

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

88 – In Their Words

Announcements:

10/4 @7:30 -

Prayer

10/5 @6:30 -

Grace Group

10/8 @8:30 -

Sunday School

10/8 @6:00 -

FAMILY NIGHT

Small Group

10/15 @5:00 -

Joint Service With

La Luz

ICE BREAKER: Has there ever been a time when your own words were used against you? What happened?

READ: Matthew 26:57-68

On Sunday we looked at this passage and tried to understand how backwards everything was. The whole trial was a sham from the search for false witnesses to the illegality of an overnight capital trial. Everything was turned upside down! Here I would like to look at something else in this passage. In particular, I would like us to dive deep into what the people who are NOT Jesus say here. Each group says something different that tells us not just about their heart, but also about what God is doing in this passage. Most of them do not know exactly what they are saying, but the weight and beauty of this passage is that God is working all these things out. In other words, we see the bigger picture than they do as God works all these things out for his glory!

The first group to look at are what I called on Sunday the “true false witnesses”. What they say is basically a paraphrased version of John 2:19 when they bear witness against Jesus. Matthew 26:61: and they said: “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” While there is much here, I have for us now just one thought. Their testimony of Jesus saying this, is what laid the foundation for Jesus to actually do this! When Jesus spoke of these things he was talking about the temple that was his body. Not getting too far into the weeds here, when Jesus spoke these things he was basically saying that the old way of approaching God would be torn down (a physical earthly temple) and after three days a new way would be made (we approach through the person and work of the resurrected savior). These witnesses lay the foundation for the accusation of blasphemy, and truly that is the foundation of the case that leads to the cross. But the cross is what gives us the empty tomb! In other words, this was a sport of self fulfilling prophecy as the words lead to the deed lead to the power of God on display!

DISCUSS: What does it mean for us that the temple was rebuilt in three days? Why is this such an important thought (hint: Again it is important to understand the **ROLE** of the temple, not the building!)

The second person to speak is the high priest. This is what he says: “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are Christ, the Son of God.” (26:63). We can first note the great turn we have from Peter's confession in chapter 16. There Peter boldly proclaimed this same truth! There Jesus told him he was blessed because God, and not man, had revealed that to him. But here the high priest is seeking to turn this into an accusation, not realizing that he himself is speaking the truth that saves! The further layer of divine irony is if God himself (Jesus) had said these things it would not have made any difference to the high priest. So the first note is the difference in heart between one who says these things as a confession and one as an accusation. But the second thing to note is that Jesus does not let the high priest off the hook. “You said it!” is basically the response in 64, but then a dire warning: because you have access to this truth and deny it, the next time you see him will be in judgment! Here the own words of the high priest are the measure that he will be judged by, and this is a great tragedy for him!

DISCUSS: In what ways can we see this same sort of thing taking place today (people who have access to the truth, but use it as an accusation)? How are we to respond?

The final group is an unnamed “they”. “THEY answered: ‘he deserves death.’” (26:66). Most likely this is the whole council, because only they had the power to make such a pronouncement, but in reality the exact makeup of this group is not that important for us here. Because whomever said it the thought for us here is twofold: 1) No he does not! But more importantly 2) what sort of person would say this? While we could go round and round the real answer here is those who are blinded by sin. We need to understand that sin warps and corrupts so totally that good is seen as bad and bad is seen as good. It is sin that so clouds the heart and mind that a perfect innocent man would be seen as deserving of death. And it is sin that Christ died to save us from! This group can remain unnamed because it could be anyone and, in fact, it is everyone. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But thank God that he made a way, through the words of these here we all can find hope and salvation and healing! This is the divine purpose of God on display!

DISCUSS: Why is it so important for us to see ourselves in this group here? In what ways are we the same? What is our hope?