

Title: **Majesty on Trial**
Text: Luke 22:63-71
Subject: *Christ before the Sanhedrim*
Date: Sunday Evening — April 16, 2006
Tape # Y-94a
Readings: *Bob Pruitt and Ron Wood*

Introduction:

While our he was before Caiaphas, in the dead of night, before the Sanhedrim had been fully gathered together to hold their trial at daybreak, our dear Redeemer was treated with the utmost cruelty and abuse. His enemies were so anxious to condemn him that, as soon as he was brought into the high priest's house, they began tormenting him, as they blasphemed. Then, early in the morning, the Jewish Sanhedrim gathered to condemn the Lord of Glory. That is what is described in Luke 22:63-71.

(Luke 22:63-71) "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote *him*. (64) And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? (65) And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. (66) And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, (67) Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: (68) And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go. (69) Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. (70) Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. (71) And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

Like wild beast, or enraged savages, "*The men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.*" They vented their utmost hatred upon the "*man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*" His tormentors had no pity for him in their hard, calloused hearts. None were found to vindicate his character, or plead his cause. No man stood with him. There were none to pity him.

What gross cowards these men were! Cruelty is always the badge of cowardice. They were the very same men who, in the garden, "*went backward, and fell to the ground,*" when our Lord said, "*I AM.*" They went out, with swords and staves, to take him prisoner. Yet, they fell to the ground when he simply spoke a single word to them. But now they think they have him in their power. He stands before them as a sheep before her shearers; and they are determined to be as cruel as possible in tormenting him.

Yet, even this record of their cruelty is set before us in the Word of God that, we through patience and consolation of the Scriptures, might have hope. Blessed Holy Spirit, whose Word we have read, be our Teacher and show us wondrous things out of your law this hour, for Christ's sake.

GOD IN GREAT HUMILIATION

First, we have before us a vivid picture of that which the Apostle wrote concerning God our Savior, when he said, "*He humbled himself!*" Here is God, the eternal God of Glory in great, indescribable humiliation.

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There stands Jesus of Nazareth, God in human flesh, the God-man our Mediator. I will not attempt to picture him. No artist's brush can paint the picture. No mortal tongue can describe it. But, here, God the Holy Spirit paints a picture of our Savior's humiliation with words of infinite skill, in the eloquence of simplicity, without the slightest hint of overstatement.

Indeed, as I began to prepare this message, I kept thinking, "Why are these things stated so calmly, with such lack of emotion?" Then, like a lightening bolt from heaven, it dawned on me that the reason these things are written as they are is that we might behold the majesty of the one enduring these things. The tormentors are nothing. The Tormented is everything.

I want you to behold him. May God give you eyes to see him who was tormented in the high priest's house on that dark, dark night. Do you see him standing before his implacable foes, clothed with a seamless garment, bound, delivered over to the officers, and now surrounded by them, as they mock him, scoff at him, and beat him. Let your eye rest on him. Set your heart on him. There he stands, our Savior, very God of very God. What do you see?

I see **Omnipotence held captive**. The Spirit of God speaks of "*the men that held Jesus*" Is God held prisoner by men? Yes, he was. The man they held is himself "*over all God, blessed forever*," the Creator of heaven and earth. "*All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*" He was, at that very moment, "*upholding all things by the word of his power.*" In all his weakness and in all his sufferings, he was still "*over all, God blessed forever.*"

Though mocked, beaten of men and blasphemed, the holy angels adore him. Surely, there is something wondrous in this! Omnipotence held captive! He who can create or destroy according to the good pleasure of his own will, took upon himself our nature, and in that nature sank so low as to become subject even to the very utmost cruelty of man! What a wondrous stoop of condescension is here! The omnipotent God allows himself to be bound, and never proves himself more truly omnipotent than when he permits himself to be held as a prisoner by sinful men.

Our omnipotent God became the captive prisoner of wicked men, that wicked men held in the captivity of their own sin and guilt might be set free. The Lord Jesus Christ went into captivity, that he might lead captivity captive and set us free!

Behold the Man again. This man is the Glory of God. Looking steadfastly on him, I see **Glory mocked**, for "*the men that held Jesus mocked him.*" They could not see his glory because they were blind, and because he veiled his glory, hiding it from them. But the angels of God beheld it. And, because he has revealed it to us and given us eyes to see, we behold his glory, "*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

There are some subjects that, when I try to preach on them, seem to make me dumbfounded. I feel utterly incapable of saying anything. That is the way I feel right now. It is amazing to me that the God, who had reigns in glory over myriads of holy angels, should be mocked by miscreants who could not even have lived for a second in his presence if he had not given them life and sustained them in it. Yet, there he is, he who made the heavens and the earth, despised and rejected of men, treated with the utmost scorn and mockery.

His glory was mocked, that we might glorified together with him, — WE who have so horribly mocked his glory! What is sin, but the mockery of the glory of God? What is sin, but the attempt of man to rape God and rob him of his glory? While I am indignant with those men who so mocked my Savior, I am even more indignant with myself for all the mockery I have heaped upon his glory! Oh, how I have mocked him!

Behold the man again. Looking upon my Savior as he stands silently before his tormentors, I see **Goodness smitten**, perfect, infinite, unutterable goodness stricken, bruised, assailed, assaulted and smitten. — "*The men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.*" To smite wickedness, is an act of justice; but to smite goodness is an abomination (Pro. 17:15).

(Proverbs 17:15) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD."

The blessed Son of God, who stood there, had within his soul that mercy which endures forever. Yet, they smote him. — There burned in his holy heart a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the

floods of waters cannot drown. Yet, they smote him! He had come to bring peace and goodwill to men, and to set up a kingdom of joy and love, of righteousness and peace. Yet, they smote him!

Never was goodness so good, as when our blessed Savior, the good and the just was smitten, not of men, but of God, that all the goodness of God might be ours in him (Pro. 17:15; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21).

(Proverbs 17:15) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD."

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

(1 Peter 3:18) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Oh what great goodness there is here! — He was "*smitten of God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed!*" Yet, again, my heart is compelled to cry, How very grievously have I smitten him, even in his own house!

I see something else here. I see **Omniscience blindfolded**. — "*When they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*" Of course, Omniscience can never be blinded. Yet, there is God in human flesh blindfolded. Why did our Savior endure this indignation? What is the meaning of this? Why is it written here? I do not presume to think I know the answer to such questions fully. Yet, when I see Omniscience blindfolded, and hear these men ask the God of Glory who smote him, Numbers 23:21 immediately comes to my mind. By the sufferings and death of Christ, the God of Glory has been, in absolute justice, forever blinded to our sins, so blinded that he does not even see us as the sinners who have smitten him!

(Numbers 23:21) "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them."

The precious blood of Christ has so thoroughly blotted out our sins that God does not behold iniquity in Israel!

INDESCRIBABLE DEPRAVITY

Now, look for a moment or two at our Savior's tormentors. In the actions of these men, I see a terrible, but clear portrayal of the indescribable depravity of humanity, the indescribable depravity of your heart and mine.

There is much talk these days about the will of man. Some fools (I am using the word "some" most graciously) even talk about man's "free will." Here are men, religious men, the temple guards, acting in the dark of night, acting not by order, not by law, not by the influence of others, but acting by the impulse of their own will. The things they did to the Son of God draw an ugly, but unmistakably clear picture of the nature of man and the nature of his will. They have God himself in their hands. What will man do in his time of utmost liberty and freedom? — "*And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him*" (vv. 64-65). Oh, what enmity we have for God! How utterly depraved we are!

- Fallen man hates God.
- Ours is a race of rebels who defy God's justice.
- We defy his omniscience.

- We are a people whose lives are lives full of blasphemies and insults to the Almighty!
- Fallen man is more relentlessly cruel than any wild beast.

MAJESTY IN MISERY

Yet, I see something else here. I see majesty in my Savior's misery. Amid all this evil, there stands God our Savior, glorious in majesty, wonderful in goodness, majestic in glory. — As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, he opens not his mouth! No flush of anger appears on his, face. No glare of wrath shoots from his eyes. He bore it all, bore it in his very soul, with divine patience, the very patience of "*the God of patience*." He bore all in patience, knowing that he bore these things from men by the will and hand of his heavenly Father. — "*Never man spake like this Man*" when he spoke not a word! What an example he sets for us to follow (1 Pet. 2:21-24).

(1 Peter 2:21-24) "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Our Savior was triumphant in submission. Submitting to the will of his Father, his persecutors could not make, him give way to anger. They could not destroy his devotion. They could not force him to think of himself. They could not keep him from doing all that he came to do for us. No; the strong-souled Christ persevered in his merciful work until he had accomplished our redemption by the Sacrifice of himself.

OBSTINATE UNBELIEF

Read on, and see how obstinate man's unbelief is.

(Luke 22:66-68) "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, (67) Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: (68) And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go."

They were determined not to believe in him and receive him. Their unbelief was willful, obstinate, and invincible. They defied that which was clearly and plainly, indisputably set before them. Therefore, our Savior said, "*Ye will not believe*."

This is the great evil that lies at the root of most men's sins, — they believe not in Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent. It is this of which the Spirit of God convinces men, as our Savior foretold concerning him: "*He will convince the world of sin...because they believe not on me*." Yet there is nothing more reasonable, nothing more worthy to be believed, than the revelation of God as given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

CHRIST MY GOD

Behold the man again. I see Christ my God confidently declaring his everlasting glory as our Savior.

(Luke 22:69-71) "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. (70) Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. (71) And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

Our Savior plainly asserted that Daniel's vision would be fulfilled in him, thus asserting that he is God our Savior, the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God.

(Daniel 7:13-14) "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."

They heard the word out of our Savior's own mouth. Yet, they would not believe. What a glaring proof these men are that faith is the gift of God!

LOVE IN LABOR

Behold the Man one more time. Let me show you one more thing that I see here. I see Love in labor. All this shame and suffering was endured by our Savior because of his love for us, because of the joy that was set before him, the prospect of giving us eternal life and salvation. — "*He loved me, and gave himself for me.*"

Let every believing sinner take what I am saying personally. For you, as much as if there were no other person in the whole universe, for you, the King of glory became the King of scorn, and bore all this shame and misery. — For you, Bobbie. — For you, Mary Lou. — For you, my dear wife. — For you, my cherished friend. For you, as your Substitute, he bore it all, and indescribably more, when he was made sin for you! He shed his blood, laid down his life, bore all the wrath of God, sacrificed himself and made atonement for you, for your sin! — For me! For my sin!

And of this I am sure. — "*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*" What does that mean? It means that the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage! Every sinner for whom he died shall be saved. His soul's travail shall not be in vain! Yet, it means more. It means that, when he has brought his ransomed home to glory...

- He shall be satisfied with you!
- He shall be satisfied with me!
- And, blessed be his name, we shall be satisfied with him forever!

Amen.