

## “Blind Ignorance” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Lent Midweek 3 March 6, 2024

- I. **Luke 22:63 – 23:1** previously read
- II. **Luke’s Gospel is a little different than Matthew, Mark, and John.**
  - a. The Gospel accounts are not exactly the same, as each of the authors were telling the story from their viewpoint.
    - i. Eyewitness accounts are never the exact same, because each of us comes from a little different perspective in what we see and hear.
    - ii. It’s not that the story is different, but the details might be shared in different ways.
  - b. Luke uses some different ways to get the story across of Jesus’ final hours.
    - i. Many of you know the story of Jesus’ arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin, or the religious leaders.
      1. Yet, many times we remember this from the other Gospels, while Luke was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a streamlined version.
        - a. For example, Matthew’s version is twice as long as Luke’s, while Mark (who wrote the shortest Gospel) wrote two-thirds more.
          - i. Luke doesn’t talk about the high priest Caiaphas, or the false witnesses against Jesus, or when Caiaphas tears his robes, or when the council tried to get the witnesses against Jesus to agree.
        2. The reason for this simplified version helps us focus on the mindset of the people around Jesus.
    - c. So, what does Luke tell us?
      - i. It begins with those who arrested Jesus... and quickly it becomes clear where this thing is going.
      - ii. Plenty of people mistreated and abused Jesus on His way to the cross, but only Luke tells us that even prior to going before the council to be rejected, the people who arrested Jesus were beating and mocking and blaspheming against Him, over and over and over.
        1. As far as they’re concerned, this is going in a certain direction and it’s pretty much a done deal.
        2. In their minds... Jesus will be condemned.
      - iii. In addition, when Jesus goes before the council, Luke takes the whole group and responds as one... for example:
        1. “And they said” (v. 66)... “So they all said” (v. 70)... and “Then they said” (v. 71)... And in the end, “The whole company of them arose and brought [Jesus] before Pilate” (23:1).
        2. Evil is speaking with one, unified voice.

- d. Now, when Jesus speaks, He doesn't let the group get anything to use against Him.
  - i. He's just allowing them to go down their path – and in a way, letting evil do its thing.
  - ii. And so, when they first say to Jesus, “If You are the Christ, tell us!”
    - 1. He replies, “If I tell you, you won't believe. And if I ask you, you won't answer...” - which is basically saying, “It's like this, you don't really care what I say. You're blindly against Me. Your mind is made up, and nothing can change it. All you know is where you want to go with this.”
  - iii. Then, Jesus says, “From now on the Son of Man, I, Jesus, shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”
    - 1. As a believer in Jesus, this is a wonderful blessing, but if you are one of the people on the council that night, it's a call to repent and believe.
      - a. But of course, Jesus' words go right in one ear and out the other.
    - 2. They are just going through the motions so they can hand Him over to the Roman governor, to Pontius Pilate—because only Pilate has the authority to execute Jesus.
    - 3. So, then they ask Him, “So, you are the Son of God, then?”
      - a. And Jesus answers indirectly... “You say that I am.”
        - i. Kind of like... “Do you hear yourselves? You don't believe—you just want to get this over with.”
    - 4. Finally, they say, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from His own lips.”
      - a. What exactly did they hear?
        - i. Certainly nothing that warranted the death penalty... but because they are so bent on getting rid of Him, they weren't interested in the truth.
        - ii. They are ready to take Jesus to Pilate so that, just like Jesus predicted, the Gentiles can torture and crucify and kill Him.
        - iii. These people are captive to their unbelief.

III. **Unbelief is defined in different ways, but let's call it blind ignorance.**

- a. Blindness is a literal, physical problem that Jesus heals on different occasions... but there is another blindness He talks about – spiritual blindness.
  - i. For example, when He teaches His disciples about how they needed to grow in their faith and understanding, He says, “Can a blind man lead a blind man?” (Luke 6:39)
  - ii. Unbelief is blindness.
- b. Unbelief is also ignorance.

- i. We know it's ignorance especially because of what Jesus says from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- c. Unbelief is blind ignorance.
  - i. And the problem with being ignorant and blind is that you don't have a clue what's going on with you.
  - ii. Last week I explained that satan is behind all this evil against Jesus, but can you imagine the Sanhedrin being aware of this?
    - 1. Like they are thinking to themselves that satan is their master and they are just making sure they work hard to carry out his evil plan.
    - 2. No, they are blind and ignorant.
- d. Yet, even with the evil and unbelief against Him, our God would pull off the greatest reversal of all time.
  - i. Jesus, God's own Son will be last... will endure evil... will be condemned... will be tortured... will be crucified.
  - ii. All of this was meant for evil... and yet, our blessing is that Jesus took these things upon Himself so that we would not have to.
  - iii. By God's mercy and grace, our blind ignorance was turned to faith in Him, which means that we are not rejected, but received with love.

IV. **So, as I asked last week, what does this mean?**

- a. What does all this mean for my faith and life as I reflect on this reading?
- b. One thing we should not do is look at the players in this story and see ourselves as better than that.
  - i. When we believe that we would never be like that... it reminds us of Peter, who was adamant that he would never deny Jesus but did.
  - ii. In a sense, pride and arrogance are blind ignorance too.
  - iii. Jesus always wants us to see our part in the sin among us and in us, so that we can repent and seek His will.
- c. Another thing we use in our faith and life from this reading is having compassion on those who suffer from blind ignorance.
  - i. They are trapped in the evil and chaos of the world... and many have no idea what their beliefs and actions are doing against God.
    - 1. Remember what Jesus said from the cross with true compassion, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
    - 2. We pray that God opens our eyes to serve and bless the people around us with God's Word so that their eyes might be opened.
- d. So, with humility and compassion, we walk with our Lord...
  - i. We cannot take credit for it, but Jesus grants us sight... and He enlightens us to see the wonders of God and His love for the lost.
  - ii. To God be the glory for our faith, because now we see... and now we understand... Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on: “You Meant It for Evil, but God Meant It for Good: An Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday Sermon Series Based on the Gospel of Luke”, Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs, Concordia Seminary Publishing, St. Louis, 2022