

24 Hours That Changed the World by Adam Hamilton

Session 3- “Condemned by the Righteous”

Session Goals:

- Explore the Gospel’s account of Jesus’ trial before the high priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin;
- Understand some of the motivations of the Jewish officials who brought Jesus to trial in secret and during the night – in particular, to examine the roles fear, insecurity, and the need for power played in the condemnation;
- Consider how this part of Jesus’ story underscores the way fear can poison us into remaining silent in the face of wrongdoing and denying the truth of Christ.

Opening Prayer -

O Lord, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit. (Psalm 88:1-4)

Biblical Foundation

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders and the scribes were assembled . . . Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death . . . 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 at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses?” You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?” All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him over and beat him..... While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “you also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” . . . After a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept. (Mark 14:53, 56, 61-68, 70-72)

Watch the Video (9:15 minutes)

Questions for Discussion -

- Imagine what it would have been like to walk barefoot for twenty minutes up to where you were then lowered into a pit, hands shackled above your head for several hours. What do you think Jesus may have been thinking? Feeling? What would you be thinking? Feeling?
- Recall the image of the statue of Peter that depicts his three denials. What aspects of Peter and his betrayal did the sculptor want the viewer to consider?
- The statement is made at the end of the video segment that “if there is hope for Peter, there is hope for us.” To what extent has that been true for you in your faith experience?

Bible Study and Discussion:

Read Exodus 3:1-14

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." **4** When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." **5** "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." **6** Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. **7** The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. **8** So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. **9** And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. **10** So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." **11** But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" **12** And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." **13** Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" **14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

- Because Jesus' suffering and death did not conform to the conventional messianic expectations of the day, the Gospel writers frequently appealed to the Old Testament to make sense of Jesus' mission and messiahship. How does the burning bush story in Exodus 3 help make sense of Jesus' response to Caiaphas in Mark 14:62?

Read Psalm 110:1-4

1 The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." **2** The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!" **3** Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. **4** The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

- How does the allusion to Melchizedek give meaning to Jesus' role as God's Messiah?

Read Hebrews 5:7-9

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. **8** Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered **9** and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

- What insight about Jesus' Gethsemane experience does the writer of Hebrews want believers to understand?

**Wrapping Up
In Perspective**

To conclude the session, ask group members to consider and discuss one or more of the following perspectives. For the painting of Tissot's *Christ is Mocked in the House of Caiaphas*, google it or print out a color copy and display it or pass it around for the group to see.

IN THE PALACE OF CAIAPHAS

Little remains of what is believed to have been the house of Caiaphas, but excavations made after the Six-Day War in 1967 revealed the ruins of several homes (called Herodian mansions) that likely were occupied by the rich and powerful Temple priests. These remains and artifacts are now lodged at the Wohl Archaeological Museum, where they bear witness to the remarkably luxurious standard of living – mosaic floors, frescoes, valuable glassware and ceramics – enjoyed by Jerusalem's Upper City dwellers. Imagine that you are inside the palatial home of the high priest. You stand under an ornate archway or lean against a cool stone column. A group of richly robed Jewish leaders sweeps past you, muttering among themselves. You follow them to the front gate, where a crowd is gathering. What do you hear? What do you see happening? What is the feeling in the house?

INSIDE PETER

Imagine that you are Peter, slinking about the courtyard outside the house of Caiaphas. You linger near the edges among the flickering shadows because you are trying to hear what is going on inside the house and to avoid any contact with other people at the same time. Go inside Peter's heart to sense his pain as he hears himself deny knowing Jesus. Listen with Peter's ears to what you hear happening to Jesus inside the house.

IN FRONT OF TISSOT'S *CHRIST IS MOCKED IN THE HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS*

Nineteenth-century French painter James Joseph Jacques Tissot was a popular portrait artist and caricaturist who, in 1886, made his first trip to Palestine and then spent the next decade researching and illustrating detailed scenes from the Bible in watercolor. This particular painting depicts a frenetic scene in which Jesus is being humiliated by a mob outside a columned entryway. Notice how Jesus' posture contrasts with those who hold him, poke him, and mock him. A young man in the bottom-left corner looks back at the viewer with a troubled expression. What is he thinking? What is his role in the painting?

Sharing Joys & Concerns

Closing Prayer

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. Amen. (2Corinthians 1:3-5)