

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 23: "1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man." 5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.**

# 'Jesus Faces King Herod'

**This morning we celebrate Ascension Sunday with the Scripture & music in our liturgy. Ascension Sunday is followed by Pentecost Sunday and then Trinity Sunday where the church calendar completes the work of Jesus and we enter the period called normal or ordinary time. There, until Advent, we focus on how we are to grow and mature in the Kingdom of Christ until His return.**

**Our focus this year on the Ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost will come a little bit later as we begin the Book of Acts, Lord willing in August. Nonetheless, our weekly covenant renewal worship, our church calendar and even our church creeds are meant to remind us of the work of Jesus in History as God restores all things, preparing a spotless Bride for His Son.**

**Each week we sing the Apostle's Creed as we approach the Lord's Table and in the Creed we confess that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."**

**These are the events that we are now working through in Luke's orderly account...**

- **These are real events from history, just as we come to another Sunday as the first day of each week, and come to Ascension Sunday each year in the Church calendar!**

**IF we forget that these are real events from real history, then what we call the Christian faith becomes no different than all the other religions of the world where spiritual nonsense provides no real help with the problem of sin in our world**

- **Jesus DID come to save His people from their sins, in real history at His appointed time!**

**What we have seen in our study of Luke is that which our confession summarizes as Jesus suffering under Pontius Pilate**

**The Gospel writers show us that this time of suffering was in fact a series of beatings, mocking and trials before every element of society and government in Jerusalem at that time.**

**We come this week to the third of three trials that Luke has outlined for us in his orderly account. I suspect it will be our least favorite, not liking what it represents and not liking how Jesus responds!**

- **However, if we are those who fear God and seek to serve Him well, it will bring an important warning and an important lesson.**

**As I have pointed out, it is only Luke who gives us details of the later trial before the Sanhedrin, where Jesus presented Himself as the Son of God. Luke then tells of the first trial before the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate where Jesus explains that He is the King of Kings**

- **And finally it is only Luke who tells us of the third trial where Jesus is taken before King Herod which we will consider this morning**
- **I have made the case that it is Jesus who puts His accusers on trial and they are found wanting.**

**We see in these trials, Jesus confronting the great enemies of our faith:**

- **Our flesh which we will see in Herod's court today,**
- **The world represented by Pilate**
- **And Satan himself as represented by the false shepherds of Israel: Those who Jesus said followed their father the devil**

**Jesus has come to Jerusalem at His appointed time to save His people from their sins AND to deliver them from the power of sin as well.**

- **We have learned that all the false religions & idolatry of this world are defeated by Jesus who came as the Christ: The very Son of God!**
- **We have learned that all of the authorities and political powers of this world are to be humbled and must submit to Jesus who came as the King of Kings!**
- **This morning we will see that Jesus also defeats the power of sin within us, our own flesh.**

**This has certainly been the more difficult to prepare and I suspect it will be the more difficult to hear. You see, we can always give hearty AMENS to the results of the first two trials, where Jesus is the one to put His accusers in their place:**

**We are quick to condemn the Muslims or Mormons or even atheists by declaring the Jesus is the Son of God and that there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved!**

**WE are quick to denounce the humanist forces in government, whether it is the communists or Nazis or dictators or even our own liberals here in America reminding them that they must bow the knee to Jesus who is the King of Kings!**

**Here we can often be guilty of pointing out a splinter in another eye while still having a log in our own BUT we don't struggle with this as much because we are telling THEM what THEY must do!**

**When we come to Herod's court, it is our own flesh that is put on trial, and now we must confront our own hearts: We must face what Jerry Bridges in the book our men in Grass Valley will soon study, calls the 'respectable sins'**

**As I have said, it is only Luke who gives of the details of this trip to Herod's court and we should consider why it is included...**

- **In the Gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, as the story of Jesus coming to save His people from their sins unfolds, we learn about the sheep and the goats**
- **Among the goats, we have three major groups that are seen over and over again, especially in Luke's orderly account:**

**-- We have the false shepherds of Israel, those religious leaders who have rejected the Messiah and now have condemned Jesus at their trial**

**-- We have the Empire of Rome, the last of the four great nations that God explained to Daniel would protect His people until the coming of Messiah.**

**-- And finally, we have those crowds seen throughout the Gospel of Luke, those I have often said have simply come for the show.**

**If we think about the parable of the sower, the false shepherds and Romans are mostly on the hardened path where the Word had no impact. These crowds would be the rocky & weedy areas where the Word has some impact but is soon choked out. This is what we see with King Herod and those in his court that day. We see here what John would later warn the Saints about in his letter: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..."**

- **This is King Herod Antipas, the son of King Herod the great who slaughtered the children around Bethlehem.**
- **This is the Herod who married his brother's wife and arrested John the Baptist.**

**John preached to him about his sin and for a time he was convicted but in the end he allowed his sin and debauchery to box him into beheading John. The picture we have now in Jerusalem tells us that the parties continue: Wild and drunken events where the King allows his own daughter to dance provocatively pleasing all the men that were present. Parties where heads can be presented on silver platter...**

- **The parties continue and now King Herod gets to meet one greater than John... Jesus the Messiah.**

**Our text tells us that Herod was 'exceedingly glad' to have Jesus coming to His court!**

- **It tells us that he had 'desired for a long time to see him.'**

**This desire and gladness was not born of a spirit of humility and certainly not repentance over the sins that had been committed.**

- **No, we see in King Herod the final example of those who came for the show...**

**Luke tells us that King Herod 'hoped to see some miracle done' by Jesus!**

**King Herod thought Jesus would be a great addition to any party!**

**We are told that King Herod asked many questions and that the religious leaders followed along and continue to make their false accusations.**

- **We are told that Jesus remained silent**
- **It is certainly appropriate to ask why?**

**I think it is safe to say that it was NOT because Jesus had nothing to say!**

**It was not because Jesus was unable to speak. We must remember that this is not the only place where He was silent, as predicted by the Prophet Isaiah, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.”**

**Jesus had been silent all morning in the face of false accusations, at the early trials, before Pilate and now here in Herod’s court.**

- **However, Jesus had answered the honest or important questions:**

**He responded to the High Priest’s question of whether He was the Christ and Pilate’s question of whether He was a King. Amidst all the noise and commotion of Herod’s court and the many long winded questions, there was not a single honest question that deserved an answer from our Lord:**

- **The truth of the matter is that it is was King Herod who had nothing to say... It is he who should have been silent before Jesus!**

**Here our Lord was following the instruction of Proverbs, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.” In verse 11 we read that King Herod and all of his court treated Jesus with contempt, mocking Him, and finally, wanting no more to do with Him, sent Him back to Pilate.**

- **The cares of this world had choked out the Word of Life.**

**In verse twelve we see that the hatred of God can unite even the bitterest of enemies in this world: Herod and Pilate who had fought over territory and power, find a common enemy that causes them to become friends. It should remind us that the Proverbs and all of Scripture declare to us that there are only two paths:**

- **There are only sheep and goats**
- **A sober truth we must keep this in mind when we consider who our friends can or should be.**

**This is why Paul warns the Saints that they cannot be ‘unequally yoked’ with unbelievers and that ‘bad company ruins good morals.’**

**So Luke has given us an account of three trials and in each case Jesus has tried His accusers and found them wanting:**

**To the religious leaders He proclaims Himself to be the Christ of God, the very Messiah who had come to save them: And they reject Him.**

**To the Governor of Rome Jesus declared that His Kingdom was not of this world meaning that He did not come as another rival for Rome, but rather Jesus came as the King of Kings who would rule Rome and ALL nations! To which Pilate simply shrugged and said, ‘What is truth.’**

**In front of King Herod & the fickle crowds he represented, Jesus remained silent affirming that Herod had already been condemned by John the Baptist who he not only refused to hear but beheaded as well.**

**This is an example that we see in the first chapter of Proverbs and one we must remember when confronting the evil power of our own flesh: The beginning of wisdom is not knowledge or education or even a title like King.**

**The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord and it is HE that we must listen to NOT ourselves or other sources of worldly wisdom.**

Solomon instructs his son about Lady Wisdom saying in verse 20: “Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. 21 She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: 22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. 23 Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.”

Wisdom had come to the court of Herod not once but twice:

- First with John the Baptist and now with Jesus, the Son of God standing in their very presence!

Hoping for a show with some cool miracle, they are disappointed because Jesus does what Solomon warned would happen to those who are too busy finding themselves or enjoying this life: Putting forth many questions and comments but refusing to hear the voice of wisdom:

“24 Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, 25 Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, 27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. 31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. 32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them...”

The power of the religious leaders, the Temple, the City of Jerusalem and all the Kings of Israel were destroyed in AD70 and Rome would be conquered by the Kingdom of Jesus over the next few centuries.

- ALL of them would be destroyed!

As we have considered these three trials, we have made the point that they demonstrate how Jesus has come to save His people from the penalty AND the power of sin.

We see the importance of this in the final trial where King Herod and his court represent the power of our own flesh:

- Our flesh’s party spirit that wants to be in control and refuses to be accountable.
- Our flesh may want Jesus in our court to see the show, but we want him to perform on our terms:
- We see this when covenant children want all the blessings that a Christian family can bring, but refuse to obey the simplest command they are given: Honor your father and mother!
- We see this in Christian families, who want all the blessings God promises, but cannot be bothered with gathering together with the Saints on the Lord’s Day or go to the trouble to learn how to properly worship!
- We see this in Christian leaders who want to say they are good Catholics or protestants, who love to say God Bless America at the end of their speeches, but refuse to stop the killing of the unborn!

I could go on to talk about married people who don’t take their wedding vows seriously or whatever sin the Holy Spirit might be bringing to your mind at the moment...

**BUT, this is not intended to make us feel guilty...**

- **IF we are troubled by having to confront our own flesh, that is a good thing, meaning that the Spirit of God is at work in our lives. LISTEN to Him!**
- **Herod and his court were no longer troubled because they had hardened their hearts and could not wait to be friends with Pilate rather than Jesus!**

**Paul clearly teaches us in Romans chapter seven that we will have a life-long struggle against our flesh. The lesson for us to learn here this morning is that the victory comes NOT from our speaking to our flesh and telling it to behave, but rather in keeping silent before our foolish nature and trusting the Spirit of God to do His work in our lives: This is the glory of what we see in Romans chapter eight:**

- **Often we are quick to claim the promise of the first verse!**
- **BUT, we must be ready and willing to allow the Spirit to do the work that is described for those who are trusting Jesus:**
- **We must believe that Jesus has won the victory!**

**Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

- **We must be on the right path to claim the blessing!**

**2 “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin:”**

- **Jesus did come to Jerusalem at His appointed time and saved His people from their sin... BOTH the penalty and the power of sin!**

**“He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”**

- **Our eyes must be on Jesus and the victory He brings... NOT on ourselves by putting forth our own efforts to clean up our fleshly nature!**

**6 “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.**

- **King Herod and most of the crowds that will gather for the final condemnation of Jesus have carnal minds and the Scripture warns us not to be like them...**
- **But, remember where the faithful are at this point: They have scattered and are felling pretty down: They are silent now knowing they cannot save themselves But Jesus has prayed for them and is now waging the battle alone against the great enemies of their faith!**

**8 “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”**

- **In other words if we are standing around in Herod's court asking lots of questions and refusing to submit to Jesus, then we are losing the battle!**

**13 "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

**14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**

**17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."**

- **Jesus has won the victory:**
- **The world, the devil and our own flesh have been condemned and defeated by Him and Him alone...**
- **Let us live, this week and the rest of our lives, as those who believe this to be true!**

**Communion Meditation: Psalm 149:**

**"1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints. 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. 3 Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. 4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.**

**6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, 7 To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; 8 To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 To execute on them the written judgment-- This honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord! "**