

Brought before Pilate

Mark 15: 1-5

It had been a long, grueling night for Jesus, but the extreme difficulty was not over. He had been betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane and arrested by the angry mob. From there He was led to stand before the high priest in a mock trial, filled with false-accusation and untruthful witnesses. Having secured the evidence, they had schemed to confirm, Jesus was declared guilty of blasphemy and condemned to death. Following the guilty verdict, Jesus was spat upon, humiliated, and beaten at the hands of his accusers.

Morning had come, and Jesus would be led to stand before Pilate. While Mark doesn't reveal all the details of that day, we do know that Jesus was sent from Pilate to Herod, and then brought back before Pilate. Our text only reveals His accusation and examination before Pilate, the Roman governor in charge of Palestine.

As we begin to examine the day of Jesus' crucifixion, we must consider the **factors** involved in this portion of His condemnation and eventual death. I want to preach on the thought: **Brought before Pilate**.

I. The Deliberation of the Council (1) – *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.* This reveals the final deliberations of the Sanhedrin before Jesus is taken to stand trial before Pilate. Consider:

A. The Assessment (1a) – *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council.* Remember, it had been a long night as Jesus stood before His accusers. One by one, they came with accusation against Him. Finally, having secured what would be considered justifiable evidence for condemning one to death, the council had adjourned for a brief period.

- As morning began to dawn, the council reconvened for final consideration of the charges, before Jesus was to be accused before the governor. Most agree this would have been in the early morning hours, somewhere between 3am and 6am, being in the morning watch. It appears the council wanted to go over the charges one last time and ensure all stood in agreement with the charges worthy of death brought against Jesus. (We know this was just a formality to make themselves feel better about condemning an innocent man to death. This was a mock trial in a kangaroo court, but these men wielded great power and authority in Jerusalem.)

B. The Agreement (1b) – *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away.* Following final deliberations, the council agreed to stand by their decision, agreeing to take Jesus to stand before the governor. These had conspired for some time to get the conviction they desired, and they wasted no time in continuing with their deceitful plan to crucify Jesus. These had agreed to the death of an innocent man, and they had now reached the point of no return. Jesus was bound and led away, to face accusations they deemed worthy of death.

- The political and social climate in Jerusalem was somewhat unusual at this time. While the Romans were in charge of the area, having complete control of the region, the Jews were allowed a measure of religious and social freedom. The Sanhedrin was allowed the privilege of hearing and settling disputes among the Jews. They had authority to pass down sentences that would be carried out for particular offenses. However, they were not able to condemn one to death and carry out executions. This was reserved for the Roman authorities.

C. The Arraignment (1c) – *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.* Leaving the home of the high priest, the council made their way to Pilate's hall with Jesus. They were determined to present their case, in hopes Pilate would consent to their desires and condemn Jesus to death. He was the only one who could pass such judgment. If they were to see Jesus put to death, they knew Pilate would have to agree and condemn Jesus to death.

- Let's take a moment to consider the role Pilate played in Jerusalem at this time. He was the governor of Palestine from 26-36 AD. There was a lot of distrust between Pilate and the Jews. In fact, it appears their relationship was not good at all. There was a measure of resentment for each other, which developed into hatred. *When Pilate became procurator of Judea, he did two things that aroused the people's bitter hatred against him forever. First, on his state visits to Jerusalem he rode into the city with the Roman standard, an eagle sitting atop a pole. All previous governors had removed the standard because of the Jews' opposition to idols. Second, Pilate launched the construction of a new water supply for Jerusalem. To finance the project, he took the money out of the temple treasury. The Jews never forgot or forgave this act. They bitterly opposed Pilate all through his reign, and he treated them with equal contempt.*ⁱ Pilate was removed as governor when he ordered an attack on Samaritans who had gathered at Mount Gerizim for religious activities. After being removed as governor, Pilate was exiled to northern Europe. Tradition claims he committed suicide there, being unable to deal with his loss of power and prestige.

II. The Examination by the Governor (2-5) – Mark revealed the encounter Jesus had as He was examined by Pilate. Consider:

A. The Confession (2) – *And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.* Bear in mind the reason for the council's decision to condemn Jesus to death – blasphemy. It is interesting to note that Pilate is concerned with Jesus' claim to be the King of the Jews. Blasphemy would have been considered a religious accusation, and the Jews knew Pilate would not have agreed to hear their case if that were their basis for trial. Securing a guilty verdict for blasphemy would serve their purpose among the Jews, but they needed more to get a death sentence from Pilate. Luke reveals their accusation before Pilate at this moment. *Luke 23:2 – And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.* Saying nothing about their charges, they now accused Jesus of insurrection against Rome, forbidding anyone to pay tribute to Caesar, and proclaiming Himself as their King. (We know that was a lie, because Jesus had charged them to render unto Caesar that which belonged to him. Nevertheless, this was their accusation in hopes of a death sentence.)

- Hearing such an accusation, Pilate questioned Jesus as to whether He was a King. Jesus simply said, "You have said it." Jesus is not denying being the Son of God, King of kings and Lord of lords, but He refused to play their games. In essence Jesus declared He was in fact King, but not a King in the way Pilate would assume. His authority was not given by men, and mankind could not abolish His sovereign rule! His kingdom was not of this world, secured by men, but given of the Father in heaven. *John 18:36 – Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

B. The Accusation (3) – *And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.* Knowing Pilate would not involve himself with what he perceived religious matters, the chief priests came up with many unfounded and false accusations. Remember, the key accusation before Pilate was that He claimed to be a King, guilty of insurrection before Rome. The King of kings, Savior of the world came to bear our sin and secure salvation for mankind, and yet these refused to embrace Jesus as Lord and King. They were willing to tell anything they could, regardless of truth, in order to secure a death sentence for Jesus.

C. The Confusion (4) – *And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.* Pilate could not understand or fathom the silence of Jesus before His accusers. He challenged Jesus to offer some argument in His defense. These were serious accusations, but Jesus refused to respond.

- No doubt, the Sanhedrin felt confident at this moment. Their plans were going well and they hoped to secure a guilty verdict. However, they failed to recognize the sovereignty in all of this.

Jesus came with purpose – He came to die for our sin. He came to offer Himself the atoning sacrifice in order to redeem fallen humanity. Their accusations and the perceived authority of Pilate would not send Him to the cross. He would willingly go to Calvary and die for our sin. He would lay down His life to secure redemption, and He would triumphantly raise it up again three days later. This was not about the Sanhedrin, Pilate, or the will of the people. This was about the submissive obedience of Jesus to fulfill the plan of redemption made before the foundation of the world.

D. The Consideration (5) – *But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.* Pilate was amazed, greatly wondering at the silence of Jesus and His refusal to offer anything in defense of Himself. This was certainly not normal behavior for one who stood accused of crimes that could result in death by crucifixion. Yet, Jesus remained silent before His accusers. He answered nothing in His defense. These were all unaware, but Jesus was fulfilling prophecy. *Isaiah 53:7-10 – He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* ^[8] *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.* ^[9] *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.* ^[10] *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* Jesus remained silent because He did not seek to avoid the cross. In fact, He was determined to embrace the death of the cross in order to provide our salvation!

Conclusion: The horrors of the that faithful day had begun, but they were far from over. As we examine these eternally significant moments, I am reminded of His sacrifice for us. He was there because of His love for you and me. He willingly endured the suffering and the shame, tasting death and bearing the judgment of God in our place. He was willing to become our substitute! I am thankful I know Christ as my Lord and Savior. If you are yet unsaved, come to Him in repentance and faith, embracing His finished work on the cross unto salvation!

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark.