

Series: John

Title: The Need of the Heart

Text: Jn 18: 28-32

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Place: SGBC, NJ

We read in Matthew 26 what took place that night in Caiaphas' judgment hall.

Matthew 26: 59: Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60: But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61: And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62: And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee? 63: But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 64: Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 65: Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. 66: What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. 67: Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68: Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?...27: 1: When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2: And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Here is our text. They bring the Lord Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor.

John 18: 28: Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29: Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30: They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31: Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

They led the Lord Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment very early in the morning. When they apprehended the Lord Jesus it was already night. The Sanhedrim hurriedly assembled in their hall of judgment to give him a mock religious trial. They questioned the Lord all through the night.

Many could have borne witness to the Lord's faithfulness and good works. But these men "*SOUGHT false witness against*" the Lord (Mt 26: 59). They wanted something that would make Pilate think he was guilty so that Pilate would condemn him to die so they could look justified before the people.

Now it is early in the morning and they bring him to Pilate to be tried by a civil judge. They had been up all day and all night. Now it is morning. Oh that men had as much zeal to promote the gospel of Christ as they do to condemn, as they do for scandalous things. Arthur Pink said, "*The disciples could not watch with Him one hour; His enemies had acted against Him all through that night!*"

Here is the Lord Jesus enduring their accusations. He is laying down his life in place of his sinful people. They are sinners condemning the righteous. He is the righteous laying down his life for chosen sinners. He is laying down his life for chosen sinners who are, by nature, no different than these Pharisees or Pilot.

Proposition: From the garden, throughout the law, and in the gospel that Christ preached while he walked this earth, God declares there is no way of salvation for guilty sinners except through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT WE MUST BE SAVED FROM

John 18: 28: Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

The judgement hall was a house of the Gentiles. So these Jewish rulers would not enter. They thought touching a Gentile floor would defile them. If defiled then they could not partake of the passover ceremony. They thought the outward works of the law was their salvation. Not touching an outward thing was their cleanness. The act of partaking of the passover lamb was their righteousness.

They had enmity in their heart toward Christ and Pilot. These men of Judah come to this Gentile governor because they needed something from him. They needed him to pass the sentence of death. But they would not go into the judgment hall lest this Gentile dog defile them. They are saying to Pilot, "We come before you because you have something we need but stand over there and do it and come not near us because we are holier than thou." They are included with those the Lord spoke about in Isaiah 65.

Isaiah 65: 5: Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

This is what all God's elect must be saved from. The sin-nature each of us got from our father Adam is enmity and pride. Pride and enmity is at the root of all sin.

Since they would not come into the judgment hall, Pilate went out to them.

John 18: 29: Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30: They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor [evil doer], we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

It offended the Pharisees that this Gentile dog should question them in such a way. They say, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have brought him to you." They are thinking "Does Pilot not know who we are? We are the elders. We are the Sanhedrim and the high priest!"

Yet, they had already murdered the innocent Lord Jesus in their hearts. They were blind to the truth that it is the heart that defiles a man. We were conceived in sin. Our very nature is sin. Our very nature is pride and enmity against God. It is not what a man touches or what goes into the body that defiles, it is the corrupt heart we got from Adam from our mother's womb.

If God had revealed Christ in them and gave them a new heart and made them truly holy then they would have used *judgment to judge* their own selves the sinner in need of righteousness they could not provide, in need of the righteousness Christ is.

If God had revealed Christ in them then they would have beheld their own need of mercy. They would have known salvation is by God's tender mercies and fell at Christ's feet. And they would have been merciful and full of pity for sinners rather than oppressive.

If God had revealed Christ in them then they would have been constrained by the faith and love of Christ in their hearts to preach Christ to Pilot rather than trying to get Pilot to join them in condemning him.

The Pharisees knew Christ made lepers clean. He had preached to them that except they believe they could not be saved. But they would not confess they were sinners and believe on Christ. Religion and irreligion was only something outward to them. To these men salvation had to do with the body not the soul.

As far as the wicked hands that put Christ on the cross, the cross is the greatest act of self-righteousness ever. The greatest deed of self-righteousness was crucifying the Lord of glory. They cried, "We have a law! Away with him; crucify him; we will take Barrabbas the robber but not this man."

Brethren, before we pat ourselves on the back and say "Lord, I thank you I am not like other men", remember, the sin-nature in every believer is no different from these Pharisees. When Peter boasted that the other apostles might deny Christ but he never would, it was the same self-righteousness, self-commendation in Peter as these Pharisees. The difference was God's grace to Peter in Christ. God had created in Peter a new heart and revealed Christ in him. Christ said, "Peter I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." Christ was the difference. Grace was the difference. God alone made Peter to differ. He alone is our salvation and acceptance with God.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

John 18: 28...they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

The Pharisee's thought the Lord Jesus was destroying their law and their temple and making it all void. That is what they accused the apostle Paul of. That is what they accused believers of in this day. But Christ was the one their temple and ceremonies were given to typify. He was fulfilling the law for his people in true righteousness and true holiness that he might be the salvation of his people. They desire to keep the ceremonial passover while condemning Christ Jesus the true Passover.

Christ is the true Lamb that the ceremonial passover lamb typified. When we say Christ is the Passover of his people it is the same as saying Christ is the Righteousness of his people. Why did God pass over the firstborn in Israel? God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex 12: 13).

God smote all the firstborn in Egypt. Justice will fall on every sinner in this Egypt, both elect and non-elect. The difference is only because God provided a Passover Lamb for the firstborn in Israel. God provided a lamb which died in place of all the first born in Israel.

Christ died in place of his people. The head of the house slew the lamb and put the blood of the lamb upon the doorpost of their houses. And God promised,

Exodus 12:13: And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

God provided the Passover Lamb, Christ Jesus, for all his elect who died in place of his people (1 Cor 5: 7). He is the Head of the house who laid down his own life and by his Spirit he applies the blood in our hearts, cleansing our conscience, to believe on him. By faith we eat his flesh like they did the passover lamb. Not one shall perish who rest in Christ through faith because God sees the blood of his Son, his Lamb, and God passes over his people. It is righteous to show mercy to God's elect because Christ satisfied justice for us by his blood.

Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;

1 Peter 1: 18: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Isaiah 44:22: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

The Pharisees were condemning the true Passover Lamb for the ceremony that typified him. They were condemning the one who gave the Law for the law he gave which they could not hear declare them guilty and in need of him. These self-made religious men condemned the one who is the Righteousness of the Law—the Righteousness of God—the Righteousness of his people. They crucified our Righteousness while thinking they were righteous for condemning the Righteous One.

It is Christ in the heart that makes Jew and Gentile one. The law separated Jew and Gentile. It stirred up the enmity in the Pharisees against Pilot. As long as men look to the law to make them differ from another they will never be one. It is only Christ who makes Jew and Gentile one by making us Righteous in his one body and holy in spirit by his Spirit. Christ broke down the middle wall of partition making his people one in his one body by his one offering. We cannot use the law to exalt ourselves over another. Christ alone is our Peace because Christ alone is our Righteousness.

Ephesians 2: 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; 15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; 16: And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

He came and preached peace to us and by his Spirit made us one. Now, in the new man in those God regenerates, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision,

Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all" (Col 3: 11). Christ is Peace between believers.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

May God gives us grace to see our need of Christ alone. May God make each of his children see we are complete in Christ.

Bodily exercise profits a little; we come to a church house; but Christ is our temple. We follow our Lord in baptism; but it is Christ's death, burial and resurrection that is our salvation. We observe the Lord's table; but it is the broken body and shed blood of Christ that is our Righteousness. We preach, pray, and sing; but Christ is the Salvation who we preach, pray and sing. We strive against sin; but Christ is our Sanctifier and our Sanctification. We do good works; but Christ is our Righteousness and his love for us our motivation.

By the very same grace, we do not want to sin, but when we do we do not run to a ceremonial fountain or to an earthly priest or imagine that cleaning up the outside has made us accepted; by the Spirit of our Lord, we are drawn to Christ our High Priest confessing our sin, taking sides with him against ourselves; we plunge into that fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Christ is our Advocate and our Mercy Seat. He it is that keeps us sanctified in him.

Brethren, by the Spirit cleansing our conscience with the blood of Christ, we worship God in spirit from the new heart. We believe on Christ alone. Through faith in Christ, God has imputed the righteousness of Christ to us. In Christ we have been made the righteousness of the law. Christ is that Righteousness. God has counted us to have fulfilled the law perfectly and to have never sinned because Christ fulfilled the law perfectly and put away our sin by his precious blood.

It is his love for us that constrains us to live for him and to love one another freely. It is free forgiveness in Christ that makes us willing to forgive as God for his sake has forgiven us. We may become puffed up but, by his mercies, the Holy Spirit turns us again to Christ crucified. We see in Christ crucified what we deserved. Thereby the Spirit will not let us go on thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. Knowing we are saved by God's mercy alone, we are merciful to one another. We remind one another of what Christ has done for us. We exhort one another to go to Christ for grace to help in their time of need.

Therefore, we put no confidence in our flesh; we know our sinful nature is yet with us. We confess that "in my flesh dwells no good thing", "when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom 7: 18, 21). We have plenty of hypocrisy in us. Each believer puts our best foot forward. We do not confess to each other all the sin we do, certainly not the sin we think, nor should we. But by God's grace, by the revelation of Christ within us, from the new heart we confess to one another that we are sinners. We are not acting as though we are righteous in ourselves and not sinners. We do not do so before God nor before one another. We confess Christ is our only Righteousness. From our new heart we worship him in singleness of heart. And God looks on the heart he has created.

1 Samuel 16: 7...*the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

We endeavor to keep ourselves unspotted from this world outwardly. But God has made us know that we cannot put confidence in our flesh. The only way we shall be found blameless is in our Holy and Righteous Savior. Christ is the prize Paul pressed toward. Christ is the

price we pressed toward. Our one desire is, "to win Christ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith..." (Php 3: 8).

Amen!