

# Christ Condemned

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[ 0 : 0 0 ] we're going to turn again to that chapter and look at words that we find in verse 63 and 64 mark chapter 14 and we'll take up the reading at verse 63 and the high priest tore his garments and said what further witnesses do we need you have heard his blasphemy what is your decision and they all condemned him as deserving death this morning we sat at the lord's table and we focused on the death of jesus that after all is what the lord's supper is all about the lord's supper took place at the time of jesus death and in the bread and in the wine his broken body the body that became broken on the cross and the blood that was shed on the cross they are represented in the bread and in the wine and that's the whole purpose of the lord's supper is for god's people those who are being brought and whose uh whose unity alone lies in the death of jesus and it's strange isn't it to think i often wonder about the the fact that the only thing that brings us together is the death of jesus christ of nazareth none of us would be here tonight if it wasn't for his death we wouldn't know each other if it wasn't for his death i often think of that in terms of my own life how much of my own life centers around everything centers around the death of jesus christ my friends my family my contacts my whole world and as well as yours revolves around the death of jesus christ and i'm going to return to that same event this evening the death of jesus but from a slightly different perspective we shouldn't think of calvary simply as the place where jesus died jesus death was a process it wasn't simply the moment when he closed his eyes and gave up as the bible tells us his spirit but it was a process a lengthy awful unimaginable unimaginable process where he suffered the agony and the wrath of god so his death took place at that particular point indeed the whole process of rejection and suffering and torture at the hands of those who accused him the crucifixion was his death not just the moment of his passing from this life and including in included in that process was the trial that we've just read about the trial that took several phases first of all there was the phase where the sanhedrin the jewish ruling council they gathered hurriedly that evening to demand and to secure his execution and his condemnation then of course he was sent to pilot in order for him to authorize death by crucifixion but it's not the second phase i want us to look at tonight it's the first phase the phase that we read about in these verses where the high priest in verse 63 having come to the conclusion

that this man deserved to die he tore his robes and said what further witnesses do we need you have heard his blasphemy what is your decision i want us to think of three things this evening in terms of this trial i want us to think this evening that of that jesus was first of all tried by man found guilty without evidence and outrageously condemned to death that's the first thing i want us to think about tonight as we as we have it in this passage he was tried by man found guilty without evidence and outrageously condemned to death that's the that's what we've just read about it was an absolute outrage we'll see that in a few moments time but the second thing i want us to look at this evening is the fact that jesus behind this great event was another trial in which jesus was tried by god before the world the bible tells us was even formed he was by god found guilty and justly punished that's the trial that that underlies what we read in this passage and i want us to look at how god at the same time as man carries out his outrageous acts of injustice and cruelty at the same time god was working hand in hand woven into this injustice was the perfect justice of god in which jesus would become guilty of our sin and put to death as the wages or the consequence of our sin that's the second thing i want just to look at this evening but then there's another trial a trial which we'll look at a little bit later on as we close what we have this evening in which you and i are involved and in which we are not just spectators but we actually are drawn into this passage and when that question is asked in verse 64 by the high priest what is your decision i hope that by that stage that we will have discovered that we have a part to play in this and this trial actually gets turned on its head so that instead of jesus being the one being tried we are the ones being tried and

asked what is your decision and i'm going to explain that in a few moments time first of all let's look at the trial of jesus before the sanhedrin was the jewish ruling council they were a group of religious men whose responsibility was over the worship and the religious affairs of the jewish people and it was to them he was taken after he was arrested and this was an emergency meeting it was late at night and it was an emergency meeting something that was hurriedly called together by all the that took place within all the jewish ruling people at that time the sanhedrin consisted of the scribes and the pharisees and the person in charge was the high priest the bible tells us that he was first of all taken to a man called annas who had once been the high priest but had handed over that function to his son-in-law and just in case the alarm bells are ringing right away and the alarm bells that say nepotism you're absolutely right that's the way that things were carried out at that time so it's hardly surprising that a great injustice is going to be committed because the whole system whilst on paper was a good system and should have been a good system resulting in justice it was actually totally corrupt from the inside out beginning with annas so after he was taken to annas who had been the high priest and who was kind of the godfather if you like he handed the whole thing over to caiaphas who was the high priest at that time and there is where the trial took place the high priest caiaphas would have been wearing his high priestly uniform which was an ornate set of clothing which was which is found described in the old testament i'm not going to go into that there were at least 23 members having hurriedly been called together in the middle of the night late at night they would have sat in a semicircle the historians tell us they would have sat in a semicircle and there would have been two shorthand writers normally normally if there was this was an ordinary trial and if this had been an ordinary trial there would have been speeches someone would have been accused there would have been a charge brought against that person and there would have been first of all speeches bringing the charge against them and there would have been a defense then that these speeches would have been in favor of the uh those of the person who was accused and after the whole trial was heard normally there would have been a vote and the vote was done in a very interesting way it was always the youngest members of the sanhedrin it was they were required to vote first no wonder if you know why the reason for that is so that they wouldn't watch how the older ones would vote and vote to please the older ones very often when you get a system of a vote sometimes people watch how other people vote not knowing themselves so they'll vote in accordance with the people that they that they know best in order to please them well that wasn't allowed to happen in the sanhedrin the youngest ones always voted first in order and then it went all the way up to the older ones the elderly ones believe it or not the jewish system for determining justice was an exceedingly fair one it was rooted in the old testament in which god is at pains to stress to his people the importance of securing justice and that's something that each one of us tonight even in the 21st century he still holds to and if i was to begin tonight at a point at which we were all agreed i think every one of us in here tonight would have to agree with me that justice is lies at the heart of any civilized society and if you take away that judicial system the system that says if a person is guilty he must be found guilty by proper judicial process and then he must be sentenced to a fitting punishment but that system also says that if a person having been tried is innocent and if there is no evidence against him or not enough evidence to secure a conviction against him that person must be set free so the guilty person must be punished and the innocent person must be set free that's the basis of every judicial system you will agree with me even although there are times when i know that we hear we read in our newspapers we watch the news sometimes and we hear about someone who's obviously guilty of a crime sometimes the most horrendous crime and that person manages to get off because of some loophole in the law you feel just the same as i do the sense of outrage and sense of anger that you feel that someone has been able by by some kind of loophole to walk away when that person has has done a crime and yet we know that

there has there can't be any shortcuts and whilst yes there may be loopholes here and there the system has to be implemented otherwise if you start taking shortcuts if you start taking away bits and pieces you're the whole of society it collapses around you and that system as it is now or as it was founded i should say it is rooted in the old testament the ten commandments this system here it was the same rooted in the ten commandments and in the old testament because god in the old testament is absolutely determined to make sure that the innocent do not get punished but that the guilty do that's the basis for every balanced normal good civilized god glorifying system of justice and so it might surprise you to notice that the jewish system for for determining justice was actually a good one the problem is not the system the problem in this passage is that all the rules were

broken the historians tells us that one historian tells us this it would have outraged every principle of jewish criminal law and procedure so when these men took jesus and arrested him they threw the book out the window because they were utterly determined not to establish whether he was guilty of whatever they they were charging him with that wasn't their intention their intention from day one and john's gospel puts this very plainly was to make sure that the end result of this court case was death for jesus we absolutely have to do away with this man what they said was we will not have this man to rule over us now of course when that's your intention when that's your purpose then justice is a laugh isn't it it's just a joke because there was no establishment of justice this court case was a mock trial it was a sham it was only put in place in order to give some kind of respectability to the hatred that lay behind the sanhedrin and the jewish ruling council they utterly and sometimes i don't think we we we understand this the utter hatred the blind obsessive hatred that these people had for jesus christ and it's quite extraordinary isn't it it really is quite extraordinary when you examine his life his teaching his ministry his innocence his helpfulness his his grace his kindness his winsomeness the ordinary people heard him gladly they would gather in their thousands to to listen to him and he and he knew he was able to confound them with the wisdom and with the knowledge that he had and at the end of the day they after they had nothing but utter contempt for him and the contempt was without reason it's almost as if they were tripping over themselves trying their best to make sure that nothing would come out of that evening other than his condemnation and his death that was their purpose make no mistake about it this bore no resemblance no resemblance whatsoever to anything that we would call a fair trial and no matter how you hate a person because you don't like the look of him or because you don't like his mannerism or because you don't like his background or whatever it is then the system of justice cannot begin on that basis that's why of course when we choose a jury we make every effort to make sure that there is is impartial as possible that they can that they don't include anyone that may have anything against the accused or anything for the accused or any kind of connection with with the accused and so on and so

forth everything has to there was nothing nothing impartial about this court case this court case was was utterly determined to make sure that he was condemned and condemned to death that broke every rule in the book for example court cases amongst the sanhedrin they weren't allowed to begin at night this one takes place at night they weren't even allowed to begin in the afternoon there was a system of cautioning and warning and all kinds of arguments every one of them was come was thrown thrown out of uh of uh of this uh the this discussion and that took place but there is that was so much for the injustice which jesus suffered that night there is another trial though that was taking place connected with this one the new testament tells us that as jesus was condemned to death and as he was put to death at the hands of men the new testament tells us that something else was happening in parallel there are two things happening in parallel and if you go to acts chapter 2 and verse 23 you listen to peter's sermon on the day of pentecost he puts it like this he says and he's talking to he's talking to those very same jews he says you with the help of wicked men put him jesus to death by nailing him to the cross that's what he accused them of and that's exactly what happened you with the help of wicked men put jesus to death by nailing him to the cross but then in the next breath in the same sermon peter says this this man jesus was handed over to you by god's set for knowledge and purpose so there's two things happening as this trial is taking place and as the men behind it are gathering their minds and their decisions together to make sure that he's condemned to death and that's exactly what in the very same event god was fulfilling and completing his purpose and his plan and order for his beloved son to die on that same cross so that by that same death god would redeem people to himself by faith that was god's purpose and that was god let's just let's just go into that enough in in a little bit more depth unbeknown to anyone anyone who was who's sitting there on the on the council god's plan was being carried out in every single detail and the more you just the more you read your bible the more you discover of how intricate the detail of god's plan is nothing gets left out not a thing happens a moment too soon not a thing happens a moment everything happens at just the right time and what's taking place is the fulfillment of another trial you see god is the god of justice this time in god's court there is no injustice there cannot be any injustice because god is the righteous judge the word righteous in the bible means just it means that you have a perfect sense of what's right and what's wrong and you will implement that sense you will put it to it you will you will take it to its proper conclusion if somebody was to ask me in one sentence perhaps what the bible is all around i would say that the justice of god the bible at the end of the day that the bible is surrounds a trial a trial in which the

charge is our sin that's the charge and in which god doesn't need to gather [20:14] evidence he has the evidence right there god sees and knows and and everything that we do even from the inside our thoughts our motives our evil intentions everything even if the attempts that we make at being good god knows that they're polluted and stained by filthiness and corruption and pride and envy and anybody who thinks that they're anything different to that you're wrong you're deceiving yourself you're wrong god sees us as we really are and we are accountable to god the bible tells us he is the perfect judge and god will and does hold us to account from the day we're born all the way to the day we die we are accountable to god the bible is all about that case that trial in which in which the charge is our sin and it's a real charge it includes all our sin not just the things that we think are serious but every single sin that we commit a condition a condition of corruption before god and sinfulness he knows everything the marvelous thing is this that instead of us being accused of those crimes god has charged his own son with them and what's more he has found him to be guilty of our sin and what's more he has condemned him as the guilty person and to a punishment that fits the crime god's sense of justice is is such that the punishment that god when we read a verse like the wages of sin is death when we come to terms again and again with what the bible tells us of the severity of god against our sin we mustn't shrink from that because it's god we're dealing with and he is sense of just if our sense of justice is right and proper how much more is god's sense of perfect and complete justice and when god sentenced his own son to that punishment it was a punishment that fitted the crime very often you read about court cases uh very often all too often don't we we read about court cases seeing them on the news on television of people committing the most horrendous crimes crimes crimes that turn our stomachs like this week the murder of these two poor french students and in london and we watched the the court case and the verdict and was there anybody who could anybody who could watch that without your stomach turning and without you saying how in the world can anybody be capable of such brutality and cruelty and these two men as we know were found guilty and they were sentenced to life in prison which usually means that they'll be released after some years i'm sure many years but possibly released and something inside you asks is that really an adequate punishment i don't know what the answer to that question is because of course that gets us into the death penalty capital punishment all of these things and i'm not here tonight to talk about those things but it is it's a question isn't it is anything what is is is is our is our system of punishment or in any system of something within you says is that adequate for the awfulness the utter brutality and cruelty and merciless nature of such a crime when we think of the pain that these poor men must have gone through the terror the utter terror that they must have gone through not to mention their families their families will never ever get over

this incident their families are scarred for life and you think well this is as much punishment as we can get there's something something in you that tells me well it's not enough you know there's something in us that that connects with justice so that when someone who's guilty we talked about that earlier on when somebody who's guilty walks off scot-free we feel outrage it's the same as when somebody when somebody who's guilty doesn't receive a punishment we feel there's something within us that but god in his perfect sense of justice always punishes and it's him that says the wages of sin is death and of course we know that the bible when the bible talks about death in that respect talks about eternal death talks about a living death it talks about a death an eternal punishment that's what the bible means when it says that the wages of sin is death and jesus was willing to suffer that death that perfect anger of god and he was willing to suffer it in all its completion and in all its awfulness on the cross we heard of course about that this morning and shrunk back from none of it he was willing he was willing to take it all and accept it all and suffer it in all its awfulness and just as we saw that this morning we must never think of of of of there having been a discount in the punishment just because jesus was god's sin there was no discount he paid it all oh every last drop he drank now here's the question of course that always comes up when we think about jesus dying for our sins the question is this a perfectly fair question was it fair was it right was it just for god to punish his own son who was innocent and who didn't deserve that punishment we've just been talking a few a few minutes ago about how true justice demanded the innocent do that the innocent go free and here's the answer to that question it is fair because god in his own way transferred the guilt of our sin onto his son so that his son became guilty for our sin now i'm not asking us to understand that i'm asking us to listen to the voice of god telling us that god made him who knew no sin to be sin for us and that means that he became guilty he took on our guilt and so

that as he walked to the to the to calvary he walked there as a guilty man even although he himself had never committed any sin he walked there as a guilty man not bearing the sin of one man or one person but bearing the sin of all his people all his people you think of all the of all that awfulness and filthiness and shame and guilt it's just it really does go beyond our ability to understand god had reckoned our sin to jesus and jesus was punished accordingly so that as these men and all their obsessiveness and all their hatred nailed jesus to the cross and as they erected the cross and as he suffered and hung and as he became thirsty and as he's his life uh was was was uh he as as he was killed at the same time god was punishing his own son and bringing about on him the wrath that we deserved that we our sin committed that's the second trial there is a third trial there is something else

this trial that we read about in this chapter it won't allow us to be spectators and neither will the bible ever allow us to be spectators to the death of jesus as we read those words in verse 64 in which the high priest said what is your decision what he meant by that of course was as he looked around him to those 23 other other members of the sanhedrin and as they brought together all of their their thinking about jesus and as they came to that conclusion he asked them all what is your decision is jesus guilty of death is he to be rejected or otherwise now here's the problem you they couldn't they were faced with the greatest challenge they had ever been faced with in their whole lives every one of these members of the sanhedrin was a religious person they were all jews they'd all been brought up in the scriptures of the old testament they were all privileged in having god's law that meant that every day they would be waiting for god to fulfill his promise and to send his chosen messiah every jew who took his old testament seriously and the sanhedrin certainly did or claimed that they did they waited for the coming of the messiah and here was this man who they had witnessed over the last three years whose reputation went before him whose teaching was unique whose person was unique whose attractiveness in terms of his wisdom in terms of his character and his authority was absolutely matchless never before had anyone walked the streets of judea and galilee like this person and neither could their history books ever recall anyone having been such a man like this and having displayed the incredible power that could only be given to him as someone who had come from god the power to create enough food for 5 000 people the power to walk on the surface of the lake of galilee the power to transform the water at a wedding to wine at a wedding the power to raise the dead the power to to heal the sick and to raise the cripple and to heal the blind and the lame and you name it he was able to hundreds and hundreds of people he was able to do that in front of crowds of people this man was absolutely extraordinary are they really in the face of such evidence going to conclude that this man is the messiah or is that was the question is this man the prophet is he the chosen one is he the one who was to come all the evidence said that he was there wasn't one scrap of evidence not even one tiny little chink in the armor that suggested that jesus wasn't but if they were this is the point if they were to conclude jesus is the messiah which was really the only option what does that mean it means that every single one of them are going to have to rise up off their seats the high priest is going to rise up off his seat he's going to have to fall down in front of jesus of nazareth and he's going to have to leave behind his position of authority

and yield it all to jesus not only so he's going to have to admit his own corruption and his own sinfulness and his own rottenness you know i mentioned before this man annas annas was an exceedingly rich man father-in-law of caiaphas he was an empire builder notorious as a man who had collected his goods and his money out of questionable means guess how guess what that included it included the money that was made in the courts of the temple as they sold sacrifices animals for sacrifices they made an absolute fortune from day to day particularly the times of the feast what did jesus do he walked into the courts of the temple he threw over the tables and he said to them my house is to be called a house of prayer guess what effect that had on annas's income it had a devastating effect on it annas was absolutely furious because all of a sudden his his gross income plummeted and you know when something means that you have to leave behind your comfort zone and your lifestyle when something means you like the life that you now live has to come to an end and you have to become a different person that's a tall order but that's exactly the place where you're at this evening and it's exactly the same choice what is your decision that's what it meant and these men with all the religious pomp and ceremony and tradition and knowledge and status and all the respect that they thought they had actually they didn't have much respect at all the common people didn't think much of them at all but they thought they did they thought that they had fame they thought that they had celebrity status in the place and to some extent they did they

were all well known by everyone to leave all that behind was too much for them you see what i'm saying is this the question was not whether jesus was or wasn't the messiah that was a no-brainer he was the messiah they knew that there were that this man could only have come from god because nicodemus said no one could do the works that you have done unless god was with him he by the way was a non-voting member of the sanhedrin or one of the minority that voted or voted in jesus favor but that's because he had come to that conclusion the question was not is jesus the messiah the question was what impact will this have on my life if i say that he is that's your question tonight is he messiah it's easy enough to say yeah but do you know what that means the moment you truly sincerely honestly before god confess jesus as your messiah you have to yield everything to him surrender your soul your life your all because that's what jesus demands anyone who comes after me said jesus must deny himself take up his cross daily and follow me i'm asking you tonight to make that decision

to put jesus first to come to him and all these thoughts are coming into your mind yes i know but you've just been showing us how much that's going to impact my life yes correct but you know when you when you take that step of faith to follow the lord jesus christ and to ask him to be your savior to take away your sins and have mercy upon you you have a life that isn't even in comparison with the life that you once had remember what jesus said i have come to give you life in all its fullness which means that the life you have right now is an empty life just like the woman at the well she came to the well and her what she was doing that day kind of illustrated her whole life she was trying to scrape the bottom of this deep awful stagnant well and jesus was saying well that's that's your life that's a picture of your life you may think that there's happiness around the corner if you just wait a little longer for the perfect husband or for the perfect job or for the perfect way but i can tell you jesus said if you knew the gift of god you would ask him and he would give you living water and right now that's where you're at isn't it because as either continue as you are trying to find fulfillment and meaning and contentment in your own life or finally once and for all stopping and looking to jesus and saying lord have mercy on me take my life and change it because i can't change myself please transform me open my eyes open my heart show me how to follow you and you know the lord says ask and it will be given unto you you know every one of those sanhedrin members they had to make a decision one or the other and upon that decision as we face the same challenge this evening rests our eternal destiny it's as crucial as that what is your decision let's pray our father in heaven once again once again we come asking that our hearts may be open to the gospel that we might be made willing as we examine the life of jesus and as we have examined his death and all that that means to us we pray that you will work powerfully amongst us this evening to impress upon our hearts that this really is the way jesus truly is the way and the truth and the life lord we pray that we will know that reality to be ours in our own hearts in jesus name amen thank you