

Journey to the Cross w/ Christ...  
*Wk 3, Complete Control even when it's "not fair"*

For the last two weeks we've been looking at Christ journey to the cross. Two weeks ago we took a hard look at Judas and his motives in following Jesus. Last week we looked at what Christ wrestled through as he decided to obey the Father and suffer for our sins. We've been digging deeper into the scripture concerning the part of Jesus life because it is so easy to grow up in church, hear the story and the cliché lines so many times that Christ; who He is and what He has done, doesn't really impact us and our lives the way it should. By digging deeper and looking at this part in Christ life from a different perspective we can gain a better understanding of the cost involved in Christ sacrifice, the reason He did it, and then live lives that glorify him instead of ourselves.

Tonight we're going to begin to look at the trials Jesus went through following his arrest. There were actually six trials that Christ went through. Three were religious trials by the Jewish people and the high priest and three were political trials which were carried out by the Roman government. We're only going to focus on one of each, and tonight we'll be looking at what took place in one of the religious trials. To get a better understanding I want to show this clip that will hopefully begin to put things in perspective for you.

Trials Clip....

I know it's difficult but I want you to imagine yourself there that night. Pick a character, maybe you're a soldier, maybe one of the religious priest, maybe you're one of the disciples that was there that night. What sort of things would be running through your mind....?

So we know that Judas does his thing and then the soldier's move in to arrest Jesus. However John gives us some insight into the situation...

*Jn 18:4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" Jn 18:5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) Jn 18:6 When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

This is first indication that we in the midst of the turmoil that Christ is still in complete control. They had no logical reason to bow down to Christ, yet they did. You see there was something about Christ that instilled in them the "fear of God" that we discussed a few Sundays ago. From this point he asks them again, "Why are you here"? It's at this point that they the soldiers move in.

*...Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. Mt 26:51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Mt 26:52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Mt 26:53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? Mt 26:54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" Mt 26:55 At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. Mt 26:56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.*

Two things happen here that stand out, the first is that Peter attempts to take things into his own hands. He almost misses completely, but ends up taking off his ear. So in one sense

you have Peter who is totally freaking out, and you can't really blame him. Remember he had given his entire life to following Christ and had just said told Christ that he would die before letting anything happen to Christ. Isn't that how we handle things a lot of times, we're totally sold out to something; a relationship, a commitment, a calling. Something that's greater than ourselves and then when things don't go our way, or the way we think they should, then we take matters into our own hands. If Christ hadn't stepped in and healed the man, most scholars believe that the disciples would have been killed. He does though; he steps in and puts things in the proper perspective....

*"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. <sup>Mt 26:53</sup> Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"*

You see even when Peter was freaking out and attempting to take things into his own hands, Christ was calm, cool, and collected. He knew he was in complete control and reminded Peter of this as well. In midst of chaos in an unfair situation, Christ was in control.

Many times we're like Peter, we don't get our way and we lose it. Maybe we are even justified when we lose it; it's not a fair situation, we were mistreated. If we pay attention though, pay attention to Christ instead of the circumstances then we have the opportunity to be like Christ in the situation, calm, cool, collected.

The unfair situation doesn't get any easier for Christ. He's arrested and brought into court, probably about 2am. Remember we said that Christ underwent six different trials in a twenty-one hour period. The majority of these trials were not legal, what I mean is this. Just like court today, there were rules back then for holding court. Take a look

- *Night trials were illegal (refer to the clip),*
- *There should have been formal charges brought against Jesus, rather random accusations from the crowd.*
- *There should have been witnesses for and against Jesus, providing evidence.*
- *Jesus should not have been questioned and had a right not to be submitted to self-incrimination.*

So what we have is an illegal trial, with illegal charges, no evidence, and witnesses that can't agree (Mt. 26:59-63). Can anyone say "setup"? That's exactly what going on. By law the Jewish people couldn't kill anyone without Rome's permission, so Jesus needed to quickly be worked through the Jewish legal system so that he could face the Roman legal system. Caiaphas was the high priest at the time, but Annas (his father-in-law) was actually the one who was pulling the strings. Neither one of these guys liked Jesus for a number of reasons. For one they were both Pharisees and if you remember your s.s. class you'll remember that the Pharisees didn't like what Jesus had to say most of the time. The other reason that they didn't like him was more personal. They lived in an apartment in the wall of the temple, so they ran their family business in the temple. Do you remember the day that Jesus flipped the tables in the temple? Anyone remember why...? They were selling sacrificial animals at the temple and ripping people off. Guess who's business this a part of...? Annas and Caiaphas.

Can you begin to imagine the situation that Caiaphas and Annas find themselves in, they have Jesus right where they think they want him. Christ is further abused by the guard (again illegal) and then judgment is quickly executed by the mob that was formed illegally. Listen to what happens next...

*The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Mt 26:64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Mt 26:65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy." Mt 26:66 "What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Mt 26:67 Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him Mt 26:68 and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"*

Jesus is always crystal clear with who He is because He wants us to know. The thing is, sometimes we don't want to know. We get our mind made up about the way we are going to do things and then attempt to force Jesus in our way. Most of us don't like to be told what to do (even when we are supposed to) and some of us throw a fit. But Jesus didn't lose his cool once. He handled everything that was thrown at him, he knew it was coming. He even told the guards that arrested him "your time of evil has come" and yet he handled it with honesty, integrity, and selflessness. Is that how we handle situations we can't control and/or aren't fair? Or are we more like Peter who lost it and attempted to control the situation when he didn't understand. Or maybe even Annas and Caiaphas who manipulated the situation until they got their way. How do we handle control and crisis?

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#### Suggested Discussion Concepts:

**IT IS NOT FAIR!**

**"Nobody ever promised that life would be fair. Everybody is going to have adversity. The only way to handle it is to take our eyes off our own circumstances and put them on the Lord." -Dave Dravecky-**

Jesus was framed by the religious leaders. Did you ever get blamed for something you didn't do? Describe a time in your life that you were treated unfairly.

How did it make you feel?

Read Matthew 26:57-68 and Mark 14:53-65. The religious leaders "were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any." (Mark 14:55) No credible witnesses could be found to testify against Jesus, because Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Eventually, some men came forward with lies about Jesus. They lied on the witness stand. In our court system, this is a crime called perjury. The Bible says that Jesus didn't answer their charges against Him.

If it had been me, I would have wanted to set the record straight. Why do you think Jesus chose to not answer their false charges against Him?

When the religious leaders questioned Him about His identity, Jesus did choose to answer them. Why do you think Jesus chose to answer that question, and not the others?

What lessons, if any, can we learn about how Jesus responded to his unjust arrest and trial?