**King Jesus was Tried and Condemned for Us**

Mark 14:53-15:15 (Key Verse 14:61b-62)

*“Again, the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” 62 “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*

In today’s passage we are going to learn from Jesus who revealed his identity as the Messiah who was tried and condemned for us. Jesus is the Son of God without sin and with power and authority over all things, however in this passage though he was without sin, he was arrested, falsely accused, beat by the guards, he was disowned by his disciples, the crowds shouted crucify him. In all this injustice, Jesus remained silent without defending himself and was finally under Pontius Pilate was sentenced to be crucified to death. Jesus did not defend himself or try to save himself from the false accusations and eventually crucifixion because he is the Messiah, who had to be tried and condemned for us, for our sake Jesus was led to the cross. Therefore, through today’s passage we will specifically focus on understanding in what sense is King Jesus tried and condemned for us. I pray that God may have mercy on us today, to receive one word, be transformed by the sacrifice of King Jesus, and worship him as our Lord and Savior, the Messiah.

The passage today begins after Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane and betrayal by Judas Iscariot, where he was captured by the guards of the high officials. After Jesus’ capture, they led him to the high priest, where all the Sanhedrin (Chief Priests, teachers of the law and the Pharisees) had gathered. They gathered together to find basis to kill Jesus, they gathered at night in fear of the people who followed and believed in Jesus as the Messiah. When they arrested Jesus, they did not have a valid reason why they arrested him, except that they wanted to kill him, they did not have a valid crime they could point to Jesus. And so they spent the night falsely accusing Jesus of crimes he did not commit. They accused him saying that: *“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’”* Even then their testimonies did not agree, it was all a lie, and they did not find basis to arrest Jesus, because according to the law in **Deuteronomy 19:15** it says: “*One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*” They needed at least two people who agreed on one testimony, and none of this took place and hence the high priest could not find reason to charge Jesus.

After having spent a long-time accusing Jesus in the night and not getting anywhere, the high priest got agitated, he lost his cool and stood up before the whole Sanhedrin and asked Jesus: *“Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?”* And in **verse 61a** it says: *“But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.”* Why did Jesus not give an answer? This was an opportunity for Jesus to defend himself and be freed, but Jesus remained silent. He remained silent, because it was not worth answering, he did not need to defend himself from the people. Secondly, Jesus did not answer because he had decided to die on the cross and obey the will of God. And in this way, he would fulfill the prophecy about him in **Isaiah 53:7** which says: *“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”*

When the high priest saw that Jesus was silent, he went further and asked another question, this time he tried to be clever by asking Jesus: “*Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”* The high priest asked this question to trap Jesus. Here the Messiah referred to the anointed king, the savior of the world; and the Son of the blessed One refers to the Son of God. So, this was a very dangerous question to answer, if he answers yes, he could be fall into the trap of being accused of blasphemy and be sentenced to death. The alternative is that he could remain silent as before. But what did Jesus do? Let us look **verse 62**: *“I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”* Jesus did not remain silent this time around, he did not even deny, but rather he boldly answered “*I am”*, Jesus used this opportunity to reveal his identity as the Messiah and the Son of God with boldness, he did not try to escape from danger, but rather he revealed the truth to those who were trying to kill him.

Jesus said, “*I am*” revealing to the Sanhedrin that he is indeed the Messiah, the savior of the world, not just the savior of the disciples, but the whole world, including the Sanhedrin. Jesus said this to reveal to them that he will be crucified because of their sins as well, he will die for their sin of falsely accusing him, their sin of wanting to kill him, their sin of jealousy unto him, their sin of self-righteousness. Jesus will carry the sin of the whole world. He is tried and condemned for the sins of the Sanhedrin, for the sin of the world. In the previous passage Jesus said: *My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death*, describing the measure of the sin he is to carry unto his shoulders. The sin of the whole world.

Furthermore, Jesus said: “*And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”* What does this mean? Why did Jesus say this? First Jesus said this to reveal to them that it will not all end in death, he will die on the cross but after three days he will rise again, ascend to the heavens, be seated at the right hand of God and be given all authority in heaven, earth and under. And he will come back to judge the living and the dead. Jesus said this to alert the Sanhedrin, to repent from their sins, though they might be judging him at this point, Jesus will come back and judge the living and the dead. After saying this, it says the high priest tore his clothes. This was not in anguish of his sins, but rather in **verse 64** it says: “*“You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as worthy of death.”* Instead of repenting from their sins, the high priest together with the whole Sanhedrin accused Jesus of blasphemy. They accused Jesus of disrespect against God, for he called himself the Messiah and the Son of God. Outwardly the high priest acted with anguish for the blasphemy, but deep in his heart he was very happy that finally he has a reason to kill an innocent man Jesus Christ. Though Jesus was innocent, because of their sins the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus as worthy of sin. Because of the sin of the Sanhedrin, because of the sin of the world, Jesus was condemned worthy of death. With great shame Jesus was condemned to death, they spat on him, blindfolded him, struck him with fists, and said “Prophesy” and the guards took him and beat him.

While Jesus was tried, falsely accused and condemned, Simon Peter followed and sat at a distance in the courtyard. Before Jesus was captured, he told Peter, together with the other disciples that he will disown him and Peter said he will never. Out of guilt Peter tried to follow the guards who captured Jesus, he sat at a distance in the courtyard to hold on to his word. But because Peter was a sinner, like you and me, like the chief priests, teachers of the law and the high priest, Peter denied Jesus. When they accused him of being one of Jesus disciples, he told a big lie, he swore to them and said I do not know this man you’re talking about. Peter told a lie, because like you and me he is sinner who needs a savior, Jesus the Messiah. To remind him of his sinful nature, and desperate need of a Savior, something amazing happened in **verse 72**: “*Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.”* At the realization that Jesus was tried and condemned in his place, Simon Peter broke down and wept. Unlike the Sanhedrin, Peter broke down and wept at his sin, it was a positive beginning of repentance. For us to truly repent we need to realize and acknowledge our sin problem, we need to acknowledge that because of our sin, Jesus was tried and condemned to be killed. When we realize this, we can truly come to Jesus with genuine repentance and be healed from our sin problem. We can be healed and filled with hope that at Jesus’ second coming we will be saved.

After the whole night of interrogations, the chief priests, the elders, the teachers of the law and whole Sanhedrin led Jesus away and handed him over to Pilate early in the morning. The first question Pilate asked Jesus, was *Are you the king of the Jews?”* and again Jesus said: “*You have said so*” Once again Jesus did not deny his identity to save himself, but rather he was determined to obey God’s command to die on the cross for the sins of the world, for the sin of the Sanhedrin, Simon Peter, you and me, even Pilate. At that time the chief priests continued to accuse Jesus of many things to make their case strong before Pilate, but Jesus remained silent, he did not try to defend himself, to him it was pointless to defend himself, what Jesus was concerned about revealing his identity and to obey God’s command to be condemned to death, take the sin of the world and save the world from the power of sin and death.

When Jesus did not answer to defend himself, Pilate was left amazed for deep down he could see that Jesus was indeed innocent. Pilate had power and authority to release Jesus, but in fear of the Sanhedrin and disturbing the peace between Rome and Israel, he pushed the decision to release Jesus to the crowd by allowing them to exercise the custom to release prisoner whom the people requested. Pilate was hoping the crowd would release Jesus instead of Barabbas who was with the insurrectionists and had committed murder in the uprising. But still the chief priests stirred up the crowds to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. Because of their sinful nature, their need for a savior, the people requested for Barabbas to be released, and about Jesus they shouted crucify him. Pilate was puzzled, and asked them: *“Why? What crime has he committed?”* But still the crowds shouted all the louder, Crucify him. And once again, because of his sinful nature, because of his desperate need for a savior, Pilate could not stand his ground and exercise fairness, but rather to protect himself, to please the crowd, he released Barabbas to the crowd and had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified.

In our place, in my place, in the place of Pilate, the crowd, Simon Peter, the Sanhedrin, Jesus was handed over to be crucified. In our place Jesus was condemned to be killed, a gruesome death on the cross. For us to be saved from this gruesome death which we so very much deserve, Jesus was tried, he was condemned. The account of Barabbas gives us an accurate representation of ourselves, he was 100% guilty, worthy to be punished, worthy to be crucified and Jesus took his place, and he was free.

My first so called big realization that I am terrible sinner before God was back in 2012, I was preparing a message-based Genesis 2:1-25 about marriage. For me to accept marriage from God I needed to surrender my whole being to Jesus as my Lord and savior, the one in control of all things. And fundamentally to all this I had to confess my sins, acknowledge that I am sinner before God. For a long time, I had seen myself as a good person, even though I committed lots of sins in secret such as pornography and committed sexual sin after my graduation. When I was preparing the message Shepherdess Rebekah pushed me so hard this one night, and I confessed all my sins to her and put them in my testimony, that night I wept so much at the realization that I am truly a sinner, that because of me Jesus was tried, condemned and nailed on the tree. Even though I broke down and wept, it was so liberating, I could feel a sense of change in my heart, I was filled with a strong desire to repent and worship Jesus Christ as my Lord and savior. And so, as I reflected on this and this passage, I realized how critical it is always realize and acknowledge our sins before Jesus, it is the starting point to repentance and entering a life of meaning and purpose.

**Conclusion:**

From today’s passage we have learnt that Jesus was tried and condemned for us, we learnt through each character in the passage that Jesus was indeed put on the cross by our sins, we learnt that we all have a part in Jesus being led onto the cross. Because of the mercy of God, we do not have to go to cross but instead Jesus went to the cross in our place. Furthermore, we have learnt that in order for us to truly repent and we need realize and acknowledge that Jesus was tried and condemned in our place. Even though Jesus revealed this to the Sanhedrin, they hardened their hearts and became even more corrupt, but when Simon Peter realized and acknowledged that Jesus was tried and condemned in his place. He entered into an incredible journey of repentance and God could use him as an Apostle of the church of Christ. I pray that we too may humbly accept today’s message that Jesus was tried and condemned for us, confess our sins, so that we can truly repent, enter into a life of grace, a life of meaning and purpose in Jesus Christ.