

Eyes on Jesus: Murderous Eyes (3/25/2020)

As We Gather

This Lent, we will use the metaphor of eyesight to examine how the various people in Mark's Gospel viewed Jesus during His Passion. In most cases, they misunderstood who He was and what He was doing; then again, sometimes by faith people did recognize Him correctly.

We have these forty days of Lent in which we may look within ourselves as people of faith in our day. How are we like or unlike the people who saw Jesus in the flesh? Most important, as we gather for worship, we will see what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death.

Today, we take a look at the chief priests and scribes, who saw Jesus as an obstacle to be rid of by violence. Yet, during the Passover festival, they would unwittingly bring about the sacrifice of the ultimate Passover Lamb. How, then, should we view those who oppose the Gospel in our day? And how might these insights guide our prayers?

Upon the Cross Extended [LSB452]

1 Upon the cross extended, See, world, your Lord suspended,
Your Savior yields His breath. The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself hath freely given, To shame and blows and bitter death.

2 Come, see these things and ponder, Your soul will fill with wonder
As blood streams from each pore. Through grief beyond all knowing
From His great heart came flowing, Sighs welling from its deepest core.

3 Who is it, Lord, that bruised You? Who has so sore abused You
And caused You all Your woe? We all must make confession
Of sin and dire transgression, While You no ways of evil know.

4 I caused Your grief and sighing, By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands. I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Your soul is cumbered, Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.

5 Your soul in griefs unbounded, Your head with thorns surrounded,
You died to ransom me. The cross for me enduring,
The crown for me securing, You healed my wounds and set me free.

6 Your cords of love, my Savior, Bind me to You forever,
I am no longer mine. To You I gladly tender
All that my life can render, And all I have to You resign.

7 Your cross I place before me; Its saving pow'r restore me,
Sustain me in the test., It will, when life is ending,
Be guiding and attending, My way to Your eternal rest.

Mark 14:1, 53–65 (English Standard Version)

¹It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, ⁵³ And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. ⁵⁴ And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. ⁵⁷ And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶² And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵ And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows.

“And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him,” (Mark 14:1) It is clear that many cast murderous eyes toward Jesus. This is why any trial against Jesus the chief priests would hold would find Jesus guilty regardless. “⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.” (Mark 14:55-56) There was nothing fair about what the chief priests and the council were doing. They had only one goal. “And they all condemned him as deserving death.” (Mark 14:64) Their hate and self interest had blinded them to the truth.

Sometimes how we see each other has the same result. We ignore the lesson of Jesus’ words in the parable of the “Good Samaritan.” Jesus’ words, “love your neighbor as yourselves,” have no effect. We tend to judge a book by its cover not its content. The is the reason Jesus said, “²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.” (Matthew 5:21-22) We can portray a false image on the outside when our true feelings and motivations we keep hidden. This illustrates our hypocrisy. This is the real reason why confession is so important. The sentiment is echoed in the following hymn verse.

I caused Thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.

I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands. (*TLH* 171:4)

It is through confession that we see Jesus' willing death on the cross for the payment of our sins.

God's love is truly in evidence as Paul writes, "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God." (Romans 5:8–9) Now we know the depth of the love of God because He sent His Son. It is for this reason John wrote, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (I John 4:7-8) So rejoice for our Lord Jesus Christ has turned our eyes from sin, guilt, and despair to see our Savior. "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." (Romans 5:10–11)

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Psalm 67:6-7 (English Standard Version)

God, our God, shall bless us. ⁷ God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!