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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
February 21, 2016
2nd Sunday in Lent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 53:4-6; Passion: Upper Room
III

Hymns: 360; 723; 163:1-4 313:1

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Mark 14:61-62

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."

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is
truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God my Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Jesus said!

Last week in the first of our Sunday Lenten devotions we
considered the deep sadness of our Savior as He declared:

“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch” (Mark 14:34). In that meditation Jesus granted us an insight into the spiritual sufferings which He endured and the intensity of that suffering. The Spirit led us to a deeper appreciation of what it was that Jesus endured that was not open for men’s eyes to see.

This morning we go forward to the High Priest’s palace and the rigged trial that the chief priests had staged. Frustrated by all that had transpired in the trial and the failure of his false witnesses to put together any evidence that could be used to condemn Jesus, Caiaphas the High Priest blurted out his question that would open opportunity for Jesus to testify to the truth.--

THEME: Jesus Said, “I AM!”

Our text opens with a statement about Jesus NOT speaking, that we might appreciate –

I. When Silence Speaks Volumes

We read in our text:

Mark 14:61 “But He kept silent and answered nothing.”

We need to consider the context of this statement to appreciate what exactly it means for us. It was in response to all the lies and distortions and fabrications that the false witnesses had brought against Jesus that He stood there silent. One might think that this was a matter of not dignifying these lies with a response. There is more to it than that.

Yes, it is true that Jesus had not committed any of the crimes with which He had been charged. Statements that

Jesus had made were not only taken out of context but had been distorted to say something quite different. Jesus had not done any of those things: He had not blasphemed, He had not attempted any insurrection, He had not misled the people. All Jesus' ways had been done in truth. Then why not protest His innocence? Isn't that what a normal person would do? Of course it is! But Jesus was not a normal person in a normal set of circumstances. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled, as Jesus is described in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 7:26). He was also the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Perhaps we would do well to recall how Jesus was pictured in the Day of Atonement ceremony. There were two goats involved in this ceremony, the sacrificial goat, and the scapegoat. It was the duty of the High Priest to lay his hands upon the head of the scapegoat and confess the sins of the people, laying them upon the scapegoat who would then be led away into the wilderness. The lesson was twofold. First: the Messiah that was to come would receive in Himself the sins of the people, and second He would then take them away, far, far away.

We see a symbolic fulfillment of this in Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin. All those false witnesses arranged for by the High Priest were laying on Jesus the sins of others, the crimes that others had done. Jesus accepted this "rap sheet" of people's sin in silence.

I said this was still symbolic, although it was only hours before Jesus would be crucified. The actual act was done by the LORD God as it was described in the last verse of our Old Testament lesson this morning: "**the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**" (Isaiah 53:6).

This is the truth that we need to hold to for life and salvation. This is what God in His grace did on that Good Friday. He laid on Jesus your sins and mine that Jesus might take them away, and Jesus submitted to this in complete silence.

“Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree.”

(The Lutheran hymnal 154:2)

Then the High Priest once again unwittingly opened the door for the truth of our salvation to be proclaimed when—

II. Jesus Confessed Himself to be the Great I AM.

The High Priest saw this as the final last good chance to find grounds to condemn Jesus. In his frustration he put forward the question that lies at the heart of our salvation, “**Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?**” (v.61)

Jesus answered, for then He would be He testifying to the truth of the gospel of our salvation: “**Jesus said, ‘I am.’**” (v.62)

Jesus was answering this important question clearly and succinctly. He simply declared that He was in fact the Son of the Blessed. However, Jesus’ choice of words in answering this question is significant. He didn’t say, “Yes, that’s true.” He didn’t say, “Absolutely right.” He did say, “**I AM!**” The entire Sanhedrin gathered that night knew exactly the significance of Jesus’ declaration. We are the ones that tend to read right over these two

short concise words and fail to grasp their significance. With these words Jesus not only answered the question, He declared that He was God. God made Himself known to the people of Israel as the “I AM.” Jesus declared before the council of the Jews that He was that “I AM.” Jesus was, is, and ever shall be the eternal God!

He came down to earth and took upon Himself our human nature, but without sin. He became our brother that He might be the all sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world. To be such a great sacrifice that it covered all people from the beginning of the world until the Day of Judgment it was necessary that His blood shed for our sins to be that divine blood of infinite value.

The proclamation of this truth of Jesus’ identity directs us to --

III. Awaiting the Final Public Display of this Truth.

Mark 14:62 “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 made it a certain prophecy that all this, His capture, sufferings and death, would not be the end of our Lord. Jesus, the Great I AM, lives and reigns to all eternity. Because He gave Himself for us, God has delivered all judgment over to the Son, who is also the Son of Man. He will return also as true man. Jesus has not stopped being our brother as well as our Lord and Savior.

That Jesus spoke these words even as He was on the way to the cross demonstrates the truth expressed in –

Hebrews 12:2 “Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Yes, Jesus had a tremendous burden being cast upon Him in that council hall, the burden of our sin, with its curse and condemnation, but Jesus was also absolutely confident of the final outcome. He already knew the joy that was to come in bringing us salvation. He also knew He would be received by God the Father where He would be at that position of power and authority over all the earth. He knew, and so we should know that He will come again on the Last Day and we too shall see Him and our **“eyes shall behold and not another.”** (Job 19:27)

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.