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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 20, 2022
3rd Sunday in Lent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 53:4-6, Passion: High Priests Palace
Hymns: 363; 375:1-4; 163:1-4; 375:5

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

Sermon Text: Luke 22:70-71

⁷⁰ Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, "You *rightly* say that I am."

⁷¹ And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we
have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

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

In Christ Jesus, our God and our crucified Savior,
dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: An Inconvenient Truth

Following his political career, a former Vice President took up the
cause of fighting global warming. To that end he wrote a book
entitled "An Inconvenient Truth." What he intended to
communicate in his book title was that everything he wrote was
unquestionably true. Those who refused to accept all that he wrote
were simply blind to the truth because they found the truth to be
inconvenient, so they rejected it.

I never read the book so I can't really say if what he wrote is factual and true or not. I do agree with his point that many times people disagree with the truth even when it is clearly laid out for them simply because they find that truth to be inconvenient.

That is very frequently the case when it comes to the truth about Jesus Christ. It was certainly the truth with the Jewish High Council, called the Sanhedrin. As we continue our Sunday Lenten meditation series on "Veiled Truths" we consider this morning the conclusion the Sanhedrin came to as they chose to reject and condemn Jesus for blasphemy. --

THEME: We Have Heard It Ourselves from His Own Mouth!

It is so very true that they heard the words clearly spoken by Jesus regarding His identity as the Son of God. The truth of Jesus' testimony was lost to them; it was veiled because their --

I. Hearing Was Not Mixed with Faith.

In the middle of the night the Jewish council had assembled for an illegal trial. Trials in the dark of night were not allowed, but that didn't stop this "kangaroo court" from being held. It turned into a marathon session of false witnesses telling lies about Jesus, charging Him with all sorts of evil things that other people do, but not Jesus. Jesus didn't respond to any of these false accusations, which frustrated the High Priest Caiaphas. *"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.'"*
(Mark 14:61-62)

While Jesus wouldn't respond to the false accusations, Jesus did testify to the truth. This was the initial declaration of His divine nature before the council, and their response was immediate: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."* (Mark 14:63-64)

The High Priest had asked the right question. He asked hoping that he would get the answer that Jesus gave. In fact, Jesus gave a

complete and truthful answer regarding His divine nature when He declared “**I AM.**” Jesus is the **I AM**, that is the One true God “*who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*” (Revelation 1:8) He made it clear to the entire Jewish Council assembled that dark night that they would see Him in His glory. They would see Him as the Son of Man. Jesus would keep His human nature along with His divine nature forevermore. As the Son of Man, both true God and true man, Jesus would sit at the right hand of Power and come to judge them.

That clear testimony should have given them pause, given them something to think about. They had their representatives watching Jesus for most of His three and half year public ministry. They all knew about the mighty signs and wonders that He had done. They knew the evidence that backed up Jesus’ testimony. Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Blessed! A proper faith-filled response would have been to fall before Jesus in worship and repentance. As clear as this testimony had been, the truth evaded them. The truth concerning Jesus was veiled because of their unbelief. It was the “*Inconvenient Truth*” they were not only not ready to accept, but also not **able** to accept apart from the Holy Spirit opening their hearts to believe.

At this point there were only a couple of members of the Sanhedrin who secretly believed in Jesus. The rest of them were ready to reject Jesus’ testimony as being blasphemy of the highest order and find Jesus deserving of death.

The words of our text were spoken in a separate meeting held as the sun began to rise. To make everything legal Caiaphas reassembled the council. “*As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying,*”⁶⁷ “*If You are the Christ, tell us.*” *But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will by no means believe.*”⁶⁸ *And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.*”⁶⁹ *Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”*⁷⁰ *Then they all said, ‘Are You then the Son of God?’ So He said to them, ‘You rightly say that I am.’*⁷¹ *And they said, ‘What further testimony do we need? **For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.**’*” (Luke 22:66—71)

Jesus challenged them that they would not believe the truth if He testified to the truth, but they called for the truth, and so Jesus once again presented a clear and straightforward testimony of His divine nature and glory. The truth was veiled to them. As they said, they heard it from His own mouth, but their hearing was not mixed with faith, (Hebrews 4:2) and so it was to their condemnation rather than salvation.

In Bible class this year we are studying the epistle to the Hebrews, where we are reminded that God “*in these last days has spoken to us by His Son.*” (Hebrews 1:3) This was as true for the chief priests and the entire Jewish council as it was for anyone. Jesus was standing before them presenting a clear testimony concerning Himself and what was to come. This was the major focus of Jesus’ public ministry, that He teach the people the truth about Himself and the coming of the kingdom of God. A couple of hours later Jesus would testify before Pontius Pilate: “*You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.*” (John 18:37) We remember well Pilate’s cynical response, “*What is truth!*”

(John 18:38)

What a tragic thing it is that people heard the words that came right out of our Savior’s mouth, words that lead to eternal life, and yet they didn’t hear the truth. The truth doesn’t coincide with their view of righteousness, or their world view, or their personal ambitions or desires. The truth of Jesus Christ, even when it comes from His own mouth, if the hearing is not mixed with faith, ends sadly and tragically. (Hebrews 4:2)

II. Jesus Testifies to the Truth Concerning His Divine Identity.

Indeed, it is the most convenient truth for us. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us as well. God the Holy Spirit’s encouragement is still in place for us, “*Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.*” (Hebrews 4:7) The holy and inspired record brings us Jesus’ words, the words that came from His mouth. The record is faithful, and His testimony is true. We have it straight from His mouth. The source of this truth of our salvation cannot get any better than that! Don’t let anyone undermine your

confidence in the Word of God. Christ Jesus our Lord is the Word made flesh. He came in fulfillment of all God's promises. The eternal Son is the Word that created the world. He is the One who speaks to us in our day! He tells us of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that we have in His name. We too, shall see Jesus come again sitting at the right hand of Power. He will come again, and our eyes shall behold Him in all His glory.

His word is true, and the truth of His identity as the Son of the Blessed One lies at the very foundation of the gospel of our salvation. It was necessary for our salvation that Jesus be the very Son of God. It all comes down to the adequacy of the sacrifice that was made when Jesus suffered and died upon the cross. He shed His holy precious blood to redeem a fallen and sinful mankind.

Remember, we were not and could not be redeemed by silver or gold. All the silver and gold and gems in the entire world could not ransom a single soul. It required the infinitely precious blood of the Son of God. For the Son of God to possess blood, for the Son of God to be a sacrifice for us for our sin, it was necessary for the Son of God to take upon Himself our human nature. He came into the world that He might offer His life as a sacrifice to God.

The truth of Jesus' identity as the eternal Son of God is the most convenient and important of truths for us. It is our assurance that we too, sinful people who live a couple of thousand years after Jesus spoke His words of testimony, are redeemed by the death of the Son of God. The precious blood of the Son of God still avails before the throne of God bringing us peace with God.

This morning we are celebrating the Lord's Supper. In this sacrament we are especially focused on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we read the words of institution it is as though we were once again hearing for ourselves the words as they came from our Savior's mouth. It is Jesus who says to us, "*Take and eat this is my body given for you.*" It is Jesus who says to us, "*Take and drink, this cup is the new testament in my blood shed for you for the remission of sins.*" As we eat that bread and drink that cup, we receive exactly what Jesus declared, we receive it for ourselves right from His mouth, **the forgiveness of sins!**

We praise and thank God the Holy Spirit that the veil as been lifted from our hearts, that we might hear the words of our Lord Jesus and know and believe that He is the Christ the Son of the Blessed, our Lord and our Redeemer.

AMEN.

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