

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Over the years, there have been many memorable movies that have been made that give us a glimpse of what goes on during a courtroom proceeding.

By the grace of God, I still have not been selected to a jury and the only time I have been in any type of court proceeding was at traffic court.

So really, these movies provide me a glimpse of the process of our judicial system.

Some of the most notable courtroom movies that I have seen are, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *A Few Good Men*,

However, my favorite courtroom movie of all time is the classic, *My Cousin Vinny*

It is just a funny movie –

And if you have never seen it, it is about these two individual who get wrongly accused of murder somewhere down south, so one of the

individuals calls his lawyer cousin from New York, to help him out with the case – not knowing that he had no experience with legal procedures.

So throughout the trial, Vinny keeps on getting reprimanded for the way he dressed to the court, the way he spoke and for his inability to follow proper court protocol.

And there is a point in the movie where the two individuals who were on trial were contemplating in replacing him as their lawyer but, however, they stick with him and he exonerates them by challenging the evidence and the witnesses that were brought against the two individuals.

All three of the movies I mentioned have a similar storyline. Someone is wrongfully accused of a crime, but through the process of our judicial system – all of them were declared not guilty in the end.

This is our due process – we are innocent until proven guilty.

This morning, as we continue our study through the Gospel of Mark, we come to the trial of our Lord and Savior.

We will see the sham of a trial that the religious rulers set up in an effort to have Jesus Christ put to death.

And we will also see the disciple Peter fail a trial of his own.

Let's pray...

[Mar 14:52-72 NKJV] 52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked. 53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. 57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' " 59 But not even then did their testimony agree. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it]

these men testify against You?" 61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." 63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. 65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. 66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. 69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is [one] of them." 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are [one] of them; for you are a

Galilean, and your speech shows [it]." 71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" 72 A second time [the] rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Last week, we left off with the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

You might remember that Judas leads the religious rulers to Jesus and they came equipped with over 600 Roman soldiers and temple guards to arrest Him,

And we saw the boldness of Peter as he took a swing at the smallest dude in the bunch as he cut off the ear of poor Malchus.

It is at this point that all of His disciples abandon Him – hours earlier they had been arguing regarding which one of them was going to be the greatest, which one was going to sit at His right hand.

Jesus is arrested and now He will undergo a set of **six different trials** in the next few hours.

Three of them will be before Jewish Officials and three of them will be before Roman officials.

Now, before we start dissecting our text, I want you to turn with me to the book of Deuteronomy 16.

During the Exodus, as the Children of Israel were making their way to the Promised Land. God wanted to make sure that they had a system in place where they would be able to judge themselves.

[Deu 16:18-20 NKJV] 18 "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 "You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20 "You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

And upon inheriting the Promised Land, that is the system that was established and it remained until the time of Jesus Christ.

Notice the emphasis on being just and bringing justice.

Every city, as long as there were a certain number of men that lived there, had its own synagogue. And when people would have disputes with one another, they were to go to the synagogue and present their case.

However, God didn't just tell them to appoint judges among them. He mandated that also made it clear that evidence or proof had to be presented in order for a judge to rule.

And because there were no cameras back then, witnesses were used to verify or deny the claims.

Turn to the right a few pages to chapter 19.

[Deu 19:15-20 NKJV] 15 "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16 "If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17 "then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18 "And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, [if] the witness [is] a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19 "then

you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. 20 "And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.

So we see here how witnesses played a vital role in the judicial system established by God.

They either confirmed the charge or cleared the person of any wrong doing.

In fact, since the method of execution for the Israelites was stoning, the witnesses were given the responsibility of casting the first stones – this was to validate their testimony.

However, if a witness gave false testimony, that witness would have to suffer the sentence that would have been given to the one that he gave the false testimony about.

So if I gave false testimony accusing someone of murder – and it was determined that I lied, I would be subject to the sentence that person would have received if he had been convicted – in this case, it would have been death.

So the Lord made it very clear in His word the rules that were supposed to be followed regarding trials and witnesses.

Let's look at verse 53 again.

[Mar 14:53 NKJV] 53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.

As we see Jesus face the religious rulers, we must remember that their role was not to condemn, it was simply to see if there was sufficient evidence to proceed with the trial.

This was supposed to simply be a preliminary hearing.

The problem was that the religious rulers had already made up their minds regarding the verdict as well as the sentence.

Jesus Christ was guilty and His punishment had to be death.

All they had to do now was come up with a charge. They didn't have one.

In verse 53, we see them ignore the rules that they were to adhere when it came to trials.

- Trials were not allowed to be conducted at night
- Trials were not to be allowed on feast days or the Sabbath – remember, this is the same night that they celebrated the Passover feast.
- Trials were not supposed to be done at the home of the priest

We are told in the other gospels that Jesus was taken to the house of Annas the former high priest and then to the house of Caiaphas, the current High Priest.

We are going to skip 54 for right now, we will come back to it later.

[Mar 14:55-56 NKJV] 55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

As we saw earlier in the book of Deuteronomy, all they needed was two witnesses to come forth and corroborate each other.

The problem was that Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Can you imagine the witnesses coming forward against Jesus?

What is your name?

Bartimaeus

What do you to say against Jesus?

Well, He healed my blindness.

And What is your name?

Legion

What do you have to say against Jesus?

Well, I had 6000 demons living inside me, I was living in tombs, running around naked and cutting myself with stones and Jesus came and healed me.

And who are you?

I am the man with the withered hand

I am the man who had leprosy

I am the woman that suffered from bleeding for twenty years.

Two witnesses is all they needed.

[Mar 14:57-59 NKJV] 57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' " 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

Turn with me to John 2.

Here in John 2 we have the first time that cleanses the temple – you might remember the second time He did it was the day after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

[Jhn 2:18-21 NKJV] 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

These false witnesses attempt to use Jesus' own words against Him and still the religious rulers couldn't get two witnesses.

Now, seeing that they were getting nowhere with the people, the religious rulers take matters into their own hands.

[Mar 14:60-61 NKJV] 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What [is it] these men testify against You?" 61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

The high priest, Caiaphas, is asking why Jesus isn't defending Himself from all the accusers - but the thing is that He doesn't have to because He has done nothing wrong.

Caiaphas had one last strategy – to get Jesus to commit blasphemy.

He asked Him directly if He claimed to be two characters:

1. The first was "the Christ." He was asking Jesus, directly, if He claimed to be the Messiah Who was promised to the Jews throughout their Scriptures.
2. The second was "Son of the Blessed."

Why would Caiaphas use the title, "Son of the Blessed?", the reason is that the Jew would not be allowed to say or write the name of God.

They had catch phrases they substituted, and "Son of the Blessed" was one of them.

You see, Caiaphas was asking Jesus if He claimed to be equal with God.

And the response from Jesus

[Mar 14:62 NKJV] 62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Jesus responds to Caiaphas' question in two parts.

Jesus used the very word used to identify himself to Moses at the burning bush, when he said, "I AM who I AM" (Exodus 3:14).

He could not have made a clearer declaration of His deity while veiled in humanity.

However, Jesus didn't stop with His true identity. He applied it. Since He was the Messiah, and very God Himself, He would one day be sitting in judgment over them.

And because Caiaphas was well versed in scripture, he realized that Jesus was referring to Psalm 110 where it speaks of the time of the Messiah's reign – you guys can read that short Psalm for homework.

No longer was Jesus going to be on trial – it was going to be the religious rulers that would be on trial.

Did the high priest understand what Jesus spoke – you bet he did.

[Mar 14:63-64 NKJV] 63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

By Jesus answering the question, Jesus provided the religious rulers with a charge – one of blasphemy.

However, it wasn't blasphemy, because it was true. Jesus was their Messiah, and God come in human flesh. His life and ministry proved the claim.

Think of the mountains of evidence Jesus could have presented, and the multitudes of witnesses:

- All who had been healed of various diseases and conditions.
- Some who had been raised from the dead.
- He could have called upon demons to identify Him.
- He could have reminded them of John the Baptist's announcing Him as "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world."
- He could have played the tape (as it were) of the Father's declaration from Heaven, "This is My beloved Son."

However, because of their jealousy, the minds of the religious rulers were already made up. Jesus has to die.

The problem with the charge - was that a simple charge of blasphemy was not going to satisfy the Romans – the Romans believed in many gods themselves.

The religious rulers were still going to have to come up with a charge that was going to compel the Rome to put Jesus Christ to death.

[Mar 14:65 NKJV] 65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Here we see their response to Jesus as well, to beat Him and strike Him.

It is one thing to be able to brace yourself when you are going to be struck – but to be blindfolded, you never see the blows coming and the damage of the blows will only be magnified.

Peter's denial

Now, in verse 54, we saw that as Jesus was taken to the different homes, Peter tagged along but from a distance.

I am not going to stand here and bash Peter for what he did in verse 66-72 because the one question I have always had is where are the other disciples?

We know that John was there with Peter through the other accounts – but what about the rest of them.

And when you read Luke's account of Jesus telling Peter that he was going to deny Him, Jesus tells Peter in Luk 22:31 "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

It is very similar to when Satan asked permission to afflict Job.

Let's keep all that in mind as we take a fresh look at Peter's denials.

Let's read the account again,

[Mar 14:66-72 NKJV] 66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch,

and a rooster crowed. 69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is [one] of them." 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are [one] of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows [it]." 71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" 72 A second time [the] rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

What we see Peter go through is a trial of his faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

And hours earlier, before 600 men – we saw Peter takes out his small sword and takes a swing against them.

Yet, here in the courtyard, surrounded by a few servants, he cowered in fear at the questions of a servant girl.

Church, trials are like that. We never know where or when they are going to strike us.

It could be at some weak point in our walk; or it could be where we think we are strong, when we least expect it.

And it is how we respond through the trials, that our faith is groomed.

Each time Peter is questioned, his denials become more aggressive.

What lesson can we learn from Peter and his denials?

The first lesson that I see here is that even during times when we are faithless, God is still faithful. Jesus had told the disciples that He was going to restore them despite their stumbling.

And we see that after the resurrection of Jesus Christ – Jesus restores Peter.

The second lesson that I see is that trials serve a purpose. For Peter, this trial perfected him to be used by God. Just like gold requires intense heat to remove the impurities, trials serve to remove some of the impurities in our own lives. It could be a sin – it could be self.

The third lesson that I see is the rooster crowing.

Jesus had told Peter that the rooster was going to crow twice before Peter would deny Him three times. Why twice???

Peter said he would never deny Jesus but after the first denial – the rooster crowed.

Obviously he heard it! But did he react to it???

Do we listen for the rooster to crow? I think that, in our trials, the Lord gives us signals that He is at work.

And it is then that we should stop and repent, before we get any deeper into it.

That is what Peter failed to do.

Always remember...

“It was not the crowing of the rooster that convicted Peter; it was the remembering of Christ’s words.”

And it is His word that guides in our every path.

Amen...

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.