

Shall we open our Bibles this morning to Mark 14:53? And if you've already found that, we're going to be flipping over to John 18 in a moment. So, if you can find that and mark that, it will save you a moment.

As we continue our study through Mark's gospel, we are with Jesus and the boys on that night before the Lord was to die - late Thursday night (for us), Friday morning (for the Jewish calendar). And Mark's interest, as we've told you before, was that Jesus was a Servant. He learned about Jesus from Peter. He was too young to be around. In fact, he mentions that in our study last week - down in the last couple of verses there. But Mark was very moved by the Lord's doing, and so his book is filled with Jesus doing - in the middle of the night, in the afternoon, when people weren't listening, always reaching out, not really put off by the reactions or the circumstances. And, as you get towards the cross, Mark wants to focus on two things in particular - Jesus' willingness to die (because He came to serve and to save) and that He is God (He is in charge of all that takes place). And so he, in his gospel, more than others, focus on those two things.

In our study last week, we were at Gethsemane, and the Lord was arrested by what would be Judas and maybe a thousand folks, six hundred Roman soldiers. And this morning we pick up the story with Mark as Jesus now goes to these trials that took place during the night. If you leave with anything this morning, I hope you'll leave with a couple of things. Number one - there is this exchange that took place between you and me and the Lord in the sense that He is the innocent One, and we're not. And yet He was treated as the guilty party. You will read in the gospels constantly how He was not guilty. Everyone involved said, "He's not guilty." Everyone did. Now they didn't let Him go because it was the Father's purpose to have Him die. That's the first part. The other part is there's a great lesson in this for how you deal with things that are unfair in your life. Because I think there're few things that frustrate us as much as, "Oh, that wasn't fair, that wasn't right, that wasn't good. I got the raw end of that stick," so to speak. And yet, as you watch these trials, Jesus got the wrong end of everything! But He does so with purpose, trusting the Father.

So, six trials. And here's the big picture - not the lesson but the big picture - there are six trials that take place during this night before we get to the dawn, where Jesus is sent off. About 6:00 in the morning, Pilate will hand Jesus over to be crucified. He'll be on the cross at 9:00 in the morning. But before that, sometime after the last supper - during those hours of late Thursday into Friday - six trials take place. They're all illegal. They're all illegal by anybody's standards. They are fake trials, if you want to call them that. There are three of them in front of the religious leaders - one before Annas, one before Caiaphas (who had a bunch of guys with him), and then one in the morning (or at least towards dawn) with the entire Sanhedrin to issue official charges that they hoped would get Rome to put Jesus to death. Then there are three civil trials before the government - before Pilate, who sends Him to Herod (in hopes of getting off the hook), and then back to Pilate who ultimately follows through. We're going to try to take a look at those in the next few weeks. There's lots to learn. We will look at the first couple of them (in front of the religious leaders) this morning. But like I said, none of these trials are legal. These are all accomplished by the Lord because He's the innocent One who stands for the guilty. He hasn't broken any laws. He's committed no crime besides just being perfect in all of His ways. The mob had taken Him. He had gone willingly. Now you should know (even from a Jewish standpoint) that, for Jewish law in the 1st century, you couldn't hold a capital offense trial at night. You couldn't hold it on a feast day. You couldn't hold it on a Sabbath. They just about broke every rule trying to get their will accomplished. You couldn't coerce a defendant to speak - as they did Jesus. You couldn't get him to testify against himself. You had to have witnesses that would agree with one another. Jesus' arrest was the result of blood money and a bribe. I mean, everything just stacks against fair here. But yet He went through it for us. The law continues, and it said that if you convicted someone of an offense that was worthy of death, that sentencing could not take place the same day. There had to be an appeal - at least from Jewish law. So, all of these procedures - none of them were intended to determine the truth. Nobody cared. They were intended to accomplish the will of the Lord and to, I think, reveal the hearts of men. I mean, the Sanhedrin - this Jewish council - had decided several years before that they would put Jesus to death, that He had to die, that He was a big threat to their popularity and to their jobs and to their power base. Pilate will say that he understood that their motive was envy. The plots that followed revealed that. These guys would make up charges, they would hire false witnesses, they would bring Jesus to Pilate, they would try to rally the people to cry for Him over that fellow Barabbas (that should have died, he was a wicked man), they would threaten

Pilate with political upheaval if he didn't do what they said, and they were able politically to put great pressure on him, and they would mock Jesus when He hung on the cross. None of these things are trials. This is premeditated murder. But it is the will of the Father that His Son would die for the sins of man.

So, Jesus knew this. You can read in Luke 18:31 that, on the way up to Jerusalem, the Lord said, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." God knew. Peter, on Pentecost, stood up on his first recorded sermon, certainly, and he said (there in Acts 2:23) that Jesus had been "delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God," but "lawless hands had taken Him and crucified Him and put Him to death." But Peter starts by saying, "God had this in control." This was God's way of saving you and me. This was God's sacrifice. Nothing had gone wrong. This wasn't a mistake. The enemy didn't get the upper hand. This didn't get away from Him. This was all part of God's purpose and plan.

So, over the next couple of weeks as we study (but in a contextual sense over the next several hours), there's a whole lot of these Old Testament prophecies that become fulfilled, all at once. It's almost like the door is open. From His treatment to His death to the resurrection, the entire kind of Old Testament prophetic picture of His first coming lays out before us very quickly. Isaiah had written in chapter 50:6 the Lord saying, "I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed." And we see this worked out here as we go through these mock trials and these beatings and the horrible treatment that the Lord would receive on our behalf. So the ropes couldn't hold Him, the chains didn't hold Him either, and the thousand people who showed up really couldn't take Him. But something more powerful kept Him there - His love for the Father, His love for you and me.

So, as we leave the Garden this morning with Jesus, we head back up to Jerusalem, which means down the Mount of Olives again, across the Kidron Valley again, up the other side through the temple gates and back into town. Three trials. And it starts with Annas. Now, if you'll kind of hold your context here and turn with me (before we read what Mark has to write because Mark picks up the second portion) - let's go to John 18:12. And hopefully you've been able to find that in just a couple

of minutes. We just want to kind of get the context from John so we can get the whole chronology set in our minds. John 18:12 says this, "Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him." And notice it says, "And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." Annas and Caiaphas were really the two wicked men that are behind the impetus to this whole mockery and this whole trial, this whole plan. Annas, historically, was the high priest from 6 A.D. through 15 A.D. He was definitely the power broker. If you called Annas the "godfather," you'd be right. I mean, he's the fella that owned and operated (with his family) all of the things that went on at the temple - the selling of offerings, the exchanging of money, if you will. They were the merchandisers who, when people came to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (according to the law) on those feast days, rather than running into a God who loved them and was represented as such, they would run into these greedy bunch of guys who were out to rip them off. And, as a result, people would come to worship and be turned away by these greedy guys. That still happens today, doesn't it? People need to know the Lord that we know, who loves them, and is a kind God and a good God. And instead they run into these misrepresentations of God, oftentimes with guys with their money - what they want is your money. They have their hand in your pocket or their hand out. So, Annas was responsible for when you came and brought your offering to Jerusalem, your lamb for your sins. The priests would find a flaw in yours, but they would have a good one on sale for you, and what you had brought along would no longer be acceptable. And if you had money, it had to be exchanged into the temple tribute because your money had Caesar's picture on it, and, "For a 20% turnaround, we can do that for you." And so they became rich, the people became poor, the relationship between God and the people was absolutely hindered, and they never learned about His love from His representatives - these folks that should have been serving at the priesthood.

So, by Old Testament law, the high priest was to serve for life. He was chosen by God. But that had been greatly corrupted by the time you come to Jesus' day and by the time that the Romans ruled. The Romans, according to history, hated Annas. They didn't deal well with him, they didn't get along with him. And so they told him they didn't want to deal with him, and they put Caiaphas in his place. The Romans replaced the high priest, if you will, and so his son-in-law took that seat. But make no mistake, Annas is the power broker behind it all; he's the "godfather" for this family. And notice we read, here in verse 13, that's where they went first.

They went to Annas' house first. Annas ruled this position for years through his sons - five of them, a son-in-law. And Caiaphas would actually stay in this job until the year that Pilate got shipped out because they couldn't trust him, and Rome recalled him, and Caiaphas disappeared that same year from the scene. Jesus had lots of run-ins with Caiaphas, not the least of which was at the beginning of the end of His ministry, you might remember. He cleansed the temple and turned over tables and called what they were doing making the Father's house a den of thieves. "This should be a house of prayer" (Mark 11:17). So they hated Jesus, and they certainly wanted to get rid of Him, particularly at the beginning and the end of, like I said, His ministry. You remember He made those whips, and He chased the money changers out. Annas was no happy camper when it came to Jesus, who had confronted his wickedness. I always like when I have a chance to go talk at pastors' conferences, especially young pastors, to talk to them about Jesus' cleansing of the temple. Because I think any practices that you develop in the church where your focus is raising money or making profit, you've missed God's heart. God wants us to gather together to honor Him. He'll make the provision. He always has. That's not something that falls, I think, on anybody's shoulders. I think you go out and you preach Jesus and teach His Word, and God will provide. So, it should be a place of worship.

Well Jesus is taken, notice, to the "godfather" first, the power behind the throne. Now you should know that they both lived together in a palace separated by a courtyard, kind of two wings of a very large building, and their offices were basically in the same place. But they went over to Annas' side first, and I don't doubt that Caiaphas may very well have been in attendance. But the purpose was they now needed to formulate charges against Jesus that would stick. They didn't want Him arrested, they wanted Him dead. And they knew how it operated in Rome, and they knew what it might take to bring charges against Him. So they wanted authorization eventually from Pilate to get Jesus murdered, and so they take Him to Annas. Now, interestingly, verse 14 John mentions to us that Caiaphas had, at a meeting, kind of unwittingly (unknowingly) prophesied that Jesus' death for man would be something that would take place. You can go back in John 11:49, and he said at the meeting - when he was the high priest that year - you'll read, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." And it says, "Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only," but for all nations. So he did it without knowing it, but John said, "This is the guy

that is now saying he's going to make decisions about Jesus' life and death." But John throws in, early on, "Hey, even before this gets started, he's already the one that talked about His death because the Lord is in charge behind the scenes in every way." And so he points it out here as well.

If you skip down to verse 19 (because in the middle is Peter's denial, which we'll talk about next week), it says, "The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.'" Now, like I said, it does appear, in context, that John (in verse 24) says, "Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." It does appear from the gospels that Jesus met first with Annas alone. Can these trials overlap? Certainly. But I want you to just look at the interrogation. This is the first one that began. And here, in verse 19, notice that the first question was if Jesus might identify Himself, that He might speak about His disciples and about His doctrine. Now, Jesus says nothing about His disciples. He is interested in protecting them. He answers nothing. It's not about them, it's about Him. When He's asked about His doctrine, His answers are pretty straightforward. He said, "I haven't talked in secret, I don't have any hidden agendas, I've been teaching openly for three years, I've spent the whole week - this last week - in the synagogue where the Jews are all gathering, I've spoken openly and clearly, I'm not at all doing what you guys have been doing in these secret meetings in hushed tones and the lights turned down, meeting in the middle of the night, looking to destroy someone. I've always been clear." And then the Lord says, and He calls attention to the legality of the trials, "Why don't you bring in some witnesses? Bring in someone who's heard what I've said. I've got nothing to hide. Bring in some folks. They'll tell you what I said and what I taught. Bring some eyewitnesses. They'll confirm."

Verse 22 tells us, here in John, "And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand," (slapped Him in the face) "saying, 'Do You answer the high priest like that?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well,' " (or correctly) " 'why do you strike Me?' " So I thought about this guy. I wonder how he's going to feel on the day that he stands before Jesus on Judgment Day. Frightening, isn't it? Like I said, Matthew and Luke tell us that Caiaphas and Annas lived in the same palace with only the courtyard in between, where we'll find Peter. But, according to verse

24, here in John, it does seem like Jesus met with Annas first before He was sent in His chains, across the way, to the current holder of the high priest office. So, there is one who by Old Testament law would have the position of the high priest (only it's been corrupted), and then there was one that Rome recognized.

All right. With that being said, let's go back to Mark (you guys are doing very well) to verse 53, where we join this second meeting. Because now we read, "And they led Jesus away to the high priest;" (that was now Caiaphas) "and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest." Like I said, the purpose of this meeting was to get people to come up with ways to blame Jesus or to point their finger at Him when it came to the Romans and their law. Notice from verse 53 that everyone's up this night. All the religious guys who should have been really preparing their hearts before the Lord for the Passover - one of the holiest weeks of the year - are all scheming and plotting, and they're going to secret meetings, and they've got Jesus in handcuffs. And they're taking advantage of Him, and He's getting slapped in the face, and these guys are all feeling like they're pretty much in charge. But they want to, with all of these Sanhedrin members and religious leaders, in the late hours, they just come to kind of get something on paper that they can use against Him. These are despicable, plotting folks. And, according to the law (Deuteronomy 19:15), one of the things that the law required was if you're going to accuse someone of something, you need to have two witnesses that would agree or corroborate, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." So these guys are trying very hard to accommodate the law while plotting an innocent Man's death on the Passover. It's just as crazy as it can possibly be.

Well, we're going to save verse 54 for next week. You should just underline the words "Peter followed Him at a distance," and just know that when you follow the Lord at a distance, you're liable to get in trouble. Right? Don't follow at a distance. But Peter had made promises he was trying to live up to.

Verse 55, "Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death," (that was their purpose), but notice it says, "but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 'We heard Him say, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" ' But not even then did their testimony agree." So,

however long this second trial took before the religious leaders, know this - they couldn't get two people to lie together. They couldn't get two liars to agree. They brought in lots of guys. "What did you hear? What did He say?" And nothing was working. Everything was just kind of falling apart. Even their lying witnesses couldn't get their stories together.

Verse 58 tells us that one person came back, and they quoted something that Jesus had said three and a half years earlier. And you can read about it in John 2, but you remember that when the Lord had cleansed the temple the first time, and they asked Him, "By what authority do You come in here and cause this kind of havoc?" Jesus had said, "If you destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up." And they said, "Well, it took forty-six years to build this temple, and You're going to raise it up in three days?" And John writes, in commentary, "But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said." Well, somebody had heard that, or it had gotten out, and it had become a story. And so the Annas family, still chafing over how the Lord had interrupted their business twice, here comes one guy (and maybe several guys in verses 57 and 58) who kind of told parts of that story, but they couldn't even tell it straight. They couldn't even agree. And when they told it, they kind of twisted it because the Lord never said, "Destroy this physical temple that I'm cleaning, and in three days I will raise it up." He was speaking about His spiritual body, His resurrection from the dead, that would be a sign to them of His authority. "I'm the Lord. That's why I'm here to cleanse the temple. This is My place, My place of worship." So, they didn't get it. They misquoted it. They twisted it. They couldn't find anyone to agree together at all. But, if you made any mention of the fact that you are worried about the temple or any kind of violence against the temple, they tried to make something out of that whole idea because to them the temple was holier, sometimes, than anything else. In fact, you might remember in Acts 6, when Steven gets up to share. He began to speak to them about the temple, and he mentions the temple there. And then they said to him, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place." They loved the place. They made it a religious icon as opposed to their hearts. So they had sought Steven's death based solely on his speech against, in one way, the temple itself.

In any event, verse 59 says, "But not even then did their testimony agree." And so Caiaphas is kind of miffed, you know. He's got a bunch of religious guys around

there. He's got a bunch of voting members around there. It's the middle of the night. Annas has kind of done the formal investigation - didn't find nothin'. Sent Him off to Caiaphas, "You handle this. I'm going to bed." And now he can't seem to get any answers at all, either. Meanwhile the Lord is red-faced from being slapped, and questioned again and again, and has done nothing wrong at all.

Verse 60 says, "And the high priest" (then Caiaphas) "stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But He kept silent and answered nothing." Now, look, nobody's proven anything! They can't even agree as to what day He was there or what He might have said or where He might have gone. Here's the deal - here's the legal deal. "Case dismissed. There's no evidence. Let Him go." And so the Lord says nothing. He just doesn't respond. There's no reason to respond. This is illegal. The proof isn't there. And even Caiaphas is trying to chide Jesus, "Hey, You hear what they're saying? You hear what they're saying about You? You sure You don't want to say something in Your defense?"

It was interesting when we were at the City Council a few years ago, looking into building a parking garage on the corner here (which we got approval to do and then ran into lots of red tape with what would have cost way too much money). But we had a hearing at the City Council where people came from the community - seven or eight of them - and said, "Oh, that church doesn't care about us, and they don't take care of their property," and they said some pretty wicked things. And I had to sit through all of that because it wasn't true, at least not in my eyes. And one of the Councilmembers said to me at the end of this thirty minutes of that, "Pastor, would you like to say anything?" and I said, "Nah. We'll just live on our reputation." There's really no reason to try to defend something that you argue against the lies. And you just kind of let it go, which we did. Now we didn't go that route, but, in any event, there's nothing good about being accused.

But look at what this guy says. "Jesus, do You hear what they're saying about You?" "Yeah, I hear they're saying nothing." "Well hear that guy." "He doesn't agree with that guy. Blue shirt, green hat. Nothin's right, everything's wrong. I'm not the suspect. I didn't fit the profile. It doesn't fit!" It doesn't fit at all. So He says nothing.

Well then, in his frustration (because they weren't taking no for an answer, at this point), we read here in verse 61, "Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him,

'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' " (Are You the Messiah, the One that is to come?) And Jesus spoke up, and He said, " I am. *Ego eimi.* " It's that declaration (in John's gospel, especially - he uses it seven times) attached to Exodus 3:14. So, "I am." Verse 62, " 'And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' " Putting Jesus under oath, asking Him a direct question, he asked Him about His claims to be God. Now in John 10, in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Dedication a year ago, they had asked the Lord about that, and He had said that He was the Messiah, that He was God. He had made the claim clearly and not only carefully but extremely clearly. "I and My Father are one." And they took up stones to stone Him, and He said, "For which of those works do you stone Me?" And they said, "We're not going to stone you for doing a good work. We're going to stone You because You're a Man, and yet You claim to be God." And that was something that Jesus had claimed, and people had understood it. People say, "Well, Jesus never claimed to be God." Oh, read your whole Bible. It's in there more than once.

So, that's the question now asked by this high priest. It's not really a charge that's going to help Him with Rome any because the Romans worshipped a thousand gods. He could have, "God? Okay, great. Now we have 1,001." It wouldn't have moved them. But, in his frustration, and this was certainly an irritant to them, he asked Jesus about His claim to be the Messiah, and Jesus readily admits to the fact that that's who He is, and He asserts it with distinction and with boldness. He quotes directly out of Daniel 7, which there are two verses - 13 and 14 - where Daniel said, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then 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 the one which shall not be destroyed." It was this wonderful prophecy of the coming One to rule, and Jesus said, "That's Me." Identified Himself. "I'm Daniel 7:13. Put the hat on. This is Me. I claim that to be Me. I am the Son of God who will rule and reign and will judge the nations."

Verse 63, "Then the high priest tore his clothes" (unfortunately it doesn't say he socked himself in the head) "and said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?' And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death." Really? I wonder, and you read the word "all." Now there are a couple of folks that belong to the Sanhedrin that we

wonder about - Joseph of Arimathea was a Sanhedrin member, so was Nicodemus. The word is "all." It either means they were there, and they voted along with everyone else to have Him killed. Or, it was just all that were there. And my personal opinion is that neither one of them could have voted for this at that point. But we don't know. I am amazed at verse 63 where the high priest says, "Well, we don't need any more witnesses." No. You need one witness, you liar. "Well, we don't need any more witnesses." No. You don't have any witnesses! But the rest, in a fit of religious rage, lash out at Jesus, and they say, "He needs to die."

And verse 65, "Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, 'Prophecy!' " (Tell us something!) "And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands." So, in their demonic state, they blindfold Jesus, they mock Him, they spit on Him, they act in their religious nonsense - these sadistic, demonic, hearts bent on brutality. I don't know if you've ever gotten hit in the head, but the Lord made our bodies pretty miraculously. We have a lot of reflex actions that we have no control over. If something's coming at you, and you see it, your head will move before you ever think, "I should duck." You just react. It's a good thing the Lord builds you that way. And if it's moving quickly from the opposite direction, and your eyes see it, your eyes will immediately blink or close to protect themselves. God has made us marvelously so. You can roll with the punches because you see them coming. It's a natural instinct. I played a lot of golf over the years, and at least, for a while, the big joke was exploding golf balls. And you'd hit them with a driver, and you'd literally jump out of your shoes. You don't expect it, and you don't see it coming. Or you get blindsided - a quarterback in football, he can lose his career just because he didn't see it coming. Well, here's Jesus - blindfolded and hit in the face, taking the full brunt of it all, unable to recoil or to lessen the blows. When you get to Isaiah, and you read in chapter 52:14 that "His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men," Isaiah goes out of his way to say by the time Jesus was crucified, you couldn't recognize Him for who He was. It started here. It started here. "I did not hide My face from shame and spitting," Isaiah 50:6. It starts here. But this is the path that the Lord has chosen for Him.

I don't know how you handle unfair persecution. I don't know if you're one who's prone to want to just fight back or strike back. Jesus took it all, and He didn't deserve any of it. At least we sometimes deserve part of it. He deserved none of it. His body is broken for us. "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He suffered for us. It'll be

fulfilled completely by the time Pilate has Him scourged, and Jesus has no sin to confess, and so they don't quit beating Him at all. Luke says, in chapter 22:65, of this time, "And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him," and Luke isn't willing to even write them down. This was a disgrace, it was disgusting to him. Meanwhile, notice, the high priest sits back. He's in charge of the situation, he thinks. He wants to get this together. Like I said, the charge of blasphemy won't stick because the Romans don't care. So they're going to spin this into being an enemy of the state - He wants to replace Caesar, He's the King of His own nation, He doesn't really have any respect to pay taxes. And they work real hard to make this. But their frustration was who He is, what He's done, what He said, and who He's proven Himself to be. Meanwhile, in His love for us, Jesus continues, and we will pick up the story next week. But by the time that dawn is breaking, they will be meeting again in an official capacity to vote, to sign off on this death warrant, if you will. And meanwhile the Lord, in His love, heads for the cross. He's the Servant, He's the Savior, He's got a price to pay. He's willing to do it, dying to Himself for our sake. Amazing, don't you think? How much you're worth to Him.

Now we're going to be interrupted next week by Peter before we get to trial three, which starts in verse 1 of chapter 15. We're going to be interrupted by Peter who has a rendezvous with self-awareness. He didn't think he knew himself well, but by the end of that day, he'll learn.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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