

Jesus Before Pilate

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[0 : 00] It was during this moment that Peter wields his sword, strikes the air of a gentleman by the name of Malchus, who was probably the leader of the battalion.

And Jesus tells Peter to put his sword back when leading resistance. And then he heals the air of Malchus. What becomes particularly peculiar to me as I began to look over this story again was these were the same guys who were just hours later.

These are the same men who were just hours later, after witnessing the air being cut off from Malchus, they would be among the people who would actually be bruising our Lord.

And that just struck me as, wow. From there, having looked through the whole Gospel writers, the next step, they take Jesus to Annas, the priest.

Now, this is only accounted for by the Gospel of Luke, and is nowhere else. All the other Gospel writers say they went to Caiaphas, which was the next step.

[1 : 20] So they go from Annas, so Jesus is now moved from the garden by force. He's taken to Annas, a high priest, who was not the high priest that year.

And then he was taken to Caiaphas, where all the men, or most of the men of the council had already met. In other words, this was already planned that they would get Jesus this particular evening.

So in the middle of the evening, you have Caiaphas, the high priest, and the scribes, now accusing Jesus and trying to find fault with Jesus.

Well, they finally came upon a place where they condemned Jesus, and they're condemning Jesus for the fact that Jesus claimed that he was the Son of God. That's the claim, and that's the charge of blasphemy.

So that will be one of the things we examine today in the Book of Mark. However, from Caiaphas, from this condemnation now, they have to wait till morning.

[2 : 23] Because, and I think Pastor Mars touched on this last week, because to make this legal, they had to wait till morning. They couldn't condemn you until morning.

So the council met again in the morning. So Jesus now goes from Annas, he goes to Caiaphas, where they had met, and now they go to the council early morning, probably the crack of dawn. From there, they immediately raise the charge, and within practically minutes, they whisk Jesus off to Pilate to be crucified.

Pilate, bless his heart, to some degree, and I'll explain, makes an attempt to try.

Pilate doesn't want to have anything to do with this. He is quite aware that the man before him is probably not guilty. In fact, Mark states that he realized that they were men of envy.

[3 : 22] So Pilate is doing everything in his power to not condemn Jesus to death. So he finds out that Jesus is from the area of Galilee.

So, ha, I got it. So he sends him to Herod. Thanks to, I think Luke is the only one that records this. He goes to Herod. And then Herod just wants to have a playtime with Jesus.

He wants Jesus to perform a miracle. But Jesus says absolutely nothing while he's with Herod. Obviously, they mock him. They beat him. So he's whisked back to Pilate.

So Jesus is before Pilate a second time. The book of Mark only records Jesus as being before Pilate once. Okay? So they just lop it all into one thing.

So Pilate goes to Herod. Then he comes back. Sorry. So Jesus gets to Herod, and he comes back to Pilate. And Pilate, again, is trying to get Jesus off the hook.

[4 : 22] But the Pharisees and the scribes are not letting up. Pilate, in attempting to get Jesus off the hook, says, You know what?

I'll beat him up a little bit. I'll let my men have a go at it. So he sends him off to his men to discourage him. He brings Jesus back.

And this time, according to the book of John, when Jesus comes back to Pilate. He is now dressed in royal garb. They say scarlet.

Okay? Like a scarlet robe. He has a crown of thorns on his head. And he's whispering. And Pilate says, Behold your king. A key phrase. Behold your king.

And then he gives him the option of Barabbas or the king. And they choose Barabbas.

[5 : 19] Jesus is before Pilate for the third time trying to plead his case. And Pilate saying, No other way out. He sends Jesus and condemns him to die.

My sermon title today is Jesus before Pilate. Let us pray for a moment. Father, as we look into the scriptures this morning, and as we seek to understand your word more clearly, we ask you that we may have ears that hear, eyes that see, and hearts that are willing to follow.

Be with us now as we look at these moments of Jesus before Pilate. In your name we pray. Amen.

My sermon text is from Mark chapter 15.

And for those of you in radio or radio land or out there listening to my voice right now, we as a church are going through the book of Mark, and we just so happen to be landing on Mark chapter 15.

And we'll be reading Mark 15, 1 to 20. See how many charges they bring against you?

[7 : 08] But Jesus made no further answer. So Pilate was amazed. Now at the feast, he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked.

And among the rebels in prison, whom had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. And he answered them saying, Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews? Well, he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him released for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, Then what shall I do with the man you call the king of the Jews?

And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said to them, Why? What evil has he done?

[8 : 17] But they shouted all the more, Crucify him! So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas.

And having scourged Jesus, he delivered him up to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the governor's headquarters.

And they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak. And twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him.

And they began to salute him. Hail! King of the Jews! And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of his purple cloak. And put his clothes, his own clothes on him. And they led him away to crucify him.

[9 : 28] They wanted him dead, silenced, crucified. The hostility was at a feverish pitch.

They even favored Barabbas over Jesus. Barabbas, a known robber and a murderer. What did Jesus do to trigger such hostility?

How did they get here? How did they get there? How do people, listen, how do people, even religious leaders, arrive at a place where they will plot and execute a plan that will result in the crucifixion of a man, yea, even the miracle-working son of man, who healed the sick, cast out the demons, and raised the dead with a simple spoken word?

How do you get there? And what of complacency? How is it that a person and authority who bears witness to such hostility yield to the demands of those wanting blood, yielding to the very ones he suspects are guilty of envy?

What causes a person to go along acquiescing to what is clearly a travesty of justice? In my sermon today, I wish to point out two thoughts that flow out of the text.

[10 : 54] We know what happens when hostility meets up with complacency, that's for sure. But why the hostility? And why the complacency?

My first, why the hostility of particularly the scribes and the Pharisees? Let's now turn to the Gospel of Mark to see if we can determine why the scribes, Pharisees, and the elders had become so filled with rage so as to want Jesus dead, crucified.

In the opening chapter of Mark, we read that Jesus commences his ministry and enters the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath and immediately began teaching. The people were astonished.

Mark 1.22 reads, Notice the comparison made by the people in the synagogue.

Jesus' teaching was different. Spoken with more authority unlike the scribes. While they're in the synagogue, Jesus even heals a man of an unclean spirit.

[12:16] Jesus speaks with more authority and he cleanses a man of an unclean spirit. They had never seen that before. As a result, Jesus' fame at once spread everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

After leaving the synagogue, Jesus goes to the home of Simon Peter and heals his mother-in-law of a fever. People began to hear of these healings and began flocking there at Peter's home and even though it was sundown, Jesus healed many and cast out demons that evening.

Undoubtedly, the news of these miraculous healings and the authority from which Jesus spoke got the attention of the chief priests and the scribes.

So some of them were dispatched to Capernaum. The very next morning, Jesus leaves Capernaum and goes to other towns in Galilee preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.

He heals a leper. And after some days, Jesus returns to Capernaum when the people got wind that Jesus had returned there, a large crowd gathers at the house, presumably Simon Peter's house, with the scribes among them.

[13:43] This would be the first record in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus encounters any of the religious establishment and in this case, the scribes.

The stage is set and it is ripe with excitement and anticipation. Mark 2, 1-12 records this first encounter.

A paralytic is let down through the roof of the house where a host of people have gathered with great expectations. Everyone anticipates what they have come to see. Jesus' next move would be to wow the crowd, healing the paralytic.

But instead, Jesus says the unexpected and for the scribes, others, the unthinkable.

Son, your sins are forgiven. No doubt there was silence from everyone.

[14:52] A pause, perhaps even a bewilderment of the crowd. That's it? That? Your sins are forgiven? And from the silence, Mark records for us in verses 6-12 the reaction of the scribes.

Their thoughts which was known to Jesus. Let's read it. Now, some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts.

Hearts. Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, which is easier?

To say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven? Or to say, rise up, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.

[16:16] And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, we have never seen anything like this.

Their response to Jesus' declaring that the paralytic sins as being forgiven, and I'm talking about the scribes, is met by the thoughts that Jesus is being blasphemous.

I want to pause just for a minute. A paralytic just got up who was a paralyzed man for years and they are thinking Jesus is being blasphemous.

I'm just baffled. I'd just be wowed if it was me, like, whoa, what just happened? But their thoughts are met.

Their response to Jesus is declaring the paralytic sins as being forgiven is met by thoughts of Jesus being blasphemous for only God can forgive sins. These were mere thoughts that Jesus exposes and makes public.

[17:39] Now, I want to stop and say something clearly here again. A lot of us live in this world where we think that Jesus is this meek and mild, let everything go type of person.

He don't ruffle no feathers. He doesn't force you to think. He just rules you and does everything nice and wonderful.

Jesus is a confronting Jesus and he does it here. They were mere thoughts that Jesus exposes and he makes their thoughts public.

Now, we're getting at the why the hostility of the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus performs two miracles before the people.

First, he reads the minds of the scribes and secondly, he heals the paralytic. Now, take a look at verses 10 and 11 again. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.

[18:58] who did they think was only able to forgive sin? God alone. They thought that to themselves.

But then again, who is the only one who can read minds? Who is the only one who can heal a paralytic but God alone? Are they convinced?

the scribes refused to connect the dots and see what is potentially obvious. In Mark 2, 13 to 17, records the second encounter.

Jesus had called Levi to be one of his disciples and so they went to Levi's home where they were reclining at the table. apparently it became the business of the Pharisees to now follow Jesus every move and so they saw Jesus there dining with Levi the tax collector.

the Pharisees then asked why does he choose to sit with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus heard it and said that he came for the sick and not for those who are well.

[20:19] Apparently those who are righteous are not to sit and eat with those people the sinners. You know that kind of people?

Could this be one of those pious traditions? Mark 2 23 28 the third encounter the Pharisees are surely tracking Jesus every moment every movement by this time but so much so that this one is funny to me but so much so that they're tracking Jesus through a green field.

Who does not? One Sabbath Jesus was get going through the green fields and the disciples plucked the heads of green something that in them in the size mind must have been unlawful to do on the Sabbath.

This undoubtedly came out of their understanding of what to work means when keeping the Sabbath. Jesus reminds them of a story of David eating the bread that only the priests were supposed to eat.

David even shared it with his men. then Jesus says to them the unthinkable. Verse 28 reads this is Mark 2 28 so the son of man is even lord of the Sabbath.

[21:44] Lord of the Sabbath. Pause and let that sink in a bit. we've probably read those words so many times that his actual meaning now escapes us.

Is Jesus suggesting that he sits over the law and is the law giver? That's precisely what Jesus was saying.

That he himself was the law giver. The very one who sits over the law. This is a clear claim to deity by Jesus and the Pharisees knew it.

We might not be readily conscious when we read but they knew it. They knew what he meant. Mark 3 1 to 6 the fourth encounter.

On another Sabbath day Jesus enters the synagogue. A man was there with with a hand. The Pharisees were just waiting to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath.

[22:59] Now think with me for a moment at how bizarre that is. These religious leaders rather than being fascinated in anticipation of witnessing the restoration of a withered hand.

Now you know people are always talking in our day about who getting healing and all that sort of stuff. You know I'm not convinced personally but if I saw a withered hand face off become whole.

Now hold on. Think with me for a moment. These religious leaders rather than being fascinated in the restoration of witnessing the restoration of a withered hand by Jesus in plain sight.

They are waiting around just to see if he would dare yield his mouth on the Sabbath. Let that sink in for a moment.

They are actually convinced that he can actually perform this miracle. Did you hear that? They're just looking to see if he can do it on the Sabbath.

[24:08] They're convinced he could do it. And he said to them, this is Mark 3, 4 and 5, and he said to them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?

But they were silent and he looked around at them. Is Jesus meek and mild? Listen. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at the hardness of their heart and said to the man, stretch out your arm.

He stretched it out. Jesus didn't even say be healed, you know. He just told him to stretch his arm out and it was healed. Here again we witness two miracles of Jesus.

Jesus reads their minds again and restores them with it out. But listen to Mark's record of the response of the Pharisees to this miracle and the reading of their minds. Mark 3, 6, the Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him how to destroy him. It's bizarre.

[25 : 29] He restores it with his hand and they want to destroy him. Mark 3, 22, 30, the fifth encounter. The Pharisees though not having witnessed yet Jesus casting out demons make the claim that Jesus is possessed by Beelzebul.

Jesus refutes this argument using a simple and basic logic. How can Satan cast out Satan? Let me interject a thought at this point. How deceived or angry must you be in order for plain reasoning and logic to go out of the window?

Failure to reason properly is caused by hearts that are simply want its way. Jesus exposes their plain lack of reasoning.

Undoubtedly rather than they see their own flawed logic they are further infuriated. While they may not have witnessed Jesus actually casting a demon out up to this point and I really went and studied that one they would certainly later witness it in Mark's record in the chapters 9 14 to 29 just after the transfiguration of Jesus.

[26 : 57] Mark 7 1 to 13 the sixth encounter the Pharisees gathered to him with the scribes from Jerusalem and they asked why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands and he said to them well did I say a prophesy of you hypocrites as it is written this people honors me with their lips their hearts are far from the heart is far from me in vain do they worship me teaching the doctrines of the commandments of men you leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men and he said to them you have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish a tradition for Moses said honor your father and mother and whoever reviles father and mother will surely die man tells his father or mother whatever you have gained from me is corbin that is given to

God then you no longer permit him to do anything for the father or mother thus making the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down and many such things like this you do the Pharisees and the scribes were incensed by the fact that Jesus disciples are completely disregarding the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands it's amazing isn't it amazing how we can trample entirely over the command of God while at the same time express utter disdain when people pay little attention to our traditions by the way that's a voice for us all Mark 8 11 to 13 the Pharisees come to Jesus and demand a sign from him imagine demanding a sign by the way that's a miracle okay imagine demanding a sign of someone whom you have already witnessed the miraculous how insane is that

Jesus tells them that he is not giving him no such sign and in fact does not bow to any demands of performing miracles on demand to anyone Mark 10 2 to 9 the Pharisees question Jesus about divorce in an attempt to pit Jesus against Moses now you gotta love this one the people the Jews love Moses if you ever know anything about the Jews Moses and David that's the two they're now trying to pit Jesus against Moses and he rebukes them saying that because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment meaning you should give them a certificate of divorce and then said what therefore God has put together let no man separate Mark 11 15 and 19 Jesus returns to Jerusalem and drives out the sellers and the buyers of the temple he overturns the tables and the money changes and the seats of those who sold pigeons he allowed no one to carry anything through the temple

Jesus alone did this by himself and then Jesus says he's in the temple now is it not written my house shall be called my house did you get it my house is it not written my house shall be called the house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers mark 11 17 and then comes the response of the religious leaders and the chief priest and the scribes heard it and was seeking a way to destroy him for they feared him because all the crowds was astonished at his teaching it is said and I think we know this in common language it is said that if you really want to rattle somebody's cage start hitting them really where really hurts their pockets the money

Jesus charges them that is the chief priest and the Pharisees and the elders with creating a market of the temple where they rob people even those most desperate and needy Mark 11 27 to 33 they asked Jesus by what authority do you do these things Jesus says he will answer them if they answer whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from man and they discussed it one another saying if we say from heaven he will say now you got to remember now this is in front of a

crowd and keep this in mind okay this is not one on one in front of a crowd if we say why then did you not believe him if it says from heaven he will say why then did you not believe him which clearly meant they didn't believe but shall we say from man they were afraid of the people for they all held that

[32 : 46] John really was a prophet so they answered him we don't know shows you some integrity right Jesus unmarked hypocrisy how could they not admit that John was a prophet mark 12 1 to 12 Jesus tells the parable of the tenants that ends with and I read from verse 10 have you not read the scripture the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone this was the Lord's doing and it was and it is marvelous in our eyes and they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people and they perceived that he had told the parable against them so they left him and went away mark 12 13 to 17 the Pharisees attempts to trap Jesus continuing the taxes they asked him if it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar he asked for a coin and

Caesar faces on it and he says Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar and to God the things that are God mark 12 18 to 27 the Sadducees take their shot and ask Jesus about the resurrection Jesus flat out tells them is this not the reason why you are wrong again remember now this is in front of a crowd is this not the reason why you are wrong because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God now think for a minute how does it feel to be told that you are wrong in public imagine making an attempt to trap Jesus with a concocted story to be flat out told you are wrong you do not know the scriptures and you do not know the power of God imagine the horror of hearing those words spoken to clergy in front of people how embarrassing is that Mark 12 38 to 48 speaking in the temple Jesus gives a warning to the people concerning the scribes now Jesus is at the temple you hear me at the temple and in his teaching he said be aware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the market places and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor of speech who devour widows houses and for pretense make long prayers they will receive their greater condemnation imagine Jesus speaking of you like this in your domain the temple over which you preside where Jesus speaks of the condemnation you will receive for the behavior of thinking yourself important so in summary so why why I did a long run so why do you hostility let's rehearse it for a moment Jesus defied their traditions he ate!

He ate with sinners and he didn't endorse their ceremonial washing of hands he broke their sabbath rules multiple times by healing the sick and allowing the disciples to pick heads of grain to eat by the way everything I'm telling you is from the book of Mark if you read the other if you read the other gospel writers I could add a whole lot more on the end this would have been twice three times long but anyway he missive missive of they make demands and he ignores them Jesus speaks out against them in a parable

[37 : 23] Jesus goes into the temple and up ends their money operations saying that they are robbers their response they want him dead crucified Jesus exposes the truth about them they love to be recognized they love to adorn themselves with their robes and fine clothing to be thought of as special they love the best seats in the house places of honor and oh how they love to be eloquent in speech and prayers ah to be the set of attention does this sound familiar to you because it should perhaps you're of a different sort which brings me to my second and final point why the complacency we need not venture far to answer this one for it is self evident in the text we

Bahamians I believe are more akin to Pilate any residual hostility that may linger is long buried and remains deep under the surface something else however is on the surface that is arguably more deceptive indifference deep down we know the truth Pilate knew it and even give deference to the truth Pilate was trying to get Jesus off the hook and that's the problem we don't believe there's a difference between knowing the truth and believing but rather we live in acquiescence we're indifferent what does it matter there's so much going on in my life so much to do

I'm just too busy right now building my business furthering my education pursuing my goals and keeping safe but indifference bites us all when we least expect it and at that very moment of truth we know what the right thing is but it's just easier to play along and go to flow should I do the right thing does it really matter in the grand scheme of things if I let it fly rather than take a stand so pragmatism fails we default to the course of action that is of least resistance and the least immediate threat rather than stand we become pilots when we encounter those who are overtly hostile our indifference makes us like pilots we cower and let injustice prevail indifference does what it always does it acquiesces and gives into the minds rather than face the fury of hostility by

the way our lord faced the fury of hostility pilot knew

Jesus was innocent of the charges pilot even knew that the chief priests the pharisees and the elders were full of envy but none of that mattered in the end so what is pilot's response mark 15 15 reads so pilot wishing to satisfy the crowd released for them barabbas and having scourged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified and now some concluding remarks you know it's no different today just like pilot succumbed to the hostility as opposed to seeking after the truth and standing on it likewise many remain in alignment with the world that desires to get rid of the messiah the son of god in the end both the council that is described to elders and pharisees and pilot were culpable for the execution of jesus one thing is certain christ exposes all of us and our sin wherever we are be we among the hostile or among the complacent he exposes the heart digging down deep into the dark recesses of the soul and unmasks his hostility that lies underneath the veneer of an image that we fight to maintain he sheds light on sin while we try to bury it there's only one remedy pastility and complacency just one and for that

I turn to the apostle john in the words that john the jesus said to pilot of all people john 18 37 reveals to us the words of jesus at the most critical of moments and as jesus is about to be condemned by pilot then pilot said to him jesus so you are king jesus answered you say i am king for this purpose for this purpose i have come into the world to bear witness to the truth everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice let me go back there's only one way to confront hostility and indifference and complacency everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice so i ask you i ask you out as you watch online can you hear his voice are you listening those who are hostile want jesus dead those who are complacent facilitate the demise of jesus the king both will receive their condemnation are you bearing witness to the truth are you listening to the king