

**Week 28:****Road to the Cross Pt.2****Matthew 26:57-75 and Matthew 27:1-32: The trials**

Today at church the pastor said it's needs to be more about God and less about us when we pray. That is so very true. Good things happen when we focus on the plan and not ourselves. What is the plan then? The plan is revealed when we stop and look. We stop and listen. When our eyes and ears are focused on God and the needs of others. Call it karma if you like. When we lean our hearts towards the well being of God and others, our needs tend to work themselves out. That's just how Gods world works.

We are about to enter four trials. Are they the trials of Jesus? Maybe these four events are people on trial. Maybe we could see ourselves in these trials. Matthew is a book with instructions on how to be Christian. What is the history. Why Jesus came. What God believes. There are also warnings of the pitfalls. When our humanity clashes with Gods world. These four trials are a glimpse at those clashes. We are Peter. We are pilot. We have mocked God. We have rejected Jesus. At some point in our lives we put our own needs first over the kingdom.

This is not about despair before the cross. It's not about being lost forever. These trials are learning experiences. How often do we see the truth on the other side? It's rarely clear as it happens. We all have been warned. In some ways, God gave us his word to help us avoid a few pitfalls. Maybe if we're lucky, we will see our life a little differently after reading the Bible. I think God is just trying to help us navigate life through the writer Matthew. What have you learned through warnings?

Matthew 26:67 **"Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"**

Matthew 11:19 **"Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."**

Jerimiah 26:5 **"and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened)."**

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At times we open our mouth. Usually that is a very bad thing. People make mistakes with words and actions. Jesus at times said very little. Strangely enough he was silent often. His accusers asked him questions. They wanted him to explain himself. Jesus remained silent. I feel this is a great lesson. An argument is what it is. Two opposing views. Do we ever change people's minds in an argument? Usually

we agree to disagree. Compromise sets in. Yet, the reason we argue remains. We believe what we believe. I feel Jesus was silent because he knew their hearts. They believed what they believed. Jesus could not change their minds.

People don't want the truth. The truth does hurt. We just want to be happy. To be comforted. It's far better to see and feel the right things. Compromise can be a deadly foe. It deceives us from understanding. It ignores the truth. Compromise puts happiness above the truth. People drink, spend, and ignore reality to avoid pain. Jesus never did that. He could have got off of the charges but he remained silent. He could have won over the authorities but he remained silent. What is the hard path in understanding?

**Matthew 26:62 "Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 63 But Jesus remained silent."**

**Psalm 50:21 ""These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes."**

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Four trials. Four interesting views of our decisions towards God. I feel that Matthew has crafted and molded us to this exact point. We know who Jesus is. We know why he came. We know a little of Gods plan. As we gain knowledge we become a walking Christian text book. A friend of mine keeps asking me to study other Holy books from other religions. His argument is that we need to understand them better. To see their good side. There is more than God in this world. The problem with that is twofold.

One is that if we learn less about our God, we leave room for other Gods. We just work that way. All through university they challenged me to know the reason I believe. To defend that with confidence. By knowing other religions? No, by knowing my God better. The second reason is not seeing people. If we strive to be the Bible then we begin to not see people. We are no better than them. Judas killed himself because he thought he had cornered the market on what is right and wrong. In the end, he even lost himself. Know your Bible. Learn your Bible. Don't let the words in the Bible become your idol.

**Matthew 27:3 "When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders."**

**Matthew 12:44 "when it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order."**

Read Matthew 26:57-75 and Matthew 27:1-32. Write down one thing in each trial you can identify with.

## 1. Trial one: The religious

It's easy to accuse someone. I have often wondered what happens when the accuser becomes the accused. The religious rulers had power. Well, they had power allotted to them by Rome. They had little power. I firmly believe that they had it cushy enough to want things to remain the same. Jesus came in healing, doing miracles, and talking about destroying the temple. Does that sound cushy? The people on trial here are those who knew.

What do they know? People in religious circles have heard the Bible. They have most likely felt the hand of God on their hearts. Yet, they think they know. They think that they can tame or corner God. I was in a group that told me that when I speak in tongues I will have arrived. Arrived where? This section of scripture screams out that we think we can tame God, but that is just not true.

Judas believed he could press Jesus to act. Maybe he did not believe. I find it hard to believe that Judas spending three years with Jesus did not believe. I think he believed too much. He tried to make the Christ take over by pressing Jesus to act or die. Why bring all the soldiers to arrest Jesus? Judas believed. The men who sent the soldiers believed. Yet, knowing in your head is different than knowing in your heart. The religious people and those closest to Jesus didn't get it.

**Matthew 26:63 "But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."**

**Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."**

## 2. Trial Two: Peter

We are Peter. Years ago, I passed a Christian bookstore all the time. I used to tell my Ex-wife smugly "who would buy from that place?" Fast forward 11 years and there I was shyly entering that place to buy a Bible. Oh, how I thought I knew reality. I was extremely smug. Then God got ahold of me. I spent weeks looking for me in the mirror. I had totally changed. Peter thought he knew Jesus. I bet he had an opinion of God. I bet he thought he knew himself. That all changed when Jesus was arrested.

Suddenly Peter was alone for the first time in three years. Let's say you learn about Jesus and God. Your friends in Jesus are gone. Are you a strong Christian still? A hungry Christian still? How would you grow on your own? Are you smug in numbers but not alone like Peter? Peter wanted to see what would happen with Jesus. Yet, he was weak inside. Peter needed Jesus. Alone by the fire he denies Jesus three times. This is a warning by Matthew. Be strong in the Lord.

Judas realized he failed. Peter realized he failed. Mark says in his book that one disciple ran away naked. Even Pilot tried to free Jesus. He failed too. We are all confronted with Jesus at some point. We think we know. Yet, Jesus makes fools of us and our logic. It's not that were stupid. No, it's that we just don't know the truth. Jesus said the truth shall set you free. I bet Peter got that once the cock crowed.

**Matthew 26:75 "Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly."**

John 8:32 **“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

### 3. Pilate on Trial

There are points in the Bible that look, sound, and feel ominous. Jehoshaphat is crying out he does not know what to do. Peter hears the cock crow. Abraham lifts his knife to kill his son. Here in Matthew 27 is one of those places. Jesus is on trial before the governor Pilate. The wife of the governor is pleading with her husband to let Jesus go. she is disturbed. Pilate wants to let Jesus go but Jesus refuses to speak. Pilate offers the crowd a terrible criminal in stead of Jesus. They refuse. They want blood. They want Jesus to be crucified.

Verse 25 of Matthew 27 is ominous. God several times in the Old Testament says the sins of the parents will punish future generations. That seems so wrong. Yet, our actions do affect others. Here in Matthew 27 we have the people so angry that they offer the blood of Jesus on them and their children. Some times we say that it's Adam and Eve's sin. How are we grouped in with them for something we did not do? Then there is the mob wanting Jesus blood.

They wanted it so bad that they were willing to let the consequences of their actions to be on the heads of their children. Aren't the children innocent? Weren't we innocent as children of Adam and Eve? We are Pilate on trial. Each of us claim to be innocent and wash our hands of the matter. We hear the warning from others. We try and find a way out. There is compromise, twisted logic, and unseen circumstances. How often have we never saw that coming? Sometimes those decisions land on our children.

Matthew 27:25 **“All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”**

Exodus 34:6-7 **“The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands,1 forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”**

### 4. The crowd on trial

Six verses put us all on trial. I mocked Christians before I was 33. I laughed at them. I chided them. Matthew 27:27-32 is me on trial. Why did I hate Christians? What had they ever done to me? These soldiers put on Jesus a robe of red royalty. They weaved a crown of thrones. I have seen pictures of the thorn length? It's not pretty. They beat him and mocked him.

Many of us have done it. I know a friend who grew up in a Christian home. The father was a minister. They had a sweet mother. Yet, this person had to go their own way. They did not do what was right in the eyes of their parents and the Lord. Today they are a mess. Their children are a mess. I feel that people like them were told the truth but they mocked it. Many people think there is a better way rather than God's way.

Then there is verse 32. Poor Simon of Cyrene. Was he there for the crucifixion? Was he in the angry crowd? Maybe he was shopping? Either way there he was walking along. The soldiers grabbed him from the crowd and made him carry Jesus cross. Jesus was so weak from the beatings and scourging that he could not carry the cross. In the end we all will carry the

cross we bare because of our sins and the sins of others. I bet Simon was never the same again. Neither was I after I met Jesus.

**Matthew 27:32 "As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross."**

**Matthew 16:24 "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."**

## **What it means?**

As Christians we have a chance to live clean lives. We can live safer. If God says no or go this way, then do what he asks. Many times, when we don't, the actions of our sins will go farther than we want. Sometimes chickens come home to roost. What that means is that what will be will be. Chickens always come home. Sin will always go farther than intended.

Peter said he would die for Jesus. Later on, he did indeed. However, in-between that time he denied Jesus. Judas tried to provoke Jesus into action. He hanged himself. Pilate lasted only a few more years and history says he died. The people wanted Jesus gone. The religious rulers wanted to keep the peace. 40 years later Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans. Killing Jesus caused grief that came back to bite them later in history.

What it means is that the four trials are us. We are the ones on trial, not Jesus. Several times Jesus was told he was something. Each time he replied "it is as you say." We can believe anything we want. Yet, things are not as they seem. Fighting to disprove God seems to expose our flaws. All that effort is fruitless. It's not about giving in to God. I feel that is the crutch of the world. They just can't stomach giving in. How about accepting the truth? Maybe Judas, Pilate, Peter, and many others would have had a better fate.

**Matthew 27:22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"**

**Leviticus 26:3-4 "If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, 4 I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit."**

**Matthew 22:37 "Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."**