



## **“Jesus Bears Witness”**

Luke 22:63-71

February 21, 2021

This morning we open Scripture as we continue in our study of the Gospel of Luke. We open to the trial of the Lord Jesus Christ before the Great Sanhedrin of Israel. Here we had a gathering of seventy men. They were the most highly esteemed priests and scribes of Israel, and they formed together something like the Supreme Court of their nation.

For the past three years they had been trying to discern from Jesus who He was. Who do you claim to be and what are you asserting about yourself? Just how lofty are your notions about yourself. Who are you?

The more that they had heard about Jesus, the more disturbed and resistant and even violent they had become toward Him. And now we find them gathered together on the very morning of the Passover Feast. It was the morning that we now call Good Friday, the morning of His crucifixion and they had to come to a final decision.

They had to come to a conclusion about Jesus early that morning and they bared responsibility for rendering a verdict as they heard Jesus bearing witness about Himself. Likewise, every person in this room has to come to a decision about Jesus. Every person in the hearing of this message and any message like it has to come to a decision about Jesus.

Do you believe Him or do you not? Do you affirm the lofty claims that He made about Himself or do you not? Do you receive Him in His claims to Lordship or do you dismiss Him? Every person who hears this message of Jesus must come to a decision; every person in your neighborhood, every person in your family, every person in your office, every person in your living room. The person sitting in your seat in the pew or in your chair at home, you must render a verdict.

This morning as we hear what proceeded before the Sanhedrin, it is my prayer that each person in the hearing of this message, by the work of the Holy Spirit, will resolutely affirm Jesus as the long prophesized Messiah of Scripture; that you will resolutely affirm everything that is involved with Him being the Divine Messiah who came from God as King.

Further, it is my prayer that you, by the help of the Holy Spirit, will conquer any sinful tendency within you to think of Him otherwise, and that you continue in the power of the Holy Spirit and unabashedly worship Him and bear witness of Him and make Him known to others. I think this is how the Scripture leads us this morning.

As we get oriented to the trials of Jesus, a careful reading of Scripture indicates that there were six hearings that Jesus was involved in. Three of them were before the religious Jewish court, and three of them were before the civil Roman courts.

Next week we will see how Jesus stood before the Roman authorities. This morning we will see how He stood before the Jewish authorities. Understand, there were three hearings that took place in relation to the Jewish authorities of the land.

This is something that helps us because in this church we are people who read Scripture. As you read through the different accounts of the hearings that Jesus had in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you will notice that there are some differences in what is said. Once you see the framework in the details of the various text, the three different hearings comes into such sharp focus.

So there were three hearings that Jesus faced in those dark early hours into the time of the sunrise.

### **The Three Jewish Hearings:**

#### **1. Informal hearing before Annas (John 18:13, 19-24)**

This was something of an informal hearing. Annas was the high priest emeritus, we might call him. He was the former high priest of Israel and he was the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas.

This man Annas, he was removed from that position by the Roman authorities because he rendered too many decisions that were out of sync with Rome. So the Romans set him aside and installed his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

However, this man Annas got to hear from and interrogate Jesus first. They wanted to know His take and this shows you just how much influence Annas still had. That hearing is spoken of in John Chapter 18. Then there was a second:

#### **2. Preliminary hearing before Caiaphas and a partially assembled Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59-66; Mark 14:55-64)**

This was the trial that took place possibly for hours through the dark early morning hours of that fateful night. This was when they were bringing forth a whole series of witnesses to bear witness against Jesus.

They needed two or three of those witnesses to lineup in their testimony, but they could not get that to happen. There were so many inconsistencies and because they were going to move Him forward to Rome for His execution, they knew that they needed an airtight case against Jesus, because Pilate would not be a rubber stamp.

They experienced frustration because they could not get witnesses to line up on the details. Finally, when you read the account of it in Matthew and Mark, Caiaphas threw a Hail Mary at the end of it, asking, Are you the Christ, the Son of God?

In that hearing, Jesus said, I am and you will see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. At that point, they began ripping their garments, saying, He has given the testimony that we need.

That was something of a preliminary hearing, or a preparatory hearing. For all the developed Jewish jurisprudence that was dismissed in the trials of Jesus, they knew that they were not allowed to make a decision in the dark time hours. All of the decisions rendered by the Great Sanhedrin had to be made during daylight.

So they preserved the final hearing for daybreak. They wanted it to happen first thing in the morning so that they could get Jesus to Pilate first. Then, finally, there was a third hearing that we read of in the Gospels. It was the:

### **3. Formal hearing before Caiaphas and formally assembled Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66-71; Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1)**

This took place at sunrise. This was the one where the formal minutes were being taken. This was an important moment.

As we continue in the Gospel of Luke, our brother in the Lord, takes us into that hearing. It was then sunrise. This was the third trial which was a formal record. Peter was somewhere sobbing. Jesus was being held by the guards, then He was moved into the court of the Jews one last time.

Here we read how Jesus bared witness of Himself. Luke Chapter 22 and Verse 63:

**<sup>63</sup>Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody (this was between hearing 2 and 3) were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup>They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>65</sup>And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.**

**<sup>66</sup>When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, <sup>67</sup>“If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup>and if I ask you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup>But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” <sup>70</sup>So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” <sup>71</sup>Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”**

So we have read how Jesus gave testimony about Himself. What we just read seems to contain what might sound like a couple of cryptic moments. In fact, at the heart of what we just read is a very powerful statement, even an aggressive statement coming from the Christ to the men who were seated there. That statement was when Jesus said the Son of Man from now on is seated in power.

At some point in the growth of Jesus in His humanity, from childhood to maturity, He read the ever important prophetic Chapter 7 of the book of Daniel and its presentation of the Throne Room of God. Jesus read how that portion of Scripture presented one like a Son of Man who appeared before the Ancient of Days and who came forward and was given all dominion and power in an everlasting way.

Jesus read of this supernatural figure who receives universal authority and rises on the clouds like chariots like God, and Jesus realized that was Him. And this title, Son of Man, became the favorite way of our Messiah in referring to Himself; far more than any of the other titles, Son of God or Christ. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of Man repeatedly and we must understand that this is a supernatural figure presented in Daniel Chapter 7.

Now they demanded Jesus to tell them if He were the Christ. And Jesus, said, From now on the Son of Man is seated at the right hand of the power of God. Jesus was claiming something awesome and stunning here, not just for the Sanhedrin but for everybody who hears Him speaking about Himself.

Jesus claimed the right to walk directly into the presence of the Living God of Heaven and Earth. He proceeds into the presence of God, not as one who goes and stands humbly in silence. Rather, He goes into the presence of the Almighty and He walks straight up to the Throne and He strides right up onto the platform. There He is in the very close proximity of Almighty Power and He takes His seat as though He belongs there side by side with Almighty God because He does!

Jesus is God. Father, Son, and Spirit. There He is manifested and clothed in the power of God, which is the power that is also inherent to Himself. So perceiving this, the Jewish authorities asked, Are you the Son of God, then? As theologians they knew what that meant. They asked, Are you one in essence with God? Are you of the same nature as the Almighty?

Then Jesus said, You say that I am. While that might seem like a somewhat evasive response, understand that it was not. It was a brilliant expression of affirmation that might have been comparable to something like this: Are you the Son of God, then? You know it! You've got it.

But even better, Jesus said it in a way that affirmed and rendered them culpable in asking it. Jesus said, You have said it. This is the nuance of the expression that He gave. This gets captured in some of the other English translations of the New Testament. The NKJV has it, You rightly say that I am. The NAS simply says, Yes, I am. The Amplified Paraphrase has it, It is just as you say. The Young's Literal Translation has it, You say it because I am.

These help us to understand the force of the Aramaic expression that Luke rendered to us in recording the details of this trial. It was a very strong affirmation. So understand this: in terms of what the Sanhedrin's intentions were for Jesus to be condemned to death, Jesus gave them just what they desired.

Jesus answered in a way that satisfied both Roman and Jewish law. He claimed here to be the Son of God. This was a grave concern for the Jews and for those in power who did not believe Him. This was a statement of blasphemy.

In addition to that, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ, the King. This was something that was of grave concern to the Roman authorities as they knew full well this Messianic figure was prophesied to come and ultimately conquer the nation. So, Jesus also responded with a Christological affirmation that could render Him culpable of insurrection against Rome.

Jesus was going in a direction that accorded with what they desired. Now understand as we perceive these things, believing hearts need to stop and praise the Lord and thank Jesus, because if He would have just kept His mouth silent, this case would have been dismissed.

Once again, there was a very, very highly developed Jewish jurisprudence. You can read about it throughout the Law of Moses. There were several elements of the Law they knew they had to uphold if it were going to hold any water before Rome, and they knew they would need multiple witnesses that agreed. However, all the witnesses were stumbling all over each other.

Every time I think of Caiaphas needing two or three witness, I think of a slot machine. I don't play them, but I think you pull the lever and must get three images to line up to hit the jackpot. Caiaphas was like a crazed man trying to get three witnesses to line up and he could not do it.

And if Jesus just pled the fifth, all of it would have gone away. If He kept silence, He would not go to the cross and you and I remain in our sins. Yet as He prayed before the Father, His volition had been empowered. It was the Father's will that He drink the cup of judgment and wrath for the sake of the bride.

It was the will of Jesus. He was strongly resolved that He would offer Himself up as a sacrifice for our sin. So speaking forth, He did bear witness, He did not do so in all kinds of language that was self-defensive trying to get Himself off the hook. He was silent in that way. Jesus spoke forth to get Himself on the hook for us.

Jesus spoke forth to get those nails driven through His hands and feet. I heard somebody say that if those Roman guards did not take the mallet and drive the stake through His feet, He would have found a way to take the mallet and do it Himself.

So resolved was He to purchase our salvation and to cleanse us by His blood, to purify us, to transform us, to forgive us, to bring holy and righteous standing as a gift before God. Brothers and sisters, look at what happened here and understand that there is no greater love than what we see here in Christ for us.

I pray that Jesus is revealed and that He is made known, and I pray that everybody who hears this will perceive and understand that you will resolutely affirm Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. Jesus Christ, eternal God now in human form who came to save us by sacrificing Himself.

I pray that this would burst forth in our hearts powerfully with praise and worship and fellowship and discipleship and evangelism, all coming as the outflow. I pray that we would be resolute in our conviction that there is none other like Jesus and that we love Him because He first loved us and that we praise Him.

In this it is my desire that we would overcome any sinful inclination within us to think of Him otherwise. Brothers and sisters, not only does the Bible reveal Jesus to us and present Him as Lord of all, but the Bible also reveals ourselves to us. The Bible is like a mirror telling us to take a good look at ourselves.

As the Bible reveals to us our sin, in places it also gloriously and wonderfully presents for us a vision for what God is shaping us into by His grace. But there are these moments like the one that is here in which the Bible presents human sin.

Whenever we read stories like this where we see the behavior of the temple guards and the Sanhedrin, we say they are the villains and there are terrible people out in the world. But wait a minute, the Scripture does in fact warn us about the sin and the darkness and the world that is out there, but let us understand the enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil who works in the world and who incites the flesh with temptation.

Here in our lingering fallenness, there are still tendencies to think wrongly about God that need to be absorbed by the power of the Holy Spirit who helps us to think rightly about God. So when we look at the behavior of the guards and Sanhedrin's, let's not get ourselves off the hook, saying, Them, them, them, them.

Rather let us look at what is there and see what we are capable of; that we need for the Lord to totally, totally wash away from us our sin and empower us to conquer and crucify and to devastate and to defeat with His power working through us.

Do you ever notice that in the pages of Scripture the Bible teaches Christians to have a savage viewpoint upon their own sin? Young people use the term *you got wrecked*. We even have to sometimes have this view of our sin. It is going to get wrecked and destroyed.

If we are always saying the sin out there, the sin out there, we are never thinking about ourselves. Like the text says, Beware, whoever thinks that he stands, lest he fall. So we must look here and, say, Lord, apart from the grace of God, there go I. Looking at what is here in this text, we see our human fallen nature

Do you ever notice how sin is personified throughout the pages of Scripture? In Romans Chapter 6 sin is spoken of as a slave master that still wants to conquer those who are in the church and those who are in Christ. Sin wants to have its way with you.

Your sinful nature will try to persuade you of two things. One, that Christ is a joke, and second that Christ is a threat. It is almost painful to put these things up on the screen, yet here they are in Scripture. These are things we need to grapple with that we might be warned.

Your sinful nature will try to persuade you that:

### 1. Jesus as a joke (22:63-65)

We see this pictured for us in the behavior of the guards. It is exemplified for us in Verses 63 through 65:

**<sup>63</sup>Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup>They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>65</sup>And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.**

We have these men who were handling Jesus and abusing Jesus. They were not the scholars or the intellectuals who were inside the courtroom. But those men sure did have a lot to say, didn't they? They were profuse in the way that they spoke. With many things they were blaspheming Him.

At the center of it you have this horrendously modified game of blind man's bluff going on where they kept saying, Prophecy, who struck? Prophecy, Ha, who struck you? The irony of it is that as they played this game saying prophecy who struck you, they were fulfilling the prophecy of the One that they struck, because Jesus repeatedly said to His disciples that the Son of Man is going to be handed over to the sons of men and they were going to mock Him and spit upon Him.

So they themselves were fulfilling prophecy. They thought it was all a big joke. You can hear their laughter and their perverse delight and their scorn. People in the Twenty-First Century do not have the opportunity to strike Jesus physically in the way that they were able to then, but let's be careful to know that people everywhere still scorn Jesus and the mockery continues. And don't think you are not capable of it.

Left to yourself without the Holy Spirit empowering, sustaining, and giving you the ability to worship Him in your heart, you are capable of it as well. The Bible informs us that there will be a certain species of sin and it seems it will multiply into the last days, and it is the sin of mockery.

Those who practice the sin of mockery are called scoffers. They are spoken of all throughout the pages of Scripture. We read in Jude and Verses 17-19:

**<sup>17</sup>But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” <sup>19</sup>It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.**

So we are warned about scoffing.

This week I was looking on a social media account and an old acquaintance who posted a collage of four or five pictures. Those pictures were to honor somebody that he cared for. One of those pictures showed his son dressed up as Jesus. He was dressed up in a robe. He had the crown on his head, and it looked like he was going to a costume party or on a Halloween-type event. I can't judge the heart. I don't know what was going on with him dressing up as Jesus for a costume party, but everything in that picture emanated scorn and hilarity and mockery.

Then posted under that picture another person posted another picture of another young adult about the same age and their parents posted clapping symbols, Ha, ha, ha, ha. Here is my son evidently mocking Jesus too. "Oh we got to get together!"

Here is the twist: the one who posted the original picture is one that I once had fellowship with. My heart has such affection for this man. He was a man that we would have once called a person on fire for the Lord. This was a man who in my young adult years edified me and helped me.

I am here today as a pastor partly because of the influence of him and others. Somewhere along the way his heart and his mind turned sour toward the faith and over the years he has repeatedly mocked Christ. A scoffer! I pray that the Lord turns his heart back, even as his children seem to be following in his footsteps.

So brothers and sisters, we need to go before the Lord and we need to cast ourselves before Him and say, Lord, fill our hearts with faith to see Jesus. Let me say this too, there is another form of scoffing that might not be as blatant as that. In what we just read, Jude was speaking to the church and was speaking of people who would regularly be a part of the church and were causing division because of their scoffing.

So imagine a person who, by the grace of God, comes to look at Scripture and sees in the Bible the absolute will of God, not just a series of suggestions or things to memorize and not put into practice, but sees especially in the New Testament instruction to the church as the will of God. And is zealous for this by the work of the Spirit in him.

Then there is somebody else over here who is lukewarm. Apathetic. Not filled with the Holy Spirit. Then there is one on fire and the person over there is shamed by the one who is on fire. So what do they do? O come on! Do we really need to follow the commands of the New Testament in that kind of pains-taking detail? Why do you have to be so intense and serious all the time?

There can a tendency of people within churches to scoff at obedience that is empowered by the Holy Spirit. So we must beware. We must watch out. We must cast ourselves before the Lord, saying, Make our hearts new.

As I think back through the years, I think about all of the people that have sat in these pews. I praise God that to my knowledge most of them continue in the Lord with genuine faith. I can think of whole series of people who have not just wandered but have become apostate and mockers. People that have sat in these pews.



Let us humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. Let us ask God to know Christ. I want to offer you a very, very important prayer. I remember when I was a young adult. I had one foot on one side of the fence and the other foot on the other side of the fence. One foot in the church and one foot in the world.

I was kind of growing into the faith. I remember for the first time in that season hearing strong criticism against the Christian faith. I was hearing academic and moral criticism against Christian faith for many different reasons.

I also remember one of the songs we sang that so deeply impressed upon my heart. I wrote it on my folders in class. I was constantly praying it:

Change my heart, O God,  
Make it ever true,  
Change my heart, O God,  
May I be like You

That prayer just entered into me. I was praying change my heart. Help me to see what is true. It is so ironic that there in the midst of some of the most intense criticisms of the faith that I heard up to that point, there was such a strong awakening in my heart to the glory about Jesus revealed in Scripture that is awesome.

Everything in society and in the world and even with some people sweeping me this way, I was being propelled the other way by nothing else than the work of the Holy Spirit in my heart and mind, showing me the glory of Jesus Christ in the pages of Scripture. So I commend that prayer to you. Change my heart O God.

Your sinful tendency will try to persuade you that Jesus is a joke. It will also try to persuade you to see:

## **2. Jesus as a threat (22:66-71)**

This is exemplified in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council. For close to three years they had seen how Jesus had been dismantling their reign; how He had been undoing their seat of power. They did not like it and they needed to get rid of Him. They viewed Jesus as a threat.

There is the tendency within every fallen human being toward self-sovereignty. This is something that is so powerful in the spirit of the age. Self-autonomy. I am who I define myself to be. Nobody has the right to tell me who or what I am except me. Nobody has the right to tell me what to do except from me. Self-sovereignty. It is the spirit of the age because it is in the spirit of the human being. It is fallenness and it is sin.

Then here comes Jesus and Jesus says, No, you are not sovereign. No, you are not authoritative. I made you. I created you. I sustain you. And Jesus enters into our lives as the Lord. He comes into our lives with an authoritative vision for you.

For every aspect of it. For how your Sunday goes. But not just Sunday, but your Monday and your Tuesday and your Wednesday and your Thursday and your Friday and your Saturday. Your morning. Your evening and your night.

What happens in your living room. What happens in your bank account. What happens in your sex life. What happens in your gender. He reigns over it all. He is the Lord. There is no better place for any human being to be than at the center of His will. But the fallen nature of the sin of man resists it. So when the claims of Christ start to encroach, there are many who say no and they reject Him.

But then there are others. Jesus gets a little too close to home but they can't just say they don't believe in Him outright, so they reshape Him. They create a Jesus of their own design talking about my Jesus, my Jesus. My Jesus would never do this. He always does that. People create their own personal Jesus who is nothing but an idol if He is not the Jesus that is clearly revealed to us in Scripture.

There are some who deny Him. They reject Him. There are others who try to reshape Him but by the work of the Spirit, there are those who receive Him. He is born in their lives as they are come to faith. They receive Him and they are born anew.

There is another prayer that is important. One is Change My Heart O God. Here is another prayer that I commend to you. It might be just as familiar to some of you as the first one. Open the Eyes of My Heart:

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord  
Open the eyes of my heart  
I want to see You  
I want to see You  
To see You high and lifted up  
Shinin' in the light of Your glory

I want to see You close. Nearby. Tender. Kind. We have to pray to the Lord to open our eyes because when we see His beauty and taste and see that the Lord is good, that is when our hearts are going to explode with faith as the Holy Spirit is at work in the midst of all of it.

How is Jesus revealed to us in this portion of Scripture? There are three titles that reveal His glory. What are they? Who is He? There is much more, but three wonderful aspects of our Christ are revealed to us here that declares to us the essence of Him.

### **Three Titles Revealing His Glory:**

#### **1. He is the Christ**

He is the Christ, the Messiah. The title *Christ* is used fifty-four times in the Gospels. The Greek for *Christ* is the same as the Hebrew for *Messiah* and it literally means *the one who has been anointed*. It speaks to the ritual of anointing Hebrew kings as they began their reign.

Even while there were series of kings in Israel and then in Judah, all along the Scripture was pointing to one who would be uniquely and supremely anointed. A king. A monarch who is good in every possible way. We need the Spirit to help us because we are familiar with so many corrupt human leaders.

For our morning Bible time, the Saltzmann's are reading through First and Second Kings. We have just read about Elijah and Ahab and Jezebel. We have read about corrupt king after sinful king after unbelievable king. One after the other. Even the ones that were pretty good, then they did something bad and we wonder what happened.

No, we would not know anything about that here in the United States of America, would we? Oh, yes we would! Brothers and sisters, the Scripture speaks of One who is to come who is going to reign in a way that is flawless. Flawless is not even the right word because that indicates doing no wrong. He is going to go everything right.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. It just keeps expanding. More and more shalom. Then when you think we have all the shalom, everything is working perfectly, then new initiatives will begin. They work perfectly too. And of the increase of His reign and His government and His shalom there will be no end. It just keeps going, blowing the minds of His people as it expands.

Isaiah Chapter 9 and Verse 7:

**<sup>7</sup>Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

He is not the only anointed one. He is the uniquely anointed One. He is the supremely anointed One. But this King anoints His people with the Holy Spirit too. We are bathed in the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Holy Spirit. Saturated in the Holy Spirit.

We are anointed by God in such a way as His Kingdom comes in its fullness that our lives will totally harmonize with His holiness and His happiness forevermore. It will be perfect. He is the Christ, the Anointed One.

Continuing,

## **2. He is the Son of Man**

He is the Glorious Divine Being who does not emerge from history, but who enters into history from the outside. This Glorious Divine Being is also associated with the human race. He is after all the Son of Man.

Early in Luke we read how our Lord was born of a virgin and He took on human flesh and in Christ, you have perfect humanity and undiminished deity merged, joined in one. He is one who is able to atone for His people.

Then He is also one who is able to sympathize with His people because having lived as a man in this fallen world, He knows the struggle of it all. So Jesus beckons us to constantly come back into His presence, to His throne of grace to find help in our time of need.

The struggle with sin does not end when you become a Christian. The struggle with sickness and disease does not end when you become a Christian. The struggle with anxiety does not end when you become a Christian.

The struggle with internal heaviness does not end when you become a Christian. The struggle with arrogance and pride and getting puffed up does not end when you become a Christian. The struggle with fear does not end when you become a Christian.

So we live in union with the One who came into this world for us. Finally,

## **3. He is the Son of God**

He is the Son of God. That does not mean that He is a created being. He is not a created being. He is an Eternal Being.

In the early centuries of the Christian faith, the theologians of Nicaea were very careful reading through Scripture and hearing some of the things that were said to help us to understand that Christ is not a created being. Begotten of the Father is different than created by the Father.

He is begotten from the Father before all ages. He is God from God. He is light and light. True God from true God, begotten and not made. Of the same essence of the Father. This is Christ for all eternity past and present and future. He is united with the Father and the Spirit, save those hours that the relationship was ruptured on the cross when Jesus took upon Himself our sin.

Now having completed the work of salvation, the Divine Son of God brings us into this circle of eternal fellowship that we read about in Scripture. There is the Father, the Son, the Spirit and there is the Bride. No, the Bride is not God. No, the Bride never evolves into God. We are not God. He is God.

But we are joined to the life of God in this intimate union. We are married into the family. Thus, Jesus says to His disciples previously that very night:

**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. John 15:9**

That is one of the most explosive and mind blowing verses in the Bible, in my humble opinion. Somebody please explain to me how to measure that. Jesus said, As the Father has loved me. Just let that soak in. So have I loved you, precious Bride. Now abide, remain, in my love.

As we finish, just a couple of final closing words of encouragement. First to those who have not come into a relationship with Jesus by acknowledging and confessing your sin and trusting in Jesus and Jesus alone to be saved and forgiven and to be cleansed. Then I have a word to those of you have.

Let the call ring forth, come and believe. Come and trust. Believe in Him. Be joined to the eternal life that Christ and Christ alone can bring you. Let Him clean the mess you have made of yourself. Come by faith that you may be forgiven in the deepest parts, even the deepest stains. Come to Jesus who paid the price for your sin.

If you reject Him, you will face the Infinite God and you will pay the eternal price for your own sin, which happens in a place the Bible calls Hell. Jesus is the door into Heaven. He is the way, the truth, the life and you are beckoned to come and believe in Him.

Right now if you are hearing this and you have never come to faith in Christ, I pray that your heart is being pulled in. Yet, at the same time, if your experience is like most peoples, you are going to be squirming and feeling conviction and something is pulling you back. That happens.

The Holy Spirit is at work drawing you in and you just need to come to faith in Christ. You need to trust in Him. You need to be brought into His fold through faith. Here is what you do. You come and be a part of the people of God, the church, your fellow strugglers, who seek to encourage each other in the power of the Spirit.

Then you get baptized! That is your public declaration. You stand up and say, I affirm Him. I believe in Him. I trust in Him. And you demonstrate that by getting baptized. That is the command of Jesus.

If you a believer and you have not been baptized, what's up? What are you doing? Get baptized! It is fun and happy. Yes, it is reverent and serious, but it is joyful. People clap their hands. It is a good time. Come to Jesus.

If you are here and you do know Jesus, make Him known. Spread His Name. Spread His fame. Make Him known to people in the church and outside the church. Make Him known to believers and unbelievers. Build people up in the knowledge of who Jesus is.

Do it anyway that you can do it. If you can go and talk to people directly about Jesus, go do that. If that is scary to you, then you need to write them a letter. If that is hard for you, and you need to write them a note on Email, write them a note on Email.

The big problem is that nothing is being done to name Jesus and make Him known. So however you do it, do it. As you do, you may find that people make things hard for you.

Following Christ , you may be called to bear witness before:

1. Those viewing Jesus as a joke (22:63-65)
2. Those viewing Jesus as a threat (22:66-71)

How awesome it is when people who viewed Jesus as a joke and/or a threat, then comes to see Jesus as the Savior. We have to believe and walk by faith that right now all around us, God is preparing people to know Jesus. They want to know Jesus. They need to know Jesus. They would like to talk about Jesus, yet we don't talk and that is sad.

There is no greater love than the love that is found in Jesus Christ. Please join me in prayer.