

Mark 14:53-15:15 - The Just for the Unjust

Pastor Chris Bove

Introduction - After His arrest, Jesus surrenders Himself to unjust condemnation, denial by His friend, and suffering as the Messiah. Everyone should believe that Jesus willingly gave Himself up while we were yet sinners to save us. That is why Christians worship Jesus and celebrate on Palm Sunday and Easter. Jesus is God's demonstration of His love.

14:53-72 - Falsely condemned by the religious elite and denied by a friend - Mark does not include Jesus' pretrial before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas (Jo 18:12-24). The Sanhedrin was unable to convict Jesus of breaking the law, even by using false witnesses (Ex 20:16). An accusation by two witnesses misconstrues what Jesus said about having the temple destroyed (His body) and rising again three days later (Jo 2:19-22; Mat 12:39, 16:4). One of the reasons Jesus came in the flesh was to redeem the perishable and make it imperishable (1Pe 1:3-4; 1Co 15:53-57). The destruction of a place of worship was a capital offense in the Roman Empire.¹ The whole proceedings were atypical, if not illegal: it was not where the Sanhedrin regularly met, at night on a festival day, and conviction was pronounced on the spot, not on the next day.² Against the accusations, Jesus remained as a lamb silent before its shearers (Isa 53:7, Act 8:32). The high priest puts Jesus under oath asking if He is the Messiah, the Son of God (Matt 26:63, Lev 5:1). Jesus answers "I am" (Ex 3:14) and says He will sit at God's right hand (Mrk 12:35-36; Ps 110:1) and come with the clouds (Dan 7:13). The high priest declares this blasphemy (Lev 24:13-16), though Jesus spoke the truth (Jhn 1:10; 1Jo 3:1).

After condemning Him to death, they beat, spat upon, shamed, and mocked Him by implying that if He were the Messiah, He could tell who struck Him while blindfolded (Matt 26:68; Isa 11:2-3).¹ Jesus prophesied this (Mark 10:33-34, Is 50:6). Peter can look up the stairs from the courtyard and see the trial. He thrice denies knowing Jesus, putting a curse on himself (anathematize - "To bind oneself with an oath or under a curse") and swearing, not profanely, but by taking "'an oath' as one does in court."³ Jesus looked at Peter after the rooster crowed (Lu 22:61). Peter wept. Peter has a Godly sorrow, keeps his faith in Jesus, and is restored (Mark 16:7; Jo 21:15-19). God was refining these followers (Zech 13).

15:1-15 - Falsely condemned and denied release by the world - The Sanhedrin reconvened early in the morning to determine how to have Jesus sentenced by Roman authorities, who alone could render capital punishment (Matt 27:1; Gen 49:10). There was a final confirmation that Jesus declared Himself the Son of God (Lu 22:66-71). Before Pilate, they said that Jesus forbade paying taxes and claimed to be a king (Lu 23:2), treasonous capital offenses. Jo 18:28-38 includes additional dialogue between Jesus and Pilate. Jesus could have made a defense (Jo 18:21-23; Act 22-26; 22:25), but did not and submitted to unjust treatment and accusation (Isa 53:7, Act 8:32, 16:37; 1Pe 2:21-25). The world will oppose us just as it opposed Christ (Jhn 15:20; Phl 1:21; Mat 10:16). Pilate sends Jesus to Herod (who has jurisdiction over Galilee) with no outcome (Lu 23:6-12). Pilate offers the people a choice between releasing the insurrectionist murderer Barabas and Jesus (Matt 27:17), but the religious leaders stir up the crowd to demand Barabas and shout, "We have no king but Caesar" (Jo 19:15). Pilate has Jesus scourged. Scourging was with a multi-laced whip with embedded shards of bone or metal, which was dragged across the skin after impact. The hematidrosis Jesus suffered in the garden (Lu 22:44) made His skin exceptionally tender to these lashes and beatings. Is 52:14-53:12 describes what Jesus endured.

So, what? Now, what? Jesus soon walks, bloodied, beaten, and bearing a cross, out of the city that had previously welcomed Him in celebration. Only a few understood Who He was. Why this injustice? Our rebellion against God. Yet God, rich in mercy, because of His great love for us, made us alive together with Christ (Eph 2:4-10). "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God" (1Pe 3:18, NASB).

- How can we live a life above reproach? (Phl 2:15)
- How would you respond to a claim that Jesus never claimed to be God? How would you defend your faith?
- How are we tempted to "satisfy the crowd?" Will we choose to follow Him on His path of obedience and love for others, even when it is not expedient to do so? What makes that hard? What empowers us to do so?

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg. 183-184.

² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/terasaka_david/misc/crucify.cfm

³ *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. Earle. Pg. 48