He had to give them permission to carry him away.

[6 : 25] And nothing is happening outside of his knowledge nor outside of his will. But here at this moment, we come to the trial of Christ. When the Lord Jesus, the Almighty, the one, as Brother Jamie read earlier, that by him and through him and for him, all things came into being.

It is he that the word of God declares is both Lord and Savior, and he is creator. He is the sustainer. He holds the world in the palm of his hands.

Later on, we're told in scripture that he sets his feet upon the world as his footstool, that the rod of iron shall never depart from his hand. It is he who sets upon the throne of thrones that is high and lifted up above all.

But now for a moment, he's put on trial. If we were to reconcile this with the other gospel accounts, we will see that there are at least six successive accounts of confrontation with Christ.

They may not all be technical trials, but they are times of questioning. Mark does not give us the fullness of it, so we would have to read all four gospels to see that.

[7 : 35] We would see that when Christ was carried away, that first he was taken to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. He was taken to Annas, and Annas questioned him.

After his questioning with Annas, he was taken to Caiaphas, who we have before us here, who is high priest that year, which is a strange terminology for when you read the Old Testament, you were to be high priest for life, not for that year.

But by the time Christ is on the scene, the high priesthood had become a position of bidding. The Roman Empire had put it up for the highest bidder, and he who had the most money held the highest position in the political realm.

And yet, when we read the Old Testament, it was to be of genealogical lineage, and it was to be for life until you died. But distortion had crept into religion, for it had become the religion of man, not the faithfulness relationship with the Lord God.

But Christ is gone from Annas to Caiaphas, and then he will be taken before the entire Sanhedrin, minus at least a couple of them. For we can say probably rather confidently that Nicodemus is not there, neither Joseph of Arimathea.

[8 : 46] For surely the two of them would not have consented to the death of Christ, since both of them were present when he was actually dead on the cross and took of his body. But for the entirety, quote, of the Sanhedrin to be gathered together, he had to have an overwhelming majority of the 70.

So he was standing before the majority of the Sanhedrin. After the Sanhedrin declares their verdict, he is led away immediately to Pilate. Pilate questions him the first time and finds out he is from the

jurisdiction of Herod.

So then he is taken to Herod. Herod questions him and hopes to see some miraculous sign from him, but does not. So then he is taken back to Pilate, and he is set upon the pavement of the judgment place.

It is there in that sixth and final confrontation where Christ is crowned with the crown of thorns. He is beaten beyond recognition, and he has that cloak placed upon him.

He has put before the crowds and the multitudes, and he takes the place of not only Barabbas, but he takes the place of each and every one of us. But before that place can be taken, the trials have to be made.

[9 : 58] And the trials of Christ have never stopped since that day. From the very beginning of the moment when people began to question who is he, the trial of Christ has remained.

Even today, Christ is on trial in the public and even the private. He is placed before individuals, and each must make a decision. There is no such thing as neutrality when it comes to the understanding of who Christ is.

For he is our only hope in life and death. Christ alone, Christ alone. And if he is our only hope in life, and he is absolutely our only hope in death, then there is no place for neutrality.

It is the common acceptance of mankind that Christ must be dealt with. And we see it taking place in the verses before us.

That Christ is very much on trial. And in the midst of that trial, we meet the testimony of not only the religious individuals, but it is the testimony of the world. That when they put Jesus before them, they question him, and they wrestle with the reality.

[11 : 11] It says that Jesus was led away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. These people are here to question Christ and to make accusations against him.

It tells us in verse 55, Now the chief priests and the whole council, notice the phraseology here, kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put him to death. It was an ongoing reality that we must find something.

We have to have a reason. We must justify the action which we have already determined to take. Friend, make no mistake about it. They had already determined the matter in their minds.

Many days before, they had already decided that one must die so that all could be spared. The one who had made that statement is here putting Christ on trial. He has said that one must die.

He was high priest that year, we are told in the word of God. And he did not know what he was saying, for the truth of the matter is, is that surely one man must die so that all may be spared. But his thinking was, is that if Jesus dies, the Roman Empire will leave us Jews alone.

[12 : 18] And he is the one here. He had already made the decision. Jesus must die. We must get rid of this man. So the trial really is a debauchery. They're not trying to figure out what should be done.

They're trying to justify what they're already going to do. And too many times, too many times, our questionings of Christ are not trying to figure out what it is we ought to do, but rather figuring out how we can justify that which we have already determined to do.

I'm going to say that again. Too often, our questioning of Christ is not to figure out what it is we should do, but rather it is trying to find the justification to do what we have already determined to do. Too often, we have made a determination in our mind, and all we need is a justification to do it. For if we come before him in honesty, and we come before him in humility, then we would understand, much like the council here, as they kept trying to find something against him.

What does it tell us there? They kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but what does it say? And they were not finding any. There was no justifiable grounds for the determination they had already made.

[13 : 42] There was no means, no sin, no faults, no failures. He had been publicly on display for them, not only during the Passion Week, but for three and a half years.

For three Passovers, he had stood publicly proclaiming the truth. He had embodied it in his reality. He had been in not only the synagogues, but he had been in the temple.

He had been in the porticos around Jerusalem. He had confronted the religious elite. He had been face to face with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, and all the Essenes up until this time.

And yet, they were not finding any, but the testimony continues. It says, For many were giving false testimony against him, but their testimony was not consistent.

Understand this about the testimony of the world. The testimony of the world resonates in its opposition against the Savior. That is, the world hates the Savior.

[14 : 44] The world hates Christ. The world is against Christ. It stands against Christ. But the sad reality is, is they can't even agree with why they stand against Christ.

The testimony of the world is, we have to do something with him, for he is always wanting to challenge us. He's always bringing conviction. He's always breaking tradition.

He's doing things which we dare not understand. He's doing things which are contrary to our accepted practices. And we just can't put our finger on it, but there's something against this man that bothers us.

But the testimony of the world is not even consistent. Read your world religions today. And I don't mean Christianity. I mean religion. I don't mean a relationship with the Lord God Almighty through Christ.

I mean world religions. Read it and see their opposition against Christ. Some of them oppose him in all friendliness. Oh, he was a great teacher. He was a great prophet. He lived a perfect exemplary life.

[15 : 45] Friend, when you make him a great man and reside him to be there, and you keep him there, you are just as opposed to calling him a liar. I know it's a hard saying.

But either Jesus is God or he is a lunatic, for he claimed to be. And we'll see it in just a moment. He is either fully God and fully man or he is fully insane.

That's the only stance we can take. We just don't know why in the world's practices we are opposed to him. But even in our agreement, there are so much disagreements about the world's opposition to Christ.

Well, there is one place we can go to and we can find a full picture of why the world really opposes Christ. In the Gospel of John, John doesn't get very far into it. John, in his opening verses, only gets down to verse 5.

And he makes just a declaration. He says, He is the light of the world, and the darkness could not comprehend it. That is, the world could not comprehend the light that had come into it.

[16 : 51] Paul would say later, What fellowship has light with darkness? The testimony of the world is, is we are opposed to him, and any old excuse will do.

Anything we can make up, anything we can fathom, anything we can say to justify our opposition will do, because we just can't understand him.

Well, John says that shouldn't surprise us, for darkness cannot comprehend light, nor do the two of them have fellowship, and he is the light of the world.

But in the midst of this testimony, in the midst of this declaration, there is a truth which cannot be ignored. In the midst of all of this trial, and all of this questioning, and all of these accusations, even those who stood up and gave a little bit of a grain of truth, for we have heard him say, Destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will erect another temple made without hands.

We know that Jesus says something very similar to that. Jesus was speaking of his body, was not speaking of the temple physically present in Jerusalem at that time, though they had accepted it as that, though that was the accusation.

[18 : 04] And here the testimony of those two didn't even agree. But notice this, it says, So the high priest asked Jesus, What about all these things? How do you answer this?

Now this is probably one of the most astounding realities during the trials of Christ. And Jesus said nothing. He was silent. He was silent.

Why? Because the truth does not have to validate itself against the arguments the world poses to it. Keep that in mind. You do not have to prove truth.

Truth is self-evidence. Too often believers, I mean strong believers, think that it is their job to argue with every argument and opposition the world brings.

And really, if all we would do is declare the truth, then it is the world that has to argue with the truth. Don't get caught in the trap of arguing with the world when the world cannot be in agreement with their argumentation against Christ.

[19 : 03] If the believers would be in agreement against the truth they proclaimed, then it would be the world's responsibility to confound that truth. Jesus remained silent.

For it mattered little what others said about him. It mattered little what caused others to oppose him. It mattered little what others thought. I read something by Warren Wiersbe a couple of weeks on this reality, and it's something that is equally astounding.

When Jesus is led to Pilate, Pilate asked a question. I shared this with an individual at the back door. I don't think I've shared it with you. Pilate asked a question. He says, what about your followers?

Now think about this for just a moment. Pilate says, what about your followers? And this is how Wiersbe put it. And at that moment, Jesus remained silent. For what would he declare?

My followers all have forsaken me. One has sold me for the price of a hireling and has now went out and hung himself.

[20 : 07] Another has denied me three times in the courtyard of the high priest, and they have all abandoned me. That's how Jesus could have truthfully answered.

But the astounding thing is that when Pilate asked him that, Jesus said nothing. He brought no condemnation against his followers.

He brought no judgment of finality. He did not belittle them in the sight of the world, for that was not the world's place, for Jesus would restore them later. All but Judas Iscariot.

So what of his followers? Their moments of weakness were not his opportunity to highlight their weakness, but rather he remained silent. Sometimes, and I'm having to learn this, silence is the best answer that we can ever give to the world's questions.

Sometimes it's silence. But when it comes to the truth, the high priest says, what about all of these things?

[21 : 07] And Jesus said nothing. And then he asked him a question. He says again, the high priest in verse 61, are you the Christ, the son of the blessed one?

Now that's a pointed question. Are you the Christ, the son of the blessed one? And notice the next verse, and Jesus said, I am.

There's a question he will answer. When Pilate says, are you a king? He says, you have said it. I am. When it concerns the reality of who he is, he always answers it.

When it concerns the world's opposition, he remains silent. When it's a matter of truth, are you? He emphatically answers, yes, I am.

And he declares here, two great passages from the Old Testament. The first from the book of Psalms, which declares that he will be seated at the right hand of the blessed on high. He declares the reality of his eternal position.

[22 : 12] And then from the book of Daniel, where he declares that you will see the son of man coming in the clouds. Both of these passages to the Jewish individual, especially to the high priest before him and to the Sanhedrin gathered around him, would be emphatically understood as declarations of his deity.

There was no obscurity here. There was no veiling. There was no hiding the deity of Christ, as some would say. He is being very open about the reality that yes, I am. And these are the only questions he answers.

Why? Now, for this is the truth that cannot be denied. The reality of who Christ is simply cannot be denied, no matter how much the world opposes it, no matter how great the testimony the world brings against it, it is a truth that must be declared.

And in the midst of this declaration of truth, we see the temptation that we all face. For this is the trial of Christ. There's a temptation that each and every one of us must face.

That when the world puts Christ on trial, it is not the world seeking to figure out what it is they want to do with him, but rather trying to justify what they've already determined to do.

[23 : 29] And in the midst of that, the truth resonates. It shines through. But the overwhelming problem is this, that the trial we face as believers in Jesus Christ more than likely will not be before the bar of the courtroom.

It will not be before a ruling multitude of elders. It will not be a public display. We will not have to give an answer for the questions, for Christ has already done that.

For some believers, yes. But the overwhelming majority of believers, the temptation they face is the trial that takes place around the fires of the world. It is where we reside in our place.

Notice what it says in the passage. And Peter was following him at a distance. Now Peter loved him too much to completely go away.

But at this moment, he did not love him enough to stand beside him. But he followed him at a distance. And I've told us to be careful in our judgment of Peter here.

[24 : 52] Because what is going on with Christ is not Peter's trial. Peter cannot bear the weight of our sin. Peter cannot even pay the penalty of his own sin. The word of God declares that no man can pay the penalty of his own redemption nor the redemption price of his brother.

Peter cannot purchase his own redemption. He has his own problems. So we have to be careful in our judgment of Peter. He's being sifted.

We understand that. Christ says that Satan has asked permission to sift you as of wheat, but I have prayed for you. These things are not catching Christ by surprise, though they appear to catch Peter by surprise.

He's been warned by them. But this is the temptation we all face, that Peter is following him at a distance. He doesn't have the privilege of being beside him, feeding off of the confident assurance of the Savior.

He cannot be physically next to him and feel his touch. He cannot have the Savior whisper in his ear, but he's following him at a distance.

[26 : 01] And it tells us that when he enters in to the courtyard that he sits down with the guards and all the military people and the personnel, and he's warming himself by the fire.

Now again, we don't say don't warm yourself by the world's fire, because the reality is that each and every one of us follow Christ at a distance, not until he calls us by his side where we see him as he is.

And at this moment, he has left us to be next to the world's fire, to be an ambassador, to be a light. We've been called to be here at this time. Then while Christ was up there, Peter was down below. When Jesus is on high, we are down below. But our trial and our temptations come in this realm when we're not physically beside him, but rather we are separated from him by distance, and we are even separated from him by the people around us.

Peter does not fall because he is being grilled by the high priests. Peter does not fall because he's being questioned by the Sanhedrin. He is not confounded because the elders and the scribes and all the teachers, we know it's a servant girl, but what is the temptation that he gives into?

[27 : 24] It is, surely you were with Jesus the Nazarene. And then notice, surely you're one of them. Surely you too are one of them. It is the repetition of the phrase that Peter, you don't belong here.

Something about you is different than everybody else around the fire. Something about you, the way you talk, the way you look, the way you hold yourself, it causes you to stand out. Peter, you don't belong here.

Peter, you're from somewhere else. Peter, you belong to someone else. Surely you are one of them. And even the phraseology, when it comes off our mouth, makes us think, oh, that seems so isolating.

That seems so derogatory. That seems so judgmental. When people say, oh, you're one of them. And here's the temptation. Peter says, no, I'm not.

I'm just like you. It is a temptation to fit in with everyone else. It is a temptation to say, well, I'm cold just like you and I just want to warm myself and be left alone.

[28 : 25] I'm just here to see what happens just like you. But the trial is, but you don't belong here. You look like someone else.

You look like you belong to another realm. And surely you're one of them. Peter so wants to fit in and just kind of blend into the crowd.

He even changes the way he talks for a moment. For it tells us that they knew he was one of them because his Galilean tongue was standing out.

His dialect was a little bit different than everyone else. He was one of those fishermen who had followed him. So he says, well, I'll show you I'm not one of them. And maybe he reverted back to his fishing days.

It tells us that he began calling curses down upon himself and says, I do not even know the man. All he wanted to do was be left alone.

[29 : 24] All he wanted to do was being a casual observer to the events that are going on. But praise be to God that Christ wouldn't let him because a rooster crowed the second time. I know some of your texts saying the rooster crowed once and then it reads again it rooster crowed twice.

But when I read from the New American Standard it only says it crowed twice the second time. You say, he left part of it out. Well, we're not here to get into the biblical interpretation. But the oldest manuscripts only have the second mentioning of it.

And it's understood that probably scribes put the first one in there because in our minds we say, how could it crow the second time if it didn't crow the first time? It did. It's just implied in the text.

Okay. So the rooster crowed the second time.

And Peter heard that rooster. And the words of Christ came back to him that before the rooster crows twice you will deny that you know me three times.

And in the original language it tells us and Peter fell to the ground and wept bitterly. Crying out over his sin.

[30 : 30] He wept. He was broken. And he needed restoration. Here's the temptation we all face.

Are you willing to be one of them even when nobody else is? Even when you stand out in the fire you've been called to stand beside and warm yourself.

Jesus doesn't ask you to take his place. He just asks you to stand strong in your place. But the grace of Christ is that even when we fail he'll use even a rooster to get us back.

To remind us of his word and to restore us as his people. We don't often turn to the laments of the Old Testament to find great comfort.

The greatest lament is Lamentations. Some of the most horrific atrocities are declared in the book of Lamentations as Jeremiah is lamenting all that is going on inside the walls of Jerusalem during the captivity.

[31 : 48] But there's the phrase in there that shines like a beacon of light. And I would say for all of you that have read Lamentations and you've read it more than once you probably have underlined it or put an asterisk beside it or highlighted it or written it down somewhere and it's that his loving kindnesses are new every morning.

Maybe there have been moments where we have failed our trials by the campfires of the world. But his loving kindnesses are new every morning.

Some say well what's the difference between Judas' response he cried and he wept and Peter's response for he wept.

Well first of all we know that Judas was the son of perdition used of Satan filled with Satan to do that. And the second reality is is that Judas decided to take matters in his own hands and didn't wait on restoration into his own life.

was always looking internally to see what it is he could do. Friend when we fail and when we stumble and when the trial gets too hard we find no answers within ourselves but we must be reminded of what Christ has said.

[33 : 07] Weep and cry over those and wait on the restoration that comes from he and he alone. for this world is always putting Christ on trial and as long as we are his people that includes us too.

For he has come it tells us in the gospel of John to make his abode within us so that when it puts him on trial we as well. Let's pray. Father we thank you for the day and we thank you for your word. We pray oh Father that you would empower us as your people to live confidently and boldly for you and you alone. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.