

**Through the Storm
Trials- Session #2
Small Group Notes**

Introduction:

What is one of the nicest things that anyone has ever done for you? Was it a surprise?

Have you ever had a chance to repay him or her? Could you, if you wanted to?

Have you ever witnessed someone being ungrateful for a gift? How did it make you feel?

In the sermon we heard this truth: Jesus endured a trial that was meant for us! As we continue through our series, Through the Storm, we are going to look at Jesus' trial that he experienced today. There has never been an act of kindness greater than Jesus laying down His life for our sins. In the moments leading up to and on the cross, Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself on our behalf. And while we can never repay this act of grace. We can learn what it means to have endurance for a greater purpose in the storms of our lives!

Discuss:

1. Read Matthew 26:57-61

- The fruit of Jesus' life was more than sufficient evidence for His defense

Explain: When we look at the circumstances surrounding Jesus' trials leading to his death, there were some things that were going on behind the scenes. From Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane, the temple guards took Jesus to the home of the high priest, Caiaphas, in the middle of the night along with the rest of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin were the 70 religious leaders as representatives for the people of Israel. Some of the leaders sought to bring false evidence to these council, specifically on the grounds of Jesus breaking the ninth commandment (Exodus 20:7) about not bearing false witness. The irony of the situation is how while Jesus broke no laws, in order to seek to condemn him of bearing false witness, they had to bring false witnesses.

Ask:

How would you characterize the religious leaders in this passage? Are there examples of their same motives that you see today in situations?

How did Jesus' response to the Sanhedrin show He was trusting in His Father and not the leaders of His day? What does this mean for us in how we respond in times when our character feels "on trial"?

2. Read Matthew 26:62-68

- Jesus was willing to be misunderstood, so that we could fully know and be known by God.
- Jesus was silent conceding guilt, so that we may be set free.

Explain: Jesus was silent as the accusers brought their false testimony. Yet when the time was right. And the question was right. It was the heart of the one asking that was wrong. Jesus spoke. Jesus' answer was Yes about Him being the Messiah. His statement was the affirmation that they had been looking for. The high priest tore his clothes as a sign of revulsion and moral indignation at Jesus' "assumed" blasphemy. Jewish law considered blasphemy a terrible sin, worthy of death (Lev. 24:16). Now the Jewish leaders had to convince the Roman authorities that Jesus deserved death under Roman law. Now that Jesus was convicted under Jewish law, the hypocrites allowed themselves to gloat over their victim. Their abuse and mockery further deepened their own guilt. Spitting in a person's face was one of the deepest insults possible. It was also against Jewish law. They struck him with their fists and slapped him.

Ask:

Why do you think Jesus remained silent against the false accusations, but spoke when questioned about being the Messiah?

What does it look like for us to have discernment about responding to the right questions that we encounter? What does this look like in our interactions with friends, family, coworkers, or social media connections?

3. Read Matthew 26:69-75

- Jesus took on abandonment, so that we could be adopted.

Explain: While Jesus stood alone in his trial, Peter encountered his own trial of faith. Where Jesus was in front of an angry mob. Peter saw even the innocent question of a servant girl as being equitable in nature as it cut to his heart and revealed his fears. Yet as Jesus knew that His journey would be His alone, the statements of Peter's faith to be with Jesus through all things would be revealed in this moment of humility and conviction. And when confronted with remembering Jesus' prior words and the crowing of the rooster, Peter was left to only weep bitterly in response, yet this was critical in his repentance and eventual restoration in John 21.

Ask:

What do you learn from Peter's actions that provide correction to our faith walk with the Lord?

How does the eventual affirmation of Peter three times by Jesus, speak to how he views genuine repentance?

4. Read Matthew 27:11-14, Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 27:15-26

- Jesus went through the storm and trial that we deserved so that we may be acquitted.

Explain: Jesus' silence was important in these three verses. Pilate gave the chief priests and elders an opportunity to make their case. They charged him with many things, possibly including several violations against both Jewish and Roman law. Pilate gave Jesus the opportunity to respond to the Jewish leaders' hostile testimony, but Jesus remained silent. In Pilate's experience, accused people who stood before him did their best to defend themselves. Therefore, Jesus' silence caused great amazement. In order to try and remove his responsibility, Pilate offered the choice between two people, Barrabas the murderous rebel or Jesus. As we see in this account, the people, being swayed by the Sanhedrin chose to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus.

Ask:

How does this remind you that the crucifixion was something Jesus chose to do, rather than something that happened to Jesus? Why does it matter that Jesus went willingly to the cross?

How does this account remind you that Jesus took your place as the substitution for you? How does this motivate you in your walk with the Lord?