

## Jesus on Trial

Message 3 of 5 in the series: "24 Hours That Changed History"

### A. After Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was put on trial by the Sanhedrin (high council) in the middle of the night at the home of the high priest.

"They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and went right into the high priest's courtyard. There he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire. Inside, **the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death.** But they couldn't find any. **Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other.** Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.'" But even then they didn't get their stories straight! Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, 'Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?' **But Jesus was silent and made no reply.** Then the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I Am. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, 'Why do we need other witnesses? **You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?**' **'Guilty!' they all cried. 'He deserves to die!'** Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him and beat him with their fists. 'Prophecy to us,' they jeered. And the guards slapped him as they took him away."

Mark 14:53-65 (NLT)

1. Jesus' trial was a total miscarriage of justice because it violated just about every rule, standard, and OT law regarding ancient Israel's justice system. **"You must not testify falsely** against your neighbor."  
Deuteronomy 5:20 (NLT)

"Appoint judges and officials for yourselves from each of your tribes in all the towns the Lord your God is giving you. They must judge the people fairly. **You must never twist justice or show partiality.** Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 (NLT)

"Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen (Lazarus raised from the dead). But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. 'What are we going to do?' they asked each other. 'This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.' Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, 'You don't know what you're talking about! **You don't realize that it's better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.**' He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world. So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death." John 11:45-53 (NLT)

**Life Application:** Jesus hates religious pretense. "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with **hypocrisy and lawlessness.**" Matthew 23:27-28 (NLT)

2. Jesus allowed Himself to suffer injustice because He came to die for our sins and the sins of the world. "He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, **he did not open his mouth.**" Isaiah 53:7 (NLT)  
"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and **to give his life as a ransom for many.**" Matthew 20:28 (NLT)

### B. While Jesus was on trial, Peter denied even knowing Him three times.

"Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest came by and noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said, 'You were one of those

with Jesus of Nazareth.' But Peter denied it. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed. When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling the others, 'This man is definitely one of them!' But Peter denied it again. A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and said, 'You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean.' Peter swore, 'A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know this man you're talking about!' And immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.' **And he broke down and wept.**"

Mark 14:66-72 (NLT)

1. Peter gave in to temptation because he trusted in his own strength to fight spiritual battles. "Peter said to him, '**Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will.**' Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.' 'No!' Peter declared emphatically. '**Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!**' And all the others vowed the same." Mark 14:29-31 (NLT)

**Good News!** The Holy Spirit will empower us to become faithful, courageous followers of Jesus! "Now all glory to God, who is able, through **his mighty power at work within us**, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

2. Peter gave in to temptation because he didn't accept Jesus' warnings. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So, when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32 (NLT)

"Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? **Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.** For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Mark 14:37b-38 (NLT)

**Good News!** We can encourage and warn each other so we don't fall into temptation. "**You must warn each other every day**, while it is still 'today,' so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God." Hebrews 3:13 (NLT)

3. Peter gave in to temptation because he was following Jesus at a distance, trying to fit in with the crowd. "Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. **If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.**" Galatians 1:10 (NLT)
4. After His resurrection, Jesus restored Peter. "After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' '**Yes, Lord,**' Peter replied, 'you know I love you.' 'Then feed my lambs,' Jesus told him. Jesus repeated the question: 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' '**Yes, Lord,**' Peter said, 'you know I love you.' 'Then take care of my sheep,' Jesus said. A third time he asked him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, 'Lord, you know everything. **You know that I love you.**' Jesus said, 'Then feed my sheep.'"

John 21:15-17 (NLT)

**Good News!** God wants to forgive us and restore us when we blow it. All we need to do is repent and return to Him. "Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, '**I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.**' And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone."

Psalms 32:5 (NLT)

5. Peter learned that trials refine and strengthen our faith. "There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. **These trials will show that your faith is genuine.** It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world." 1 Peter 1:6b-7 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why did the religious leaders in Jerusalem want Jesus dead? (Mark 3:1-6, Luke 20:9-19, John 11:45-53)
2. Why do you think Jesus let them get away with it? Why didn't He speak up? (Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 20:28)
3. What does religious pretense look like in our culture? How does Jesus feel about it? (Matthew 23:27-28)

4. Read Mark 14:54 & 66-72. Then discuss the following statements:
  - Peter gave in to temptation because he trusted in his own strength to fight spiritual battles. (Mark 14:29-31)
  - **Good News!** The Holy Spirit will empower us to become faithful, courageous followers of Jesus! (Ephesians 3:20)
  - Peter gave in to temptation because he didn't accept Jesus' warnings. (Luke 22:31-32, Mark 24:37-38)
  - **Good News!** We can encourage and warn each other so we don't fall into temptation. (Hebrews 3:13)
  - Peter gave in to temptation because he was following Jesus at a distance, trying to fit in with the crowd. (Galatians 1:10)
  - **Good News!** God wants to restore us when we blow it. All we need to do is repent and return to Him. (Psalm 32:5, Joel 2:12, Malachi 3:7, 1 John 1:9)
5. How does it make you feel to know that after He rose from the dead Jesus gave Peter three opportunities to affirm his love for Him? (John 21:15-17)
6. Describe a time in your life when God strengthened your faith through a difficult circumstance. Describe a time when God taught you an important lesson even through failure. (1 Peter 1:6-7)