

No More Secrets

Mark 14:53-72; November 28, 2021

Introduction: Thanksgiving week is one of my favorite weeks of the year.

- Food:
 - I enjoy some good food including cooking and preparing good food.
 - I have one main job: the Turkey, primarily, to make sure I don't burn it. I didn't brine my turkey this year and it still came out pretty good. The one curve ball this year came from Zoe. I'm getting ready to toss the neck and the giblet bag (which includes the heart, liver and gizzard) and Zoe's like, "Dad, cook the neck for me."
- Flag Football:
 - Rain, snow or sun...it's what me and my boys will be doing and usually Lionel and Adam join us.
 - For a few hours, I get to relive the glory days of college and then afterwards I start popping the Ibuprofen (Lionel, you still sore today?)
- The kickoff to the Christmas Season
 - Decorations:
 - Thanks to Ava, this starts wicked early in my house (Christmas music, trees, etc.)
 - Movies:
 - Who's watched their favorite Christmas movie already? Home Alone anyone? Christmas Vacation? Elf?
 - Presents:
 - For our kids, instead of them buying gifts for EVERY sibling, we have them draw names so that they each buy a larger gift for ONE sibling.
 - The biggest challenge: them keeping that a **secret** until Christmas (*who* they are buying for and then *what* they have bought them).
 - I think this year we had to redraw within the first 30 seconds because someone had already accidentally spilled the beans on who they had.
 - So far, I think they've kept it a **secret** who they have.

Speaking of secrets, one of the tensions that we've seen throughout Mark is what's called the **Messianic Secret**.

- Multiple times Jesus has *strictly* charged others to say nothing to anyone about who he is (cf. Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 8:29-30).
- There are two primary reasons Jesus has done this:
 - As soon as his full identity becomes public, his execution is inevitable. Yet, Jesus still had things to do on this earth.
 - Jesus can't be fully understood apart from the necessity of his suffering and the cross.

In our passage today, **the secret will come to an end**. There will be **no more secrets** about who

Jesus is.

Last week in Mark...

- Jesus is betrayed by Judas in the garden and then he's seized and led away by the religious leaders.
 - This was probably around midnight.
- Read Mark 14:50: "And they all left him and fled."

Read Mark 14:53-72.

Initial Key Observations:

- The entire account that we're studying today happened between midnight and roughly 6am.
- In addition to Jesus, there are three key people or groups of people in our passage:
 - The High Priest
 - John tells us (cf. John 18:13-14) that Jesus was first taken to Annas (the former high priest) who still wielded enormous influence and then he went to Caiaphus, Annas' son-in-law and the current high priest.
 - The Sanhedrin (chief priests, elders and scribes)
 - These are the religious leaders of the day.
 - This wasn't an official trial...but more like an informal hearing.
 - The Jewish leadership didn't possess the legal authority to execute Jesus but they could make a recommendation, which they eventually do in bringing Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor.
 - Peter
 - It's not just Jesus who is on trial here, Peter is as well.
 - With this literary "Peter Sandwich," the implied question is: Who will be a faithful witness under persecution? Jesus? Peter? Both?
 - Peter's *distance* is already foreshadowing his impending denial.

Transition: Mark is inviting us into two court rooms this morning and he's asked us to be a part of the jury. Both of these trials demand a decision and a response from us.

Trial #1: Who is Jesus and what will you do with him (53-65)?

Verse 55: Their aim was to put Jesus to death but they needed not just a religious indictment, but a political indictment.

- A religious indictment would be of little interest to the Romans.
- But if a political allegation was raised, the Romans would have to act in their own self-interest.
- This is why actions against the temple are raised against Jesus (it had religious and political overtones).
- Darrell Bock notes this clearly:

- “If Jesus could be shown to have designs on damaging this site [the Temple], he would be a threat to law and order.”
- “If Jesus claimed to be a competing King, Caesar would not be pleased.”

There are three particular things that stand out about Jesus:

1. His Innocence (55-59).

- “But they found none” (55).
- Their testimonies didn’t agree (56).
 - As a result, their testimonies couldn’t be used as a formal charge against him (cf. Deut. 17:6).
- The only specific charge that Mark notes is that Jesus would destroy and rebuild the temple.
 - This is a serious charge.
 - The temple was the center of Jewish worship.
- Jesus never said he would destroy the temple (cf. John 2:19-21).

“Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body.” (John 2:19–21, ESV)

- As we’ve already seen, Jesus had already hinted that he was replacing the temple (cf. Mark 11:12-26).

2. His Silence (60-61a).

- Jesus was silent so that none of his statements could be exploited and used against him but he is also modeling the pattern of the suffering servant in Isaiah whose silence represents innocence.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7, ESV)

- As Jesus remains silent, the high priest assumes the role of prosecutor. He asks... (read 61b)

3. His True Identity (61b-65).

- “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”
 - Christ (Greek); Messiah (Hebrew and Aramaic)
 - “Son of the Blessed” means none other than “God’s Son.”
 - Cf. Mark 1:1 and 8:29
 - “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mk. 1:1).
- “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming

with the clouds of heaven.”

- Jesus’ response echoes two key OT allusions.

“*The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”*”
(Psalm 110:1, ESV)

“*I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”* (Daniel 7:13–14, ESV)

- Jesus is claiming to be the *Son of Man* predicted in Daniel 7 and the *Lord* who will reign as king at the right hand of God from Psalm 110:1. He is claiming to have an authority received directly from God.
- Jesus is ironically saying that he is the final judge.
- Jesus is claiming to be able to go directly into God’s presence in heaven. Even more, he was claiming to be the Son of God, to be God himself.
 - The response of the high priest in tearing his garments and claiming blasphemy confirms this (cf. Num 14:6; 2 Sam. 1:11).
 - The charge of blasphemy was reserved for those who ascribed God’s honor to themselves or equating themselves equal with God. The punishment of this was stoning (cf. Lev. 24:16)

Why was Jesus sentenced to death?

- Jesus wasn’t killed for being a good man. He was killed because he claimed to be the promised one. He claimed to be God.
- Yet, the cross was the sovereign will and plan of God (cf. Acts 3:13-14, 17-19; 4:27-28). It was God’s plan to save and redeem his people!!!

The Irony of Jesus’ Trial:

- The Sanhedrin is really who is guilty and Jesus is completely innocent.
 - One commentator notes: “Nearly every detail of Jesus’ trial violates the rules for capital cases prescribed in the Mishnah” (James Edwards).
- The Sanhedrin provides false witnesses while it’s the true testimony of Jesus that results in his death.
- The Sanhedrin thinks they are putting Jesus on trial but in reality Jesus is saying they are the one’s on trial and one day he will be their judge.
 - As Daniel Akin says, “Today I stand before you, but there is coming a day when you will stand before Me in judgment! A great reversal is coming!” (Akin).
- The Sanhedrin mocks Jesus’ ability to prophesy yet all of his prophecies have come true.
- The High Priest is the one who blasphemes, not Jesus, because Jesus really is God’s Son.

What will you do with Jesus?

- Will you condemn and reject him like the High Priest and the Sanhedrin?
 - The spitting, hitting and mockery echoes the suffering servant of Isaiah (Isa. 50:6; 53:2-3).
- Will you receive his testimony and worship him?
- The one option they fatally disregard is that Jesus is indeed speaking the truth and that he enjoys the full endorsement of his heavenly Father.

Transition: Mark now turns to Peter, who has been following and watching from a distance.

Trial #2: Will you (like Peter) forsake costly discipleship for safe observation (66-72)?

- Peter is the only person identified here since it is Peter's story that he desires to tell.
- Peter denies Jesus three times exactly as Jesus predicted (cf. Mark 14:29-31).

1. The Servant Girl to Peter: "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus" (67).

- "I neither know nor understand what you mean."
- Peter moves even further away from Jesus.
- Then the rooster crowed the first time.
 - What do you think Peter was thinking when the first rooster crowed? Did he even hear it?

2. The Servant Girl to Bystanders: "This man is one of them" (69).

- But again he denied it.
- Illustration: this is how I feel sometimes when I'm out with my kids :)
 - Sometimes we'll go out as a family to MarketStreet in Lynnfield. It's great because Leigh and Ava can shop and I'll take the other kids to the turf field and we'll play football.
 - When tag turns into tackle :). Who do those kids belong to? Yeah, the ones tackling each other over there.

3. The Bystanders to Peter: "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean" (70).

- Peter invokes a curse on himself and swears: "I do not know this man of whom you speak."
 - His oath was not profanity but calling upon something sacred to guarantee what he's saying is true. He's most likely calling on God's wrath to strike him if he's lying.
 - Peter can't even bring himself to announce Jesus' name.
- Immediately the rooster crowed a second time.
- Peter remembered Jesus' prediction of denial.
 - He failed three times in the garden (cf. 14:37-42).
 - Now he has failed three more times.
 - Despite his best intentions, temptation overcome him. He has failed.

- Jesus will now face his death alone.

Can you relate with Peter?

- Has there been a time in your past where you denied knowing Jesus?
- In what situations are you tempted to make excuses in order to avoid being identified as a Christian?
- Are there other situations where you tend to simply lie low and avoid the subject?
- Do you feel shame and remorse over situations where you could have stood up for Jesus?

Peter's example is a warning to all disciples:

- It is in our everyday actions that we bear witness to who Jesus is.
- Not even the best Christian or leader is immune to apostasy.

“And he broke down and wept” (72).

- His betrayal overwhelmed him.
- Luke gives us one more detail that I want to end with:

*“But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.** And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.” (Luke 22:60–62, ESV)*

What was in Jesus' eyes as he looked at Peter? What did Peter see in Jesus' eyes?

- Did Jesus' look say, “I told you so!”? You know, the one we so often give our kids or co-workers.
- Were his eyes full of anger?
- Thabiti Anyabwile (An-ya-bwee-lay) thinks the look was “pure and holy love.” He continues, he says, “We can't bear to see him look at us with such pure and holy love when we've failed so miserably. So, like Peter, we turn our faces away and weep bitterly when we fail our Lord.”
- But he continues, “And that's a terrible mistake. If when we sinned against our Lord, we could continue to look in His face, we would eventually see that this holy love accepts us. It pardons. It cleanses. It relieves guilt and removes shame. It heals the broken and lifts the worthless. If we could but look in His face, we'd see a loving look that says, ‘Come unto me.’ Peter's biggest problem isn't that he denied Jesus three times....Peter's biggest problem is that he wept alone and turned away... rather than run to Jesus' loving face. Our biggest problem is looking away from Jesus. He has taken away our sins. Now we must look *to* Him and continue looking *to* Him until we rejoice in His loving acceptance.”

The Point: Repent and turn toward Jesus' loving face which extends grace greater than your sin.

Conclusion:

- When our sin is exposed, we want to run and hide from God (like Adam and Eve).
- But God's love and grace invites us to run TO him. Jesus died for sinners like you and me.
- As far as we know, Judas only felt regret for what he did but he never turned to Jesus.
- In contrast, Peter would repent and turn to Christ for forgiveness.
- You can to!!!
- Don't let your failures define you. Let Jesus' grace define you.
- Satan wants to use the guilt of past failures and sins to hinder you. Don't let him win! When you look and come to Jesus, you are free. He sets you free.
- With Jesus, there are no more secrets.
- With you, before God, there are no secrets.
- Confess, repent and turn to Jesus. May God's grace define you, not your failure.

Pray.