

John 11:45-54 The Plot to Kill Jesus

Pastor Mike Thompson Stanley Faith Free Church April 23, 2017

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

Last time we were in John we were approaching Holy Week. So Pastor Randy jumped ahead one chapter to the text that deals with Holy Week and the events leading up to His crucifixion.

The people we see in the text today and the ones who saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. Let's read the text.

READING THE TEXT

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."

51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

PREACHING THE TEXT

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,

SEEN WHAT HE DID,

Seeing is not always believing. Think of the people of Israel walking through the desert with Moses. They began to grumble and complain and even scheme to replace Moses. This was after they saw the Red Sea part so they could walk through it to escape Egyptian soldiers. If you watched the original Ten Commandments think of the character played by Edward G Robinson and his intentional schemes to get people to follow him rather than Moses and the God of Israel.

Think of the times in the bible that God spoke from heaven but skeptics called it thunder, even though it was thundering in syllables, words and sentences. Seeing and hearing is not always believing. And think of Judas. It was possible to live day to day with Jesus but still fail to believe.

Many of the Jews went to the grave site with Mary. When they witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead they reacted with the kind of faith that leads to salvation. They placed their trust and faith in Jesus Christ to save them from death. And more importantly in the mindset of that day when you become a follower of a teacher or prophet you submitted your life to that person and their teaching. Not only did they receive Jesus Christ as their source of salvation. They began to follow Him and live their lives the way that Jesus instructed.

Today and throughout history we have had many people who want salvation from Jesus but they are not interested in surrendering their lifestyle and daily decisions to Him. Many call Him Lord but then do things our way rather than His. When this passage says they believed it means they began following Jesus and living for His glory, not their own, not perfectly, but striving and showing evidence of transformation in their everyday life and what they prioritized. That was not the reaction of everyone in the crowd because seeing is not always believing.

46 ...some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

It looks like some of the Jews in attendance played the tattle tale. They could not wait to get news to the Pharisees. This religious group in power was interested in having people spy on Jesus and bring them back news so they could find a way to exaggerate, lie and spin a false narrative.

For example when Jesus healed a lame person at the pool the Pharisees would only talk about the negative about how Jesus broke their rules of healing on the Sabbath. Healing must be work they assumed, so Jesus worked on the Sabbath therefore we must kill this sinner. Never mind the awesome work of healing the lame person. Never mind the God sighting and miracles. Let's focus on what policy might have been violated.

Their scheming and interested in keeping power at all costs is revealed in the way they talk amongst themselves in the following verse.

47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

A Spirit filled believer hears about a work of God and says; "Praise God! God is at work in this place!" But politicians who want to keep their power focus on their loss of control and power. New voices threaten power bases.

"What will we do" they cried!? God is working and doing miracles. How can we possibly get people to hate Jesus when He keeps doing these pesky miracles!" like many politically minded churches today the subject does not focus on the God sightings for long.

One of the things that I loved about this year's annual meeting is that we reported about what God had done this past year and we celebrated. So many times churches hear about incredible works of The Spirit but refuse to celebrate because all people can think of is some agenda just like the Pharisees. If we hear about the God sighting or a work of The Spirit we celebrate and honor what God has done. God is working in this place. If we have some difference to work out, address it in the right way and in the right place. But don't forget to see what God is doing and celebrate. That must be what we focus on most because that is how God is working.

The religious leaders completely downplayed the work of God because all they could focus on was keeping power and making sure people were on their side instead of Jesus side or anyone else's side. So don't forget to celebrate and see all the things Jesus is doing. So here is the primary concern of the Pharisees.

48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

EVERYONE WILL BELIEVE IN HIM

Their first concern was that people would follow Jesus instead of them. They believe in their own agenda but they will not trust Jesus Christ God's own Son to do what is right with His followers. Further, they want people to come to them. They like it when they control the agenda. This will always be a temptation both at work, at home, in our relationships, and even in any church. Every one of us wants things to run our way. That is something that is built into every single person.

The way that we are called to deal with that is to make sure there is unity concerning the essentials of the faith and charity, grace and understanding about that which is non essential.

Churches that die a liberal spiritual death are churches that have no essentials. Anything goes. Each person does what is right in their own eyes.

Churches that die a legalistic spiritual death are churches that make every single issue an essential.

ESSENTIALS (Hills to die on)

GOD - eternally existing as a holy Trinity

SCRIPTURES - Are infallible and are indeed the very words of God

HUMANITY - Humans are born into sin and under the judgment of God until they are saved by placing faith in Jesus Christ who made atonement for our sin

JESUS CHRIST - Is God incarnate fully God and fully man. One person with two natures. He was born of a virgin, lived without sin, died and rose again and now acts as our mediator between us and God.

WORK OF JESUS - Jesus and His death and resurrection provide the only means of salvation for humankind. His vicarious sacrifice for our sin satisfied the wrath of God. His atoning sacrifice justifies us before God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT - does all His work to glorify Jesus Christ. He lives in those who follow Christ and moves into our lives at conversion joining all believers together. He indwells, guides, equips, illuminates and powers up the Christian life reproducing the holiness of Jesus in us.

THE CHURCH - is comprised of all believers everywhere who have believed in Jesus Christ for salvation and have received the Spirit of God. Local churches are instructed to perform two ordinances, baptism and communion which do not save but which are meant to bring us closer to God.

SANCTIFICATION - God's work of justification (His work that saved us) cannot be separated from His work to make us more holy. Those who are saved are being transformed in their behavior and attitude by the work of The Spirit.

HIS RETURN - we believe in the personal bodily return of Jesus Christ at a time that no one knows but God Himself. His return is motivation for holy living and expectancy.

ETERNAL DESTINY - We believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer for sin and the only means of eternal life. Those who trust Christ for salvation will live eternally with Jesus Christ after death or upon His return and those who fail to follow Him will live in eternal utter darkness.

HILLS THAT WE SHOULD NOT DIE ON OR DIVIDE

Forms of governance

Church building programs

Preferences in preaching or ministry style (1 Cor 1-3)

Personal convictions about food or drink (Romans 14)

Saturday or Sunday worship (Romans 14:5)

Church Programs (added or subtracted)

OUR SPIRIT LED ATTITUDE

In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity

So unlike the Pharisees we can and will celebrate God sightings. And we can focus our attention on the essentials and pick the right hills to die on or freak out about. And in non essentials we can show liberty and in all things we can display charity.

Continuing The Text...

Caiaphas speaks up after everyone expressed fear that they will become irrelevant when everyone follows Christ.

(VS 49 continued) **...Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,**

WORDS OF PROPHECY FROM SURPRISING SOURCES

First, notice that Caiaphas was not a believer. He was in an official position in the organized religious system. But there were few believers in positions of power. But God speaks through unexpected sources. He spoke through Balaam's donkey. This is God's universe and He can and will work outside the norms.

Think of the passage where people cry out in the last day; **“Lord Lord we prophesied in your name”** and yet they turn out to be unbelievers who were used by God in His Sovereignty but who never cried out to God for salvation in humility.

ONE MAN SHOULD DIE FOR THE PEOPLE

The words of truth spoken by Caiaphas was a truth reflected in **Isaiah 53** and **Psalms 22:16**

ISAIAH 53:3-6

**3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

**4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.**

**5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.**

**6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.**

.....Text continues.....

52 (Caiphas continues...) and (this death is) not for the nation only, but also to gather into **one the children of God who are scattered abroad.**

The ones scattered abroad are people like us who have heard of the Jewish Messiah but did not grow up anywhere near Israel.

53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

TAKING IT HOME

1. What are some times that you have forgotten to see the things that God is doing because you have been too focused elsewhere?
2. What are some of the things you have treated as essential and hills to die on that may really be non-essentials?
3. How does it impact you to know that Jesus rose Lazarus from the dead and still people turned away from Him?
4. What does it do to your heart and witness to read Isaiah 53; He was pierced for our transgressions?
5. What is one commitment that God may be calling you to make right now?