

THE CROSS OF CHRIST, SELF-DECEPTION, AND THE COMING OF A NEW WORLD - Good Friday Service, April 7th, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:59-64 - "Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, [60] but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward [61] and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.' " [62] And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" [63] But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." [64] Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

This is one of my favorite passages in the whole Bible. In an almost hidden way it shows the matchless power and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, God the Son. The passage ends with a very fascinating exchange between the high priest and Jesus. After a rather prolonged period of no response whatsoever to the accusations brought against Him, Jesus does say something when the high priest puts Him under oath. The high priest says, "I adjure you by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

And that's when Jesus says, ***"....You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."***

“You have said so.” What does that answer mean? Does this mean “No, that’s just your opinion”? Does this mean “Yes”? Or, does this mean something else - something **more** than just “Yes”?

I think Jesus **did** mean something more in this response. And I don’t think He chose these words lightly. I think they are the studied, careful words of the Son of God as He strives to make a point. And it’s a point on which life and death - **eternal** life and death - hang. I say this because Jesus used this very same phrase - almost the exact same words - earlier on in this same chapter of Matthew’s gospel. He used them in a soul-searching exchange when Judas questioned Jesus about His betrayal:

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:24-25 - “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” [25] Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

There it is. **“You have said so.”** And here, because we have the advantage of looking back in time, we all know what Jesus’ words meant. We all know that Judas is just **pretending** here when he says, **“Surely, it’s not I!”**. Judas knows full well that he **is** the one who is going to betray Jesus. He has already made **plans** to betray Jesus. So he’s bluffing here. He’s hoping he can get away with some sort of con.

And because Jesus also knows full well that Judas is going to betray Him, and because Jesus knows full well that Judas is just pretending innocence by looking as though he was asking a sincere question, Jesus comes back with the same words He would later speak to the high priest - ***“You have said so (25).***

In other words, when Jesus says, ***“You have said it yourself”*** to the high priest, He is saying, ***“There is something in your heart that already knows the answer to that question. Your question is merely a means of hiding the truth from yourself. You know more than you are willing to face in the core of your being. And I’m not going to play this game with you. There’s too much at stake.”***

So Jesus is answering ***“Yes,”*** but He’s answering ***more*** than just ***“Yes.”*** He’s saying ***“Yes, but your problem is your unwillingness to yield to this truth. You are trying to look like an honest seeker of truth, when, in fact, you aren’t willing to accept the consequences of this truth in your own life.”***

Jesus pins this high priest down the same way He pinned Judas down at the last supper. He doesn’t just answer his question with a simple affirmative. He says, ***“The answer is in the words you have just spoken. The truth has just come a tumbling out of your own lips.”***

What does Jesus do with such blindness? What else does He say to the high priest? What do you and I need to remember as we live in this world of truth suppressers? Look at the rest of His words in **verse 64 - "Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." - IPAD TEXT**

These are powerful words. Jesus points to ***three great reversals*** that are coming. Palm Sunday comes with the message of the death of Jesus Christ. There was no deliverance for Him. He didn't escape the false accusations. He didn't escape the phoney trial. No miracle saved Him from the embarrassment and pain of the Cross. People like Pilate and the high priest were free to play fast and loose with the truth for their own power-hungry ends.

People still have this freedom. Jesus get's crucified a million times a day by silly people who don't respond to His claim on their lives. He gets ignored, even by church people, who think they can pay lip service to Him without Him actually bringing judgment on them for their stubbornness.

But Jesus says there are three great reversals coming that are going to usher in a totally new world. Your future hangs on these great reversals more than it hangs on your investments, your business successes, your education, or even your family and loved ones. Jesus said the high priest was going to **see** these reversals with his own eyes. And you and I will see them too:

- 1) **“YOU CAN PRETEND I’M NOT THE CHRIST FOR NOW, BUT ONE DAY YOU WILL SEE ME COME IN GLORY”**

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:64 - “Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

In many Bibles the last half of this verse is either capitalized or printed in italics. That’s because its roots are in the Old Testament Scriptures:

IPAD TEXT - Daniel 7:13-14 - "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. [14] 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."

This is how Jesus understands that term for Himself, "***Son of Man.***" It is a term filled with might and dominion. Jesus was the Messiah in the prophesied sense of being ***God's Chosen Deliverer and King.*** But it didn't look like it as He stood before Caiaphas. People were ***mocking*** Jesus, not ***bowing*** before Jesus. He was everyone's victim. There were no robes or crowns - unless we count the one made of thorns. People didn't seem to be ***ruled*** by Jesus at all. They were ***playing*** with Him.

And He let it all happen. He still does. But, He said, there was a ***great reversal*** coming. He said, "***I say to you, you will see it!***"

- 2) **"IN YOUR BLINDNESS YOU THINK YOU ARE PASSING JUDGMENT ON ME. YOU ARE GOING TO REALIZE WHEN I COME THAT YOU ARE ONLY SEALING JUDGMENT ON YOURSELF"**

Jesus told the high priest that he would see Him coming with power. But I want you to notice one small detail that has great significance:

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:64 - "Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

In all the days of his trial and accusation Jesus was made to **stand**. He was shuffled and shuttled around in front of this world's power brokers and made to stand before them like He was somehow **answerable** to them. There is such great **restraint** here on the part of Jesus, such great **humility** and **love** for this lost, proud and arrogant world.

But when He comes back He won't be **standing** before anyone. He says the next time the high priest sees Him, and the next time you and I see Him, and the next time this whole world sees Him, He will be "**sitting at the right hand of power**" (26:64). What that means is the next time we see Jesus, **He** won't be standing before **us**. **We** will be standing before **Him**.

There are other passages where Jesus goes into even more detail about the next time we all see Him "**sitting at the right hand of power**":

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 25:31-33 - "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. [32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33] And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left."

Now we begin to see even more clearly why Jesus said to the high priest, ***"You have said so yourself."*** In spite of all outward appearances Jesus wasn't the one on trial here. The high priest was passing sentence on ***himself - "You have said so - You yourself!"*** ***Remember these words, Caiaphas!*** Everything hinges on knowing Who Jesus is. Dodging truth is an eternally dangerous game. You're passing sentence on yourself.

How our world needs to hear this message. Jesus Christ will never be the defendant again. The only way He will appear from now on is as Judge. You will see this. This is the second great reversal.

- 3) **"IN YOUR BLINDNESS YOU SENTENCE ME TO DEATH. YOU THINK YOU ARE MAKING AN END OF ME. BUT THE CROSS AND THE GRAVE ARE NOT THE END - THEY ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING!"**

IPAD TEXT - Matthew 26:64b - "...But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

It is so striking that at this very appearance before Caiaphas they brought up the statement Jesus made about the temple - **Matthew 26:59-61 - "Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, [60] but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward [61] and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.' "** - IPAD TEXT

Of course, this was all false. It was *close* to what Jesus said, but not *quite* what Jesus said: **John 2:18-19 - "So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" [19] Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."** - IPAD TEXT

Jesus said “**You destroy this temple (His body) and I will raise it up in three days.**” **This** is the truth staring Caiaphas in the face. Jesus was saying, “**You sentence me to death. In your blindness you think you can put me out of sight forever. You think this means you will be done with me forever. But you’re wrong. You will see the Son of Man - not dead, but alive - coming on the clouds of heaven.**”

“Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days. Not only will I rise, I will come again. Not only will I rule somewhere far away in heaven, I will return to earth. This will not just be some rule of love in devout believers’ hearts. It will take place right here on the earth, literally, visibly. You will **see** it happen!” This is the third great reversal.

Remember church, **some great reversals are coming.** Your world is going to be turned upside down. Everything hinges on how we all **own up to the truth we know and have heard about Jesus Christ.** Like Caiaphas, we don’t need more proof. We need to submit our lives to the incredible force of revealed, God-given truth. Jesus Christ is the Risen Messiah, the Son of God, who died for our sins as the only Redeemer, and who will come again on clouds of glory to judge the world in righteousness. And everyone needs to **yield their lives** to that truth.

Do it today. There’s a new world coming.