

Jesus on Trial

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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “Talking Points, Walking Points” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time”, are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Note: For each of the following questions, refer to the **Sermon Summary** inside.

Observation—*What do I see?*

- In the United States, on the average more than twenty-five years elapse between arrest and execution. Approximately how much time elapsed between Jesus' arrest and his execution?
- What specific charges were brought against Jesus before Pilate?
- In the United States approximately 25% of defendants in capital cases are declared to be innocent. What verdict did Pilate initially give regarding Jesus' guilt?
- Since Pilate's verdict was that Jesus was innocent, how do we explain him receiving the death penalty?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- What is the significance of the repeated legal irregularities in the trials?
- Why did the Jewish leaders change the charges when bringing Jesus before Pilate?
- What does Jesus' silence before Herod indicate?
- What is the meaning of Jesus' statement, “It is finished”?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- How should we respond to the injustice Jesus endured?
- What does our comparison to Barabbas tell us about ourselves?
- How should Jesus' willingness to suffer influence your personal conduct?

Sermon Summary **Key Text: Luke 22:54-23:25**

Jesus endured various trials leading up to His crucifixion and they were carried out illegally and swiftly. Things moved quickly from the time Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane until He was pronounced dead on the cross. Jesus endured 6 trials between the time He was arrested and the time He was crucified.

Trial One: Before Annas, Ex-High Priest (John 18:12-23) This trial was done quickly and under the cover of night because the leaders feared the crowds with whom Jesus was very popular. According to Jewish law, a trial was never to be held at night. According to the Talmud, the accused was to have an attorney present during questioning. And they were not to mistreat prisoners until they were convicted of a crime (John 18:20-21).

Trial Two: Before Caiphas, Reigning High Priest (Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14: 53-65) Essentially the charge leveled against Jesus here is blasphemy. In the Jewish mind, God was so transcendent that no man was envisioned as being worthy to sit at God's right hand, certainly not this Galilean Jew named Jesus. But Jesus IS the Son of God and He IS presently seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Trial Three: Before the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66-71) Once again the procedure of this trial was flawed. In a capital trial, the members of a Jewish court weren't permitted to render an immediate verdict. They were required to adjourn to their homes for two days and two nights. In Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, given the speed by which all this transpired, we are safe to assume that all voted quickly, emotionally and simultaneously. If the Jews wanted Jesus executed, they would have to find him guilty of a capital crime under Roman law. So, when they brought Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor, they switched the charges.

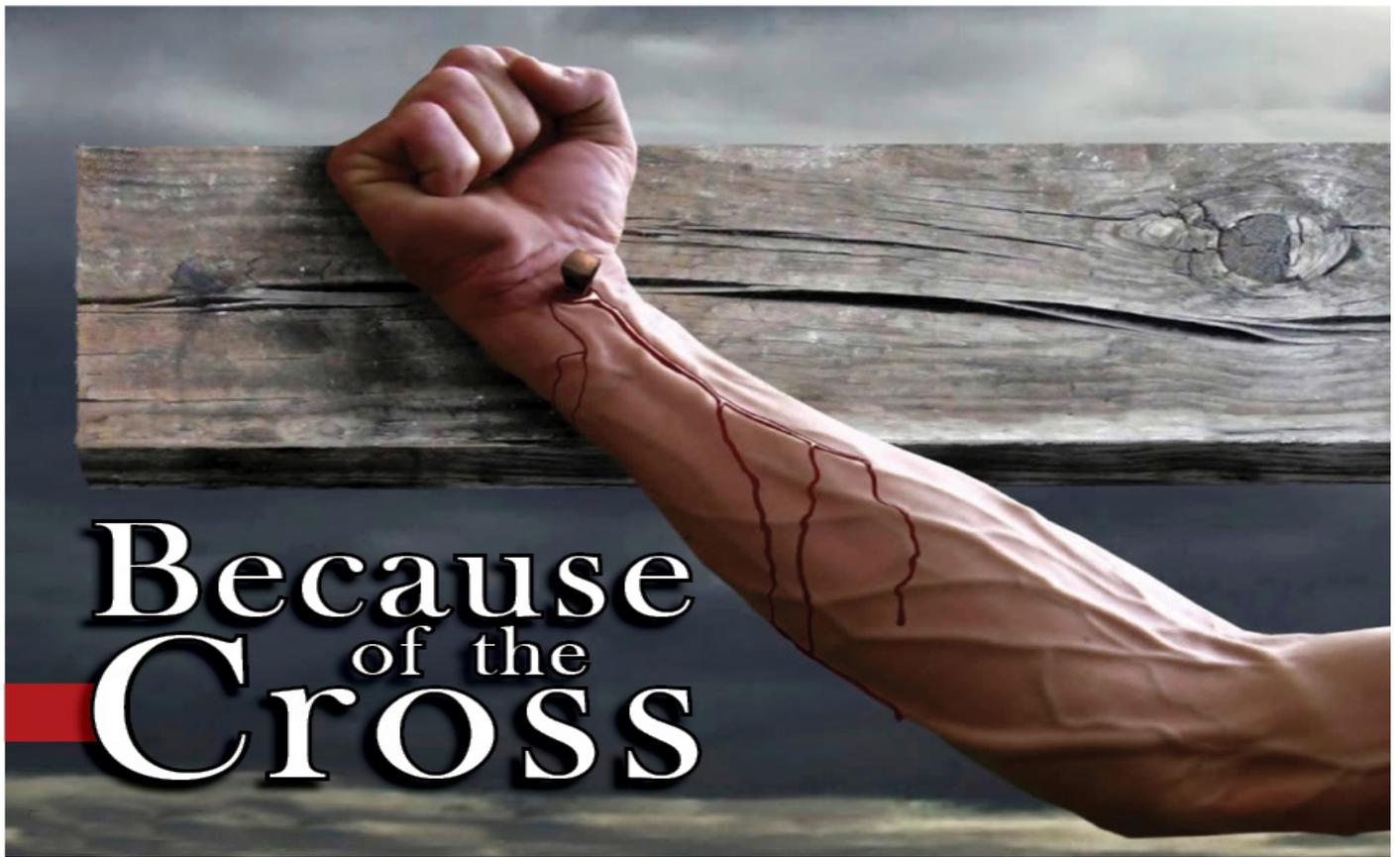
Trial Four: Before Pilate (Luke 23:1-2) Three charges are leveled here. Jesus is accused of [1] Misleading the nation (Matthew 15:14 & 23:13), [2] Promoting tax evasion (Luke 20:25), and [3] Claiming to be Messiah, King of the Jews (Luke 23:3-7). Pilate did not want to be in the middle of this mess. According to an ancient historian named Philo, at the time of Jesus' trial, Pilate was under investigation by Rome for his cruel, anti-Semitic practices. Understandably Pilate wanted to extract himself from this delicate political situation.

Trial Five: Before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:8-12) At this trial Jesus refused to answer Herod's questions. Frustrated, Herod allowed his soldiers to make sport of Jesus. Like the preceding trials, this one was also illegal. First, Pilate had already declared Jesus to be innocent. He should have been a free man, not undergoing another superfluous inquiry. And once again, Jesus had no legal counsel as required by Roman law.

Trial Six: Before Pilate Again (Luke 23:20-25; John 19:12) Obviously this trial was a travesty of justice. Without proof of guilt, Pilate handed Jesus over to death. An innocent man was substituted for a guilty one. Barabbas missed his cross because another man, Jesus, literally took his place. But isn't that what the cross of Christ is all about...an innocent man dying in the place of the guilty? In a sense, we are Barabbas. Under God's law, we are guilty and deserving of death. But some 2000 years ago, consistent with prophesy and in fulfillment of God's plan, Messiah Jesus died for us (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus' death sentence, although arrived at illegally, was no accident, but part of God's predetermined plan to make fellowship with Him possible.

Jesus died for you and for me. But the benefits of His death only come to those who freely choose to place their trust in Jesus as their sin bearer (1 Peter 3:18). Why would you reject God's love (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16)? In Christ, God has purchased for us a great salvation. It is yours for the taking.

Trial	Officiating Authority	Scripture	Accusation	Legality	Type	Result
1 2:00 am	Anna, ex-high Priest of the Jews (AD 6-15)	John 18:13-23	Trumped up charges of irreverence to Annas	ILLEGAL! Held at night; no specific charges. Prejudice and violence	Jewish and Religious	Found guilty of irreverence and rushed to Caiphas
2 3:00 am	Caiphas and the Sanhedrin (AD 18-36)	Mt. 26:57-68 Mark 14:53-65 John 18:24	Claiming to be Messiah, the Son of God--blasphemy	ILLEGAL! Held at night; False witnesses; prejudice and violence	Jewish and Religious	Declared guilty of blasphemy and rushed to the Sanhedrin
3 6:00 am	The Sanhedrin	Mark 15:1a Luke 22:66-71	Claiming to be the Son of God--blasphemy	ILLEGAL! Accusation switched. No witnesses. Improper voting	Jewish and Religious	Declared guilty of blasphemy and rushed to Roman official Pilate
4 6:30 am	Pilate, governor of Judea	Mt. 27:11-14 Mk. 15:1b-5 Luke 23:1-7 John 18:28-38	Treason	ILLEGAL! Jesus kept under arrest even though found innocent. No defense attorney; violence	Roman and Civil	Found innocent...but rushed to Herod Antipas; Mob overruled Pilate
5 7:00 am	Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee	Luke 23:8-12	No accusation made	ILLEGAL! No grounds; mockery in courtroom; no defense attorney; violence	Roman and Civil	Mistreated and mocked; returned to Pilate without decision made by Herod
6 7:30 am	Pilate	Mt. 27:15-26 Mark 15:6-15 Luke 23:18-25 John 18:29-19:6	Treason	ILLEGAL! Without proof of guilt Pilate allowed an innocent man to be condemned	Roman and Civil	Found innocent, but Pilate washed his hands and allowed him to be crucified



What can believers learn from Jesus' unjust treatment? Let's see...

Monday— Study Matthew 26:47–56; 69–75, observing the weakness of human loyalty. We must recognize our dependence on God. Spiritual vigilance and humility are necessary to remain faithful under pressure.

Tuesday— Study Matthew 26:36–46, observing the importance of submission to God's will in times of crisis. Christians are called to yield their desires to God, especially in hardship. Faithfulness is measured not by comfort, but by obedience.

Wednesday— Study Matthew 26:57–68 to observe the importance of maintaining our integrity when we're accused falsely. Christians face misunderstanding or misrepresentation. Our response must reflect integrity, patience, and confidence in God's ultimate vindication.

Thursday— Study John 18:28–40; 19:1–16, observing the danger of compromising truth for man's approval. We must prioritize truth over acceptance. Faithfulness requires standing firm even when it leads to rejection or loss.

Friday— Study Luke 23:13–25, observing the reality of unjust suffering. We must not be surprised by unjust treatment. At the same time, we are reminded that Christ suffered in our place, shaping our understanding of grace and endurance.

Saturday— Study John 19:16–30 in order to learn to be faithful to the end. The Christian life requires endurance. We are called to remain faithful, trusting that God's purposes include, and extend beyond, present suffering.