

Who Has Redeemed Me a Lost and Condemned Person

The Passion Of Our Lord Jesus Christ: *The Palace of the High Priest*

Trinity Lutheran Church – Kearney, Missouri

March 7, 2018 – Wednesday of Lent III



In the name of the Father, and † of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. That meeting must have been pretty doggone important. After all, the manor was plum full of the high-falutin, bigwig high priests, scribes and elders. It was a veritable Who's Who of Israel's so-called religious heavyweights – its most pious movers and shakers – its Bible-experts-on-steroids. So, what was the big deal? What was going on? What was so doggone important that the Jewish supreme court of religious affairs had to assemble itself so quickly?

Well, you need look no further than the popular Preacher from Nazareth. Those super spiritual Mafioso-like big shots had been trying to snuff out this Preacher for years. And now, "Voila," Judas' treachery had worked like a charm. It was money well spent. Now they had the Preacher in custody right where they wanted Him – cuffed, corralled, bound hand and foot, going nowhere fast. There was no time to waste. The case had to be made now or never. The Preacher had to be demonized as the heretic they all knew He was – a radical rebel hoping to overthrow an omnipotent state run by the Lord Caesar. Now Jesus would finally get His just desserts.

But don't you need evidence to sentence someone to death? Who needs evidence? All you have to do is just repeat the lies long enough. So, go ahead, repeat after me: "Heretic. Revolutionary." Speak those words often enough and all the low information folks will believe it as it were God's honest truth come down straight from heaven to their ears. Bring on those false witnesses. What, their testimony doesn't jibe? Who cares? This isn't about justice, it's about getting rid of this threatening, controversial Preacher who's not theologically PC enough. The things He says are making eve-

ryone uncomfortable. We have to get rid of Him, and fast.

Let's practice those clincher statements again. Go ahead you two, let's hear what you have to say. "Thank you Reverend High Priest. Yes, the Preacher claimed He would destroy the Temple, God's House. Can you imagine that, Your Grace? I couldn't believe my ears. And then the Preacher had the audacity to claim He could rebuild the entire destroyed Temple in just three days. We all know, Your Eminence, that Israel spent 46 years building the Temple, and it's still not completely finished. Really, your Holiness. Who does this Preacher think He is?" But through all this Jesus remained silent and didn't say so much as a word.

The high priest gave Him a chance to defend Himself against these questionable, unreliable witnesses, but He wouldn't. That's when the trial shifted into high gear. "Look here Jesus. You're under oath. Tell us, who are You, really? Do You actually believe You're the Messiah? Let's have it. Are you the Christ, or not?" Jesus finally answered: "Yes indeed Reverend High Priest. **I AM** the Messiah. Take a good, hard long look at the proof, especially Psalm 110 and Daniel 7. **I AM** the Divine Son of Man who is King and Judge over all the kingdoms of the world. **I AM** God, and I possess an eternal kingdom. Is that clear enough?"

Jesus simply told the truth. He gave the good confession. So they let Him go, right? They apologized, right? They promised to make reparations for false arrest and defaming His character, right? They all fell down and worshiped Him, right? Not hardly. Actually, that was when the high priest went ballistic, tore his clothes and began screaming: "Blasphemy! Sacrilege! Desecration! Heretic! There's no need to hear anything more. This Preacher must die!"

Soon the spit was flying from everyone in the palace, drenching Jesus and dripping off His face. He was sucker punched, clobbered, smacked and slugged. He was blindfolded and mocked. “If you’re the Christ tell us who landed that blow!” They shoved and kicked Him relentlessly in a brutal, vicious, cruel attack. “Is that how the Messiah acts?” they cried. “Where’s God now, Jesus? Let’s see the power of Psalm 110 and Daniel 7. Oh, you can’t do that? I guess You’re not the Messiah after all. You’re a fraud. Messiah would never suffer to endure such abuse.” But Jesus’ tormentors – those Bible-scholars-on-steroids – had a blind spot in their study of Holy Scripture. How had they missed the fact that Isaiah prophesied this would be precisely what would happen to the Messiah when he wrote: “I offered My back to those who beat Me, My cheeks to those who pulled My beard. I did not hide My face from mocking and spitting?”

But Jesus *was* innocent, *not* guilty. He *hadn’t* done a blessed thing wrong. Why was all this happening? Why had He been arrested and bound? Why wouldn’t He defend Himself by speaking up or shouting them down? Why didn’t He threaten them with a lawsuit, call 911, send for the 12 legions of angels under His command, or rain down fire from heaven like He did at Sodom and Gomorrah? Here’s why: He was fulfilling all those prophecies – going through all of this *for you* – to redeem *you*, a lost and condemned person. Jesus is the Suffering Servant who, “opened not His mouth,” as the Lord laid upon Him the “iniquity of us all.” And while it may seem strange to us, Jesus’ sole purpose for coming into this world was to take your sin and put it upon Himself so that that it might become His – and His righteousness might become yours.

Jesus, you see, is the Sacrifice that atones and pays for your sin. That was why He gladly allowed Himself be arrested, bound, and brought before the high priest. In order for a sacrifice to be acceptable to God according to

Levitical Law, it first had to be shown to and approved by the high priest. Only then was it to be brought before the Lord. So Jesus suffered all this in silence as the Sacrificial Lamb of God, and bore it all by Himself even as the “first” of His disciples and apostles, Peter, denied ever even knowing Him because he was a coward – too embarrassed and afraid to be seen with a Savior who suffers so.

Dear Christian, Peter’s sin, your sin, is the crushing burden that laid upon Jesus as the Suffering Servant so that He might redeem us lost, condemned sinners. As a sinner it is *you* who should have rightly been bound hand and foot, brought before the Lord’s court, justly accused, appropriately found guilty, and quite deservedly thrown out into the eternal darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But this will not happen to you. You will not get what you deserve. And you have Jesus to thank for that. For He freely and willingly allowed Himself to be arrested, accused, and bound tight by the nasty ropes of Satan, death and hell as all your sin was laid on His body and He suffered for it vicariously – all of it in your place, so that you might be released and set free, untied and loosed from your sin.

Now Jesus says to you: “Do not fear. You are forgiven. I was tied up with all your sin. And now, I have released you from its shackles. I allowed Myself be falsely accused as a heretic and rebel for your sake. You have been set free from any and every damning accusation all because I died *for you*. Your sin is now mine, and My righteousness yours. Your sin no longer condemns you, for My blood is the guarantee that you have been purchased and won for all eternity – free, forever and for always.” And now that joy is yours, dear Christian. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

And now that peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in that one true faith in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.