

Mark 14:60

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 0 0] chapter 14, and we're going to look at the section where Jesus has been taken, and he is before the high priest. And if we read from verse 60, it's one of these defining moments. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But he remained silent and made no answer.

Again, the high priest asked him, are you the Christ, the son of the blessed? Jesus said, I am. And you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.

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. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, prophesy. And the guards received him with blows. Now we have before us here really one of the most remarkable scenes that it is possible to even imagine. The Lord, who is the judge of all the earth, is here at this particular moment, sitting or standing, and he has been judged. Not in a fair courtroom. If ever there was a mock trial, this is it. This was not a trial in order to establish right and truth. It was a trial to condemn Jesus. There was no fairness. There was no legitimacy. There was nothing in it but that they would receive. There was only one thing this group of men were concerned about, and that was that they were going to be able to hand Jesus over to the Roman authorities to declare the death sentence. Because while they might declare the death sentence, they couldn't carry it out. It had to be through the official verdict, as it were, of Rome. And that is why Pontius Pilate was brought in on the matter. But here is really, as we say, quite a remarkable scene where the Lord of Glory is before this group of people. And it's here we see the submission of Christ. Because just a little earlier on, what we saw in the garden, when they came to arrest him, that how it was Peter, remember, who drew out his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus, although it doesn't particularly tell us that here, told Peter to put his sword away, and he said, I could call on 12 legions of angels. At that moment, Jesus, if he had exercised his power, he could have summoned 12 legions of angels. Now, we can't get our mind around that. When you think, we've said that before, of how an army that was, we read about in the Old Testament, there was an army of over 100,000, and an angel destroyed them in a night. When you think of the angel that went through Egypt, that awesome night, the night of the Passover, and you think of the destruction that one angel can bring about in a moment. To call on 12 legions of angels, we just can't get our mind around that. And Jesus is really saying, I could, in this moment, I could have all personnel in this world destroyed. But that's not what I'm about. And we find the submission of Jesus as he hands himself over. We read of that prophecy in Isaiah, which tells us that as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. And that's what was really getting to the religious leaders at this time. Because one false accuser after another was getting up, and they were making accusations against Jesus. And one was saying this, and another was saying that. And the high priest just said to Jesus, listen, are you hearing all these accusations? What have you got to say for yourself? And he wasn't saying a word. And that's just what it says, as a sheep before his shearers, so he opened not his mouth. He's led like a lamb to the slaughter. And it's here we really see the twistedness of sin. Because there are times, you know, when we, if you read any of the papers or

magazines that are distributed just now from various bodies that are monitoring the persecuted church throughout the world, one of the things that we find so hard to understand is just the level of irrational hatred against the Christian faith. And where men and women and children are being put to death for no other reason but that they love the Lord Jesus Christ. And you say to yourself, I just don't understand it. I can't understand it. But when we look at this, this gives us, not that we can understand it, but it gives, it helps us to understand. Because the, what we're seeing happening all over the world is against the followers of Christ. Here we're seeing what is actually happening against Christ himself. And when you think here, here is and here was perfection. Here is somebody who never did anything but that which was good. Everything that Jesus did, he did, but with a correct motive. Now you and I can't understand that. Because with the best will in the world, sometimes our motive isn't pure. It isn't right. We can sometimes do things by way of deception. We can do things in order to receive praise. We can do things for loads of varieties of reasons that are actually sinful. We can do a good thing and do it with our own spirit, do it with our wrong motive. It's possible to do all these things. Well, Jesus never, ever, ever did anything out of our own spirit or with our wrong attitude or with our wrong motive. And so everything that he ever did was right. With a right spirit, a right attitude. And as we saw this morning, he was, every step he was taking, it was in order to reveal the Father. And that's why he was saying that he who has seen me has seen the Father. He came not to do his own will, but to do the will of the Father. Everything he taught was of what was given to him by the Father. Everything that he did, these were the works that the Father gave him to do. And so he lived this life of absolute perfection. And everywhere he went, he was healing and helping. And yet they couldn't wait to destroy him.

And when it came down to the choice, remember, who are we going to, Pilate, remember, Pilate who was so keen, Pilate goes down as such a sad character. The man who knew what was right and yet didn't do it.

[7 : 41] You know, I think that's one of the saddest things that a person can be in this world. A person who knows what the right thing is to do. The person who is absolutely sure what is right and yet won't do it.

That was Pilate. And he knew if ever he saw an innocent man, a man who ought to be set free, it was Jesus. And in his determination to set Jesus free, knowing the Jewish custom that somebody had to be released, he trawled, as it were, through the prisons to find the worst possible character he could find. And he got this terrorist of the day, this man Barabbas. And so he thought, if I set Barabbas side by side with Jesus, then obviously they're going to say, oh, okay, we'll have Jesus released. That is why he chose Barabbas to stand against Jesus. And you'd say to yourself, it's obvious who they'll choose. It has to be the one who has spent the years going around doing good, healing, teaching truths, living in absolute perfection. But no, the cry, who will we release?

It was Barabbas. That is the twistedness and the perverseness and the ugliness of sin. And so, as we said, Jesus is standing before this group of people who are only out for one end, and that is to have him destroyed. And so this is such an awful situation. So while there are all these accusations being leveled against Jesus, the high priest eventually comes forward and he says to Jesus, have you no answer to make? What is this that these men testify against you? But he remained silent. And then he asks, again a high priest asked him, are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

And Jesus said, I am. It's at that moment that Jesus says, right, you're asking me this question. You are really asking me, am I the Messiah? Am I the Son of God? Am I the one that the prophets spoke about?

Yes, I am. And we've got to remember that who Jesus is speaking to at this moment. This is the chief priest. These are the men who were steeped in the Scriptures. These are not ignorant, unlearned men. These are not people who were kind of iffy about religion. These were people who were at the very top of the ladder, as it were, in religious society. These were the people who understood everything in the Bible, or at least had a massive Bible knowledge. And yet they were in the dark. They were in the dark because of their prejudice. They were in the dark because they refused to see what was staring them in the face. And we've said it on many occasions before. One of the things that had got to them above all was they were jealous. They were envious of Jesus. I think it was Shakespeare who talked about it as a green monster, envy. And that's really what it is. It's like a cancer that eats away within a person. And Pilate knew that it was for envy that they had delivered him up. So the chief priest asked this question, and Jesus tells them, I am. And you would have thought at that particular moment that they would have fallen down in worship and said, Lord, we are so sorry now that we've heard it from your mouth. And when we put together all our knowledge of the Scripture, and as we reflect in this moment upon your life, surely, yes, we see that your whole life has been a fulfillment of Scripture, but no. And we see this, as it were, like this righteous indignation, of course, twisted, self-righteous indignation, the high priest ripping his robe. Oh, this is awful, such blasphemy when he hears Jesus making this statement where he says, I am.

[12:10] Can I ask you tonight, where do you stand in all this? What do you think of Jesus? Do you—this is an important question—do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Do you believe that he is the Son of God? Do you believe that he is who he says he is? Do you believe all that the Bible says about him? If you do, then logic demands that you do something about it. It's not sufficient to say, well, yeah, I believe Jesus is who he says he is. I read through the Gospels, and I believe all the words that Jesus spoke. I believe them to be true. Well, if you do, then it is sheer lunacy to say, well, but I'm not going to do anything about it. That really is the most absurd thing in the world, to know, to have it in black and white, to see the truth, and yet to walk away from it.

I hope, my friend, that even tonight, that as you consider this Jesus, and as you reflect upon this Jesus, that you will listen to him, that you will realize this is the most serious thing that we're faced with. And Jesus goes on to say to them, I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. Seated in a place of honor and authority and dignity, the one who is the Almighty, the Lord did say unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, just what we're singing in Psalm 110. Do you know, the high priest and the priest must have found this really strange at that moment. Where Jesus is being tried and where they're condemning him to death, at this moment he's talking about his authority and his power and his coming, and that he's really saying in that that the roles are going to be reversed, and that there's going to be a day that it's not, he is not going to be the one who is being judged, but that they will be judged before him. Really, that's what he's saying. And so, Jesus is telling them here, and he's telling us as well, that he is coming again. And Jesus said, I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. He is coming again. We're told in Revelation, it tells us in

Revelation chapter 1, behold, he is coming with clouds. And the actual language that is spoken of there is, it's speaking about it as an event that has already begun, that is coming again as an event that has already begun. The process that has taken place, we are living at a time where we are waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus. When? I don't know. Not Jesus said of that, that not even the angels in heaven, no. But the language in Revelation is speaking about it in such a way as that the events that are going to lead up to the return of Jesus are already unfolding. And you know, when we look around us and we see all that's happening in this world, sometimes you say to yourself, it's so chaotic.

The world is just, it's like a place that's boiling and bubbling. And we're seeing so much chaos and confusion and we wonder what is happening. My friend, it's all coming together. This is all part of the process. This is all part of the event that is already taking place. And Jesus will one day come.

As we say, we don't know when, but one day he will return. And it's quite an amazing thought. And how is he going to come? Well, he's going to come, as he tells us here, it's going to be in power, seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. So, his coming again into this world will be a majestic coming. Very different to his first coming. Remember when he came first time in the incarnation, in the outhouse? Nobody knew. There were a few shepherds in the hills and a revelation was given to them. There was that angelic display. There were wise men from the east who saw, were given an understanding and they came and bowed in recognition of his kingship.

[17 : 14] Just really a handful of people that knew. There were moments like, for instance, when Simeon held little baby Jesus in the temple, where the Lord revealed to him who he had in his arms.

But by and large, the world didn't recognize him. And even as he walked throughout this world for 33 years, the world by and large didn't recognize him. That'll be so different when he comes again.

He will come in kingly majesty and glory, and everybody will recognize this is King Jesus. And there will be no atheists or agnostics or scoffers on that day. There will be no God delusions. There will be an absolute persuasion. This is the Lord. This is a King of glory.

And as it says in Philippians, before him, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess of things in earth and things in heaven and things under the earth, which is speaking about that before appearing before Jesus, all angelic beings will be. The hosts of heaven and the devils of hell and all created humanity will have to appear before him. We're told that the devils themselves are to be judged.

And we know that they will be cast into the lake of fire, into chains of everlasting darkness. Because even at this moment, there is an element of freedom that they have, even although they are in slavery and bondage, there is, they still have an element of freedom that one day they will not have.

[19 : 00] And so it's an extraordinary thought. Jesus is coming again, and he's coming in a moment. Coming, as he described it elsewhere, like the lightning. And as lightning just comes all of a sudden, and everybody sees it, this is going to be an event of global significance.

And the thing is, there will be no warning. Yes, there are certain events that will take place prior to his coming. In New York just now, they had, and in the east coast of America, they were being given warnings before Hurricane Sandy came. And you could see in New York, them bracing themselves and making preparation for this assault that came. And despite, all the preparations they made, they couldn't cope with the power of nature unleashed. But there were warnings, and they were preparing. But the Son of Man is going to come without any warning.

Well, I shouldn't say without any warning. He has given us warning. And the warning that he's giving us is, be ready and be prepared. Watch and be ready. For you know not at what hour the Son of Man comes.

And he's warning us that we won't be slumbering and that we won't be sleeping, but that we'll be watching and we'll be ready. It's a solemn and a sobering thought, but Jesus is coming again.

And we read that he's coming with the clouds. That's what it tells us, with the clouds of heaven. And again, that is, of course, just signifying, it's something we often find in the Bible that speaks to us of the presence of God. When Jesus rose, remember, at his ascension in the Mount of Olives that he disappeared as he entered into heaven, into the cloud. You have the wilderness experience as Israel were led through the wilderness by the cloud, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. You remember when Solomon dedicated the temple, that there was the glory of the Lord appeared in this great cloud into the temple. Remember when Isaiah had his vision of the Lord high and lifted up? And it tells us of how the smoke filled the temple. When Jesus was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration, it tells us there of how again there was a cloud, and so he comes with the clouds of heaven. It's like the very clouds of heaven are his chariot as he comes. And while we said he comes in majestic kingly authority, he also comes as judge of all the earth.

[21 : 48] Here he is being judged, but on his return, he will be the judge. In this world, they nailed him to a cross.

When he returns, it won't be on a cross, but on a throne he'll be sitting, and it'll be a judgment throne or a judgment seat. And there has to be a judgment. Because when we look at this world, there is so much that is wrong. There is so much injustice in this world. And I'm sure there are few things that hurt in a heart more than injustice. If you've ever been the victim of injustice, it's something that really, it goes right into the very core of your being. And if you go through the Bible, it's one of the things that the Lord has a particular hatred of, is injustice and oppression.

It was part of the reason why God dealt in judgment with his people Israel and with Judah, was their injustice and their oppression. We tend often to think of other things, but if you study into the Old Testament and you see God's prophecies against Judah and against Israel, it is so often for their oppression and for their injustice. God hates injustice. And you make sure one of the things that we must always guard against is that we are unjust. We must guard against ever being unjust in our dealings, one with another. Well, this world we know is in so much pain because of all the injustice.

Well, it would, let us say, thank the Lord there is to be a judgment. And there is to be a righting of the wrongs because everybody has to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, everyone. And that is an incredible and a solemn thought. But we know that with regard to that judgment, that there is going to be one aspect of it that is going to be the deciding factor in that.

Where do we stand in relation to Jesus? Now, there are other aspects to the judgment because we're told our works, our works are going to be judged. There are, everyone will receive in his body that which he has done, whether it's good or bad. There are aspects to our judgment that it's a big area. But there is one particular aspect to it that is the all deciding one. And that is what we have done with Jesus and where we are in relation to him. Do we have him as an advocate on that day or do we not? Is he ours or are we on our own? If he is ours, do you know what will happen? If we belong to Jesus, we will be openly and acknowledged and acquitted on that day.

[24 : 59] Isn't that wonderful? There will be an open display of being acquitted, of being set free. But more than that, there will be side by side without the great invitation, enter into the joy of the Lord. That's what we're told in Scripture. Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. As Peter says to us, we will receive an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. It's not wonderful.

It's reserved your place. It's reserved. Nothing to corrupt it, nothing to defile it, and it will never, ever fade away. When we're going through Peter, we looked at that. That's a great hope. Is that your hope tonight? Is that what you're looking forward to tonight? If tonight you're called out of time into eternity, do you have that kind of hope? Or are you still on your own and saying, I'm going to have to battle this out myself? Well, as we said earlier on, if you believe what the Scripture tells you about Jesus, you know that it's not enough to battle it out on your own. If you're going to try and battle a doubt in your own, you've lost. You have no hope. And that's what the Bible tells us, without Christ, we have no hope. Who are without God and without hope in this world. It's a fearful condition to be in, to be lost. It's one of the most awful words that we can come across, to be lost.

to hear the word from Jesus. Depart from me, for I never knew you. You know, there are people who think somehow that when they die, it's going to be all right, and that the Lord will just take a passion to heaven, and that's it. That's it. Well, if a passion, think about it logically.

If you don't want Jesus, if you never want Jesus, if you're saying to Jesus, I don't want you, how can we at the end of the day think all of a sudden, oh, it's going to be all right?

You know, even logic tells us, if a person doesn't want Jesus in this world, and cannot bear to have him as King and Lord, how are we going to spend eternity in intimate, immediate companionship and fellowship with him forever? It just doesn't fit.

[27 : 46] But you know, the wonderful thing at the end of the day is that, thankfully, the destiny of the soul, while that destiny is fixed and sorted in this world, that destiny belongs to the Lord.

It's between God and man. It's nothing to do with a church or with any religious group. When a person comes forward in this congregation, as in many places, a person will come before the Kirk session. Some people will say, well, where's your biblical warrant for that? Some people will disagree with that particular practice. I think, actually, it's a very good practice in the sense that one of the things that is being asked is, for a person, is really doing something that's quite scriptural. We're told that salvation is believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth.

And when a person comes to the session, that's really what they're doing. They're confessing that Jesus Christ is their Lord and their Savior. But at the end of the day, the destiny of a soul has got nothing to do with a Kirk session or with a general assembly or with any group or body of people. It is something between the Lord and the individual. It is personal.

And we know that as long as breath remains within a person, and in the split second, the Lord, that's all it takes. A person, the Lord can change. We've heard it's happened on various occasions from, you know, the old line, from the stirrup to the ground. Mercy sought, mercy found. The person who fell off his horse, and when he fell off, he was an unbeliever. By the time he hit the ground, he was a believer.

There was a, like I mentioned it before, during the last war, a man from this island, their boat was hit, and he was a wild character with not a thought of God in his heart. Somebody who was as careless and indifferent to the things of God. He was plunged into the sea. A lot of people went down in that boat.

[30 : 08] But some were rescued, and he was one of those who was rescued. And when he hit the water, he was as much an unbeliever as ever. When he was rescued, he was a believer. He cried to the Lord in that moment, and the Lord had mercy on him. And you see, that's how it is. We don't, it's not, thankfully, it's not up to us. We're not the ones who make the decisions as to the destiny of our soul.

That's between the individual and the Lord. The important thing is that you get right with the Lord. You remember that King Jesus is coming again. How will you feel as you stand before him if you rejected him?

Because as sure as you and I are here tonight, one day we're going to have to stand before him. How are we going to feel if we've spent our life saying no?

Well, remember, he is coming in the clouds of heaven. But tonight, he's inviting you to him. Let us pray. Amen.