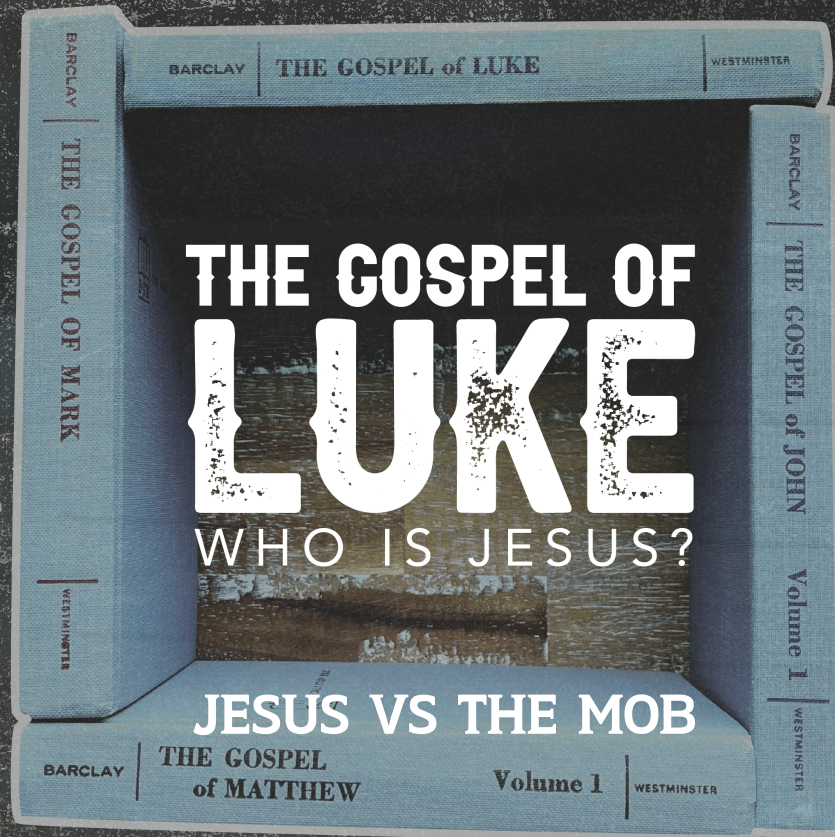


GRACE CITY — CHURCH —



Pastor Josh McPherson

April 3, 2022

Luke 22:63-23:25

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63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him.

66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You say that I am."

71 Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

23 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him,

saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." 3 So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. 4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." 5 But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here. 6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign

of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.”

18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” 19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Who is Jesus?

Here's the deal, Jesus elicits a different response than God does. That's, I know very contradictory, but follow me in what I'm trying to say. If you were to walk into a room and you were to say, perhaps at an award ceremony in Hollywood somewhere, if you were to say, "I'd like to thank God." "Woo. That person's so wonderful." *God* can mean and should mean anything that you want it to mean in that moment (they claim). If you stood and said, "I'd like to give thanks and shout out to Jesus of Nazareth – the Son of God; the Messiah; the fulfillment of all Old Testament messianic promises; the One who came, lived a perfect life, was stoned and beaten and bullied and blasphemed while He was blindfolded and then was murdered by sinful men; went into the grave and rose three days later, victorious over sin, Satan, death, Hell, absorbing the wrath of God; is now reigning and ruling over the world as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and is the exclusive way to know the Father via salvation – I'd like to give Him the glory." Dead silence and tomatoes.

Because, Jesus Christ elicits a different kind of response.

Jesus Christ provokes a kind of response that I find fascinating. We're going to see the kind of response that Jesus elicits today in our text, maybe most explicitly on display. In this story, we're going to learn about the mob. We're going to learn about the religious pharisees. We're going to learn about political leaders, and we're going to learn about you. All in the light of who Jesus says He is. Jesus is going to make three audacious, radical claims in our story today and it's going to cause a ripple in the global feathers, shall we say – it's a mixed metaphor.

Why is Jesus Controversial?

Why does Jesus provoke this kind of response? Here's a few reasons for you to consider.

#1: Because the claims of Jesus demand an answer. The claims of Jesus demand an answer from you. It doesn't matter what your parents say, doesn't matter what your friends say. The claims of Jesus are so radical and so specific that they demand a response from you personally. What do you think? What have you considered? What are your assumptions? What are your conclusions? Who do you say that Jesus is? Jesus's claims, demand an answer from every person who hears Him.

#2: Secondly, the claims of Jesus leave no room for ambiguity. He didn't stutter. He wasn't unclear. He wasn't uncertain. He was absolutely clear about what He was saying about who He was, and it leaves no room for interpretation. "Well, I don't think He meant—" No, no, He meant.

#3: Number three, the claims of Jesus put you on the spot to make a decision because the claims of Jesus imply that you currently are wrong. If you're viewing the world apart from Jesus and out of a relationship with Him, Jesus's assumption is, "I love you and you're dead wrong." Jesus's claims and His teachings say, "You are inadequate. You are a wretch. You are

in need of repentance. You are not your own God or anyone else's God. You are not the center around which the world revolves, nor the end to which history marches. You, apart from Jesus, are on the wrong side of history. You, apart from Jesus, stand condemned as a sinner by your own deeds. You, apart from Jesus, will stand before God, the Judge, to give an account for every thought and action. If one sinful thought or action is found, you will be judged and punished."

Good Outweighs Bad...Wrong

Friends, some people go through life thinking that if my good outweighs my bad, I'll be okay in the end. First question, where did you get that? Where did you get that? Because if that didn't come from an authoritative source that the Judge of the universe will reference as authoritative on judgment day, you're screwed. Because what won't work is like, "Well I know you're the Judge of the universe. That's very obvious to me now, since you know. Anyways, I thought my good outweighed my bad." Really? In that moment, God will tap into the database of every thought you've had, every motive that has come out of your heart, every desire, every unspoken, everything in your life comes out in that moment and you're going to sit here and tell me with a straight face that you think the good things you've done outweighs the bad?

Let's just take into consideration sins of commission, things that you should not have done that you did. Things that you should not have said that you said. Things you should not have thought that you thought. Things you should not have long for that you desired. Things that were not yours that you lusted after. Let's just take that category. Do you still think the good outweighs the bad? But that's only half the story, because the other category is sins of omission. Things you would have done that you didn't do. Things you should have said that you never said. Things you should have longed for and desired that you did not long for or desire. Things that should have motivated you that didn't. Things you should have lived for that you ignored.

Friends, it is only the delusional and the dishonest who think that, "Ah, I think the good outweighs the bad." That person in that moment is wildly blind and lacks a modicum of self-awareness. Jesus says you're on the wrong side of history. Jesus says you stand condemned as a sinner. Jesus says you are a man or woman in need of saving. Jesus says you are a person in need of redeeming. Jesus says you are a person in need of repenting. If you're arguing with me right now – "No, but you don't know me. I've done some good things. I've said some good things." – you're not arguing with me; you're arguing with Jesus, which proves you're a sinner. Because you're arguing with the most perfect man to walk the planet, and there's more data to prove He was perfect than there is to prove that your good outweighs your bad. When you think about stacking up your three-pound brain against the Creator of life, it's breathtaking arrogance to say, "I think I see it better."

Who Did Jesus Say that He Was?

We're going to look this morning at why Jesus elicits such strong reactions, because His claims are not ambiguous. His claims are galactic, they're global and they're clear and we don't want to miss them because the danger would be that we follow and worship a Jesus of our own making, not the One revealed in holy Scripture and not the One He says who He is. When we consider Jesus, it's fair, I think, and right to let Him in His own words say who He is. Because everyone's got an opinion about Jesus. "Well, I think He was this. I think He was that." And I kind of like that. It's postulations and opinions and points of view about who Jesus is. But, if we're going to assess and examine someone, I think at some point in time, the fairest way to do that is to let them speak in their own words about who they say they are. That's the most revealing. That's the most truthful. That's the most helpful in assessing who they are.

We're going to see in Jesus's own words today, who He says He is. Well, before we do that, we're going to do it a little differently. We're going to work our way backward through the text this morning. We're going to start with the result of what Jesus said and the reaction it caused to just look at it in detail. Because it's going to teach us something about the nature of humanity in the spiritual realm. Then we'll come back and then we'll look at what Jesus actually said and we'll draw some lessons out from Pilate and the apostles and the pharisees. Then lastly, we'll look at what it means for you. That's where we're going to go this morning, Luke 23, we're going to start at verse one of chapter 23.

Some Context

Now some context, if you're new to the story, Jesus has been alive for 33 years. Let's do this. This is going to be crazy. I didn't do this in first and second service. We'll do it third. Is there anyone here who's 33 years old? A 33-year-old dude, male. Anyone? You're going to be 33. Jason, you? You're pointing at your brother. Right there, are you 33? Stand up. Are you 33? Stand up. You go ahead and stand up. Both of you? Now just look around so people can see you. Just stand up. There's three guys right there. Look at those guys. Just take them in. Are you 33 too? Who? Stand up, bro. Stand up. This is great. Any other 33-year-olds in the room? Oh, in the back there too. There it is. For those of us who are older than 33, what's the first thing you think when you look at these guys?

Yeah, that's a kid. Look at the baby face up there, man. I mean, my gosh, that guy looks like he was born three days ago. Thanks guys. No 33-year-olds will ever come to church again. They're like, "I'm not going back till I'm 34, babe. I'm not going back." Isn't that wild? That was Jesus. We tend to think of Jesus like old, sage, wise. No, no, He was a kid. He was a kid, 33 years old. Jesus, 33 in this story, He lived in obscurity for 30 years; began His public ministry three years before this account we're going to read; and has been teaching, preaching, healing the sick, raising the dead, and performing miracles publicly. So it's public record for three years and now we're here in this moment. Judas has betrayed Him. He got taken in the garden, led off at night, and had a pretty rough night that we'll see about in a moment. He is now on trial and He is hours, not weeks away from His crucifixion and He knows it. That's the context for what we're going to see here in this story. He's in Roman custody. He's going to

go before Pilate and then Herod and then Pilate. There's a certain group of people following Him.

The Mob

We want to ask ourselves, what can this teach us about the nature of the mob? I'm highlighting this because I have read this story with a bit of dispassionate disconnection in the past. Because as an American, I have not lived through a lot of mobs. I missed the 60s thanks be to God. I didn't land on the scene until a few years before Reagan got in place and took out the Soviet Union and brought in this unparalleled season of prosperity. That was my kind of childhood. At 40, I'm like, "What do you do during inflation?" I got no idea. I got to live through it. Mom and Dad are like, "It's okay. Take a deep breath." I'm like, "Do you buy gold? Do you buy property? Do you put your money in a stock? What do you do with..." I don't know because I'm young and I haven't lived through that cycle.

I had not experienced mobs in the streets of the country I live in until two years ago where everywhere you look cities are being burned to the ground and businesses are being destroyed. Slogans, chanting demands for justice, demands for change, demands for people's head on a platter, were filling our news screen. You take the 30 or 40 years of ideological propagandizing of our children in schools – so someone once said in response to this kind of Marxist ideology being taught in schools, they said, "Well, it's not that big a deal. One day they'll grow up." Then guess what? They did. Now they run businesses.

The Mob, they take their internal values and make a judgment call whether not you're an oppressor or the oppressed. Then if you're an oppressor, they're going to burn you down. I mean, aren't you just begging for a company that isn't wearing their morals on their sleeve and trying to force it on your throat. It's like, "Come on, Disney, just make movies." This is crazy. It's just so frustrating these days. You can't go somewhere that just does something to do something. "We have an obligation to speak our position." No you don't. No, no, no. I liked you better when I didn't know you very well. Not to mention that Walt would be rolling over in his grave. Can you imagine, "In 50 years your company will wield global influence to convince kids they can be whatever gender they want"? Can you imagine telling that to Walt Disney?

Where are we at here? The mob. Here's why it's important to understand the nature of mobs because the mob is coming for you. Lest you think that mobs are reserved for celebrities that make mistakes on live TV, mobs are your new reality. We need to learn how they work and what's underneath them so we won't be swayed by them. Because mark this, they're coming for you and they have an agenda and that's to turn you or to burn you. You have a choice.

How Mobs Work

Let's read the story. Verse one of chapter 23, *"Then the whole assembly rose and led Jesus off to Pilate. They begin to accuse him saying, 'We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payments of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah a king.'"* Here's what mobs do.

Mobs take fact and fiction and blend them to distort reality. Mobs don't deal in facts, science, reason, logic or truth. Mobs deal in fogged-over facts with a preset narrative that everything gets shoved through so as to produce a certain outcome, a predetermined conclusion. That's how the mob works. Here they take Jesus and they say, "Hey, this man has been found subverting our nation." True or false? 100% false. "He has opposed payments of taxes to Caesar." True or false? False. He literally said four chapters ago, "Pay to Caesar what is Caesar's." Three, He claims to be Messiah." True or false? True. "He claims to be," this is a trick question, "a king." True or false? False.

Oh, you're such a smart church. I love you. Jesus didn't claim to be any king. He didn't claim to be a king. He claimed to be *the* King, which is very different. So they take one truth, three untruths, blend them together to paint one lie. That's what a mob does. You're like, "Well, these are broad strokes." No, no, no. Mobs function the same everywhere in history because mobs are being driven by the same demonic spirit. You're like, "Well, this is getting weird." We haven't even started yet friends. It's going to get much weirder. When you see how mobs function 2,000 years ago and how mobs function today, you're like, "Is there like a mobs for dummy's book out there that they're all reading that I'm missing?" No friends.

From a leadership perspective, have you ever marveled at a mob? I have because I'm spending the best years of my adult life attempting to organize groups of people. Let me just be honest, you are very difficult group to organize. You're all going your own way and busy and sports and kids and agenda and whatever everyone's going this way. It is not easy, or "Hey everyone show up on Sunday, 8:30 or 10:30. We'll make the building nice and pretty and warm." I mean, you got to go to a lot of work to try get folks together. Mob's just boom, they appear and then they march. It's like, "How'd they get them together?" As a leader, you marveled these things, like is there a group text? It's like, "How do they all know where to be and what to say? It's remarkable." It's because there's a unifying factor that goes below the physical scene realm. It's because there's a uniting demonic factor in the spiritual realm that's bringing a coalition of haters together to work to attack God himself or the image of God in humanity. That's how mobs work.

Verse three, *"Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are you king of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You have said so.' Then Pilate announced to the chief priest in the crowd,"* this is huge, *"I find no basis for the charge against this man."* Pilate represents the law and he's stating publicly here that he finds no grounds from which to charge the man of what they're accusing him of. Verse five, *"But they,"* that's the mob, *"insisted."* They're not shouting yet, but they'll get there. *"They insisted, 'He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.'"*

It's so funny. They mobs are ingenious. They're taking things that don't matter and making them sound like a headline. You know what I mean? It's like they can frame headlines. You know what I mean? "Pastor Reads Bible Inciting Hate Speech across the Land." It's like, I'm supposed to read the Bible because I'm a pastor and then how does that— They take things

and they blend things together to make these headlines. So they say here, *"He's inciting people all across Judea by his teaching."* Is that true? Kind of. Jesus has been inciting internal revolution, in that people are having a revolution of heart on the inside. He's igniting war inside the heart of every human that says, "I'm righteous before God." Whoops He says, "I'm not. Danger Will Robinson, trouble." So He's inciting personal revolution inside.

Nowhere has Jesus once said, "Everyone behind me, we're going to dominate and dictate our terms to the Roman government or we'll burn them down." Jesus was not a revolutionary. I kind of have to, well, He is causing personal revolution. That's different than inciting people against their government. Verse six, *"On hearing this Pilate asked the man, if he was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at the time."* "Okay, Herod can take care of him and I can avoid being a leader."

Verse eight, *"When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased because for a long time, he had been wanting to see him."* Now you might go, "Herod must be a good guy." You're new to the story, aren't you? Let's keep reading. *"From what he had heard about Jesus, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priest and the teachers of the law were standing there vehemently accusing him."* Herod wasn't looking forward to seeing Jesus because he was looking for the Messiah and looking for the truth. Herod was looking forward to seeing Jesus because Herod didn't have Netflix. He was bored. He wanted entertainment. He wanted Jesus to do a trick like dogs do, "Hey, entertain me. Pull a rabbit out of a hat. Make something float. Make that guy go away he's annoying. Do something fun. Entertain me." When Jesus refused to dance, because Jesus does not throw pearls before swine, he gets frustrated and starts grilling Him with questions. Jesus goes silent.

All the while, the hate mob is there vehemently attacking Jesus. It's quite the scene. It's quite the scene. Verse 11, *"Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked Jesus. Dressing him up in elegant robes, they sent him back to Pilate."* Now you read that and I know I'm going quick here and it might not hit you like it should. But you should read, *"Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate"* and just get a little pit in your stomach. You should tremble.

It is a terrifying thing to mock the holiness and kingship of God.

The Fear of the Lord

I got to speak with a man who raised his hand two weeks ago to meet Jesus. He's a remarkable young man. You're going to need to meet him because God's doing something unique in his life. I've had a chance to talk with multiple people who have met Jesus in the last few weeks here at Grace City Church. To hear them talk about what's happening to them, is a

remarkable thing. They didn't read it online somewhere that, when you get saved you're supposed to save these things. Or when you are born again, you're supposed to do these things. They're just doing them because it's happened to them. They're like, "I can't read the Bible enough. I can't stop singing enough. I've told my girlfriend never to call me again. I haven't touched a drop of liquor in three weeks. I don't want to drink. I don't want to look at stuff on the internet. I don't want to have impure thoughts. I'm doing spiritual warfare at night. I didn't know what spiritual warfare is. I wake up, I have dreams. I have visions. There's things in a room. I cast him out in Jesus' name. I just heard about Jesus's name 13 seconds ago. This is freaking me out." It's crazy.

They're like, "There's no explanation for me right now. There's no explanation what I'm saying, when I'm thinking. This isn't me." You're like a new you. Yeah, "Just like a new me." You're like, "I know." They're like, "It's like I've been," "Born again?" "Yeah, born again like made new. It's like I'm a new creation. I mean, it's just awesome." To listen to him articulate it, you're like, "Oh, that's what it looks like to get saved." Here's what one of those men said to me holding his Bible. He said, "There's a word in here, wretch." He's like, "That was me." Tears rolling down his face. He says, "There's another word in here, grace. Those words are so amazing because wretch described me and grace described how God's treated me in spite of being a wretch. That doesn't make sense." "You mean the gospel is scandalous?" "Yes." Preach it bro." He said, "There's another phrase, the fear of the Lord." The way he said it, "The fear of the Lord. When I think about how I've treated God and what I've done with my life, in my life, with other people, to other people and what I would've had to stand and give an account for had not God sent Jesus, woo." He's like, "I'm getting sick to my stomach right now." "That's the fear of God." He said, "We need more of the fear of God in our lives." I said, "Hallelujah." Because when you lack the fear of God, you begin impressing yourselves with your point of view and your opinion and your take on life.

*When in reality, the only proper response before a holy
God is to bow low and tremble; repent in dust and ashes;
then when He gives grace you didn't deserve, rise and
worship and go, "This is nuts. This is nuts."*

Friends, some of you are here right now, you've been around church. You've been in church, you've been playing with church and you are playing the fool because you are right now, living in a life of sin. You're calling it, no big deal. "I'll make it right eventually." You're doing the same thing as placing a robe on Jesus and mocking Him as a king. You're saying He's kind of a king, but not really a king. When you act at as if you are king and you can determine what's right and wrong and you can do with your body or the body of others whatever you'd like, you are putting a robe on Jesus and mocking Him as a fake king and sending Him out of your life. You should be terrified right now. Jesus's holiness will not be mocked by people using a three pound brain to try to reason away their rebellion against Him.

Mobs vs Justice

The story keeps going. Verse 12, *"That day Herod and Pilate became friends, before this day had been enemies."* Sidebar won't get into it, but it's interesting the alliances that can be formed with former enemies when they find a bigger cause to hate. Verse 13, *"Pilate called together the chief priests and rulers of the people and said to them, 'You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence.'" Get that, this wasn't like a backroom smoke filled good old boys club. "I have examined him publicly in your presence. You were there. I have found no basis for your charges against him." What's Pilate saying? He's saying, "If you think he's a blasphemer, whatever. Religion's your thing. I'm saying legally, He's crossed no lines. There is no crime He's committed. "There is no basis or grounds from the evidence to punish this man." "Neither has Herod [by the way] for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."*

Why is Pilate doing that? Because Pilate's a coward. If Jesus has done nothing to deserve death, why punish Him? He's trying to send a message. "Don't bother me with these things I don't want to deal with." He's hoping to make a point with the Pharisees. "I heard you. I took into consideration your thoughts and hopefully this will abate your wrath. Hopefully this will appease your discontentment." He's hoping to be done with the problem and just do a little act of injustice, not a big act of injustice. But watch what happens to the mob.

Verse 18, which is why you should never reason with the mob, by the way. Verse 18. *"But the whole crowd shouted—" First, they were just talking. Now they're shouting, "away with this man, release Barabbas to us."* This is where it gets hilarious. Mobs are hilarious. They're so cute. First their reasoning was, we got to get Rome on board with our hatred against Jesus. So we'll use something that they might bite on. So our case against Jesus will be, "He's a revolutionary insurrectionist who's leading a movement of people to overthrow Rome." Then when Rome doesn't buy it and Pilate says, "Those claims are ridiculous." They say, "Give us Barabbas." Then Luke's little parenthetical comment because he couldn't stand letting the irony go, Barabbas by the way, had been thrown into prison for insurrection in the city and for murder. They're like, "Jesus is dangerous because He might be a revolutionary insurrectionist. We find no facts supporting that. Well then give us Barabbas." Who's Barabbas again? He's the violent, murdering insurrectionist.

That's the capacity they have for logical reasoning. They can't even hide their hatred for Jesus with claims of being objective thinkers. Verse 20, *"Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again, but they kept shouting, 'Crucify him, crucify him.'" Because mobs aren't driven by nuance to reason, logic, argumentation and thoughtful reflection. They're driven by slogans. These slogans take complex issues and they reduce them down to something chantable. "'Crucify him, crucify him.'"*

Verse 22, *"For the third time Pilate spoke to them, 'Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty.'" Pilate is on record three times for*

publicly saying that to crucify this man would be a gross miscarriage of justice because He's done nothing to deserve it. He's on public record as saying that. Verse 23, *"But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified."* Facts who cares, science, whatever, logic out the door, "We have an agenda. Give it to us or you will burn." That's how mobs work. Ringing any bells here. This is the world you are living in and they will come for you. They insisted with shouts, "Crucify him." They insistently demanded that He be murdered and maybe the saddest phrase in the new Testament: *"and their shouts prevailed."* Not their logic, not their case, not their evidence— their demands, their shouts, their anger, their irrational vitriol prevailed.

Why did it prevail? Because Pilate decided to grant their demand. *"Pilate decided to grant their demand."* Do you track what's happening here? Pilate said three times publicly, it would be a crime to kill this man because He's done nothing to deserve it. Therefore, if we were to kill Him, it wouldn't be justice, it would be murder. It wouldn't be justice, it would be a lynching. He gives into their demands.

Friends, truth dies in the hands of mobs, and when cowards are in position of authority, injustice always wins.

Because when the truth is dead and the mob is chanting and there's not enough courage to say you're wrong, they will give in to the unjust and unrighteous demands of the mob. Then it is the end for that society. Because there's no one in power. There's no one in authority. There's no one in leadership who's willing to say this is wrong and if we give in to the demands of this mob democracy, nobody's safe. Because democracies were never intended to protect minorities. Democracies were intended to give the right to the might. *"He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to the mob's will."*

Is that story blowing you away? I just don't feel like I have the ability to communicate it accurately in a way that gets you there, in a way that it should be. God comes from heaven to earth in the form of a man and we asked to trade Him for a murdering insurrectionist. That's just crazy. That's like, "We'd like to trade Tom Brady for my three year old niece." It's like, "What?" That's a lousy trade, if football's your game. This here a lousy trade if truth is your aim.

What Are Mobs?

What can we learn about mobs? Mobs are walking contradictions because mobs demand justice while committing in injustice. Mobs butcher the truth in the name of truth. Mobs lie in the name of discovering the truth. Mobs claim to be love unified by hate. Mobs claim to be righteous while all the while acting unrighteously. Mobs hold the world to standards they don't live up to themselves. Mobs claim to be victims, even as they victimize. Mobs claim to be oppressed, even as they act as the aggressive oppressor. Mobs demand swift justice

driven by a preset narrative, hand picked jurors, paid off judges and a defense attorney who's not allowed to speak so that the predetermined end might be realized.

In other words, mobs don't want justice, mobs want vengeance.

Mobs are driven by anger, pain, and the desire for power so that by the way, they might inflict pain on other people in their anger. Mobs demand everyone listens to them, while listening to no one themselves. Mobs can carry a collective sense of righteousness that no individual who makes up the mob lives up to personally. Which means mobs are walking contradictions and hypocrites. Mobs are driven by simplified slogans, attempting to address complex issues. Mobs take on a God-complex. They will devour anyone who stands in their path. They divine truth, they render judgment. They pass out reward or judgment appropriately. Mobs attract cowards and people who lack the fortitude convictions and articulate courage to stand and act on their own. Mobs embolden people to do together what they would never do on their own. Mobs are group bullies.

Mobs work in sweeping generalities because a detailed analysis of their argument would not hold water. Mobs are cover-fire for sinners. They are an opportunity for people to divorce action from personal responsibility and therefore provide an excuse for simple desires and behaviors to be lived out, that are already in the individual's heart, but needed justification to come out. Mobs are justification for godless behavior in the name of an often trumped-up righteous cause. I like this one. Mobs make things up then demand you take it seriously. You're like, "But that didn't happen. That's not real. Those aren't facts." Mobs are easily steered as long as it is in the direction of evil. Mobs have an inability to hear themselves like, "Are you listening yourself talk right now?"

Think back through the things you've heard and seen on the TVs that have filled our news feeds the last two years. The reason mobs have gathered. An event takes place, an instant rush to judgment, broad sweeping generalities, a pre-narrative put in place that all facts have to fit through so as to produce a predetermined outcome. Justice is not the issue here. Power and vengeance are the issue here.

Mobs are like spoiled brats. They make their demands and only whine louder if they don't get them, and they won't stop until they have what they want. Mobs can't be reasoned with through logic because they're not interested in reason or logic. Mobs cannot be won over by truth because they care not about the truth. Mobs are impervious to facts. Mobs demand trials, but only if the trial delivers their desired outcome. Mobs are a collective exercise in individual temper tantrums. Mobs blur fact with fiction, truth with lies, rationale with the absurd, resulting in a reality distortion field intended to stir the masses into a frothing frenzy. They don't want people thinking for themselves. They want people frothed and bleary-eyed with rage.

Mobs are driven by hurt, anger and pain in order to get power to inflict the same. Mobs are remarkably unified in how they group-think that's spiritual in nature and demonic in origin. They're not all on the same text thread. They're on the same spiritual wavelength, being filled and driven by the same demonic spirits. Mobs give people meaning and purpose. Mobs are the demonic realm materialized to make war on truth, justice, peace, humanity.

Mobs for the people are often led by the elite. You ever noticed that? War for the little guys. That's funny because you're not a little guy. War for equality. Yeah, but nothing about your life says you're like me. War for the masses. Well, yeah, but then why don't you play by the rules that you voice on the masses. Mobs are always led by the elite using the stupidity of group think to get what they want. Wake up. You are a tool and a pawn in hands of people playing off of your anger and rage to get what they want. This is how mobs work. This is the nature of the demonic.

Interestingly, in this story – have you ever heard or said, "My goodness, the crowds, they were shouting Hosanna on Palm Sunday and crucify Him on Friday?" You ever heard that? It's not really true. Joe Plummer was not shouting crucify Him. The religious elite were crying crucify him. The mob here isn't like Joe-Plummer, average Jew in Jerusalem. The mob here is the religious elite who are claiming to speak for the masses they represent. History repeats itself. This is a mob of the elite. Mobs unleash chaos in the society. Mobs always follow and attack Jesus and His followers. Jesus leaves, He commissions His disciples and what do they face the whole book of Acts? Mobs. Because the spirit that hated Jesus is still at work in the world hating His followers.

What Do Mobs Teach Us about Humanity?

What can mobs teach us about humanity quickly?

#1: Humans are emotional, temperamental, fickle, petty, and easily swayed. Say amen. That's you.

#2: Humans long to be a part of a movement that's bigger than themselves. See, mobs are counterfeiting the Church. The Church is where God gathers people under His name to worship Him, to receive communion with Him, to receive forgiveness for repentance. The mob is where Satan gathers his people to demand vengeance.

Revival is where God pours out His Spirit and people respond in brokenness. Riots are where the spirit of the antichrist stirs up people to go out and break other people.

Mobs are the demonic counterfeit to the gathering of the people of God. It speaks to something deep in the heart of humanity says, "I want to be a part of something bigger than

myself." Historians are looking back at what happened in the last two years and they're going to continue marveling at it, because of the intersection of events that came together. You take this cultural Marxism stuff, this woke ideology, you take years of stuff going on in universities, you take this victim mentality, you take identity politics, and then you take a few events that spark the flame. Then you put on top of that COVID and it's like, shake that thing up and run. Sociologists are already saying there would not have been riots like we saw that changed the fact of our nation if people had been at work. But no one was at work because the government said, "Don't go to work or you'll die. You'll over run the hospitals and all the zombie-pox will take place. Put a mask on your face, cover up the the most dynamic and beautiful expression of the image of God on the human body and then go into hiding."

Then just shake that up.

I mean, humanity was a two liter of Pepsi Cola. They got shaken for three months, then people with no job and government money in their pockets, got given a cause bigger than themselves. Fight against systemic racial injustice in our country.

#3: Number three, mobs teach us that democracy is not a good idea if you care about a voice and justice for minority. Mobs teach us that size and might don't always make right. In other words, large groups of people can be really, really wrong. "Well, that many people can't be wrong." They totally can be.

#4: Mobs teach us that leaders lead culture, politicians follow culture. Was Pilate a leader or a politician? Politician. Leaders say, "I have assessed the facts. I've done my research and homework. This is the truth and I will stand on it and lead from it no matter the cost, because I have an internal conviction that that's right." That's a leader. A politician says, "Give me a minute. I'm running my opinion poll up the flag, I'm checking which way the wind blows. I'm bringing it back down. I think we should go this way. You like that? Okay, good. Let's go." Leaders lead culture, politicians follow culture.

#5: Lastly, integrity demands that you resolve not to cave to demands of people who hate you or your values. If you are going to be a person of integrity, you have to resolve right now that people who don't agree with me are going to hate me and I'm going to be okay with that. I talked with a wonderful pastor a few weeks ago, who's been one of the few that I can observe, who has taken a public stand for righteousness in Washington and refused to give the keys of his church over to King Inslee. I talked to him on the phone and I said, "Bro, why'd you take that position?" He said, "Because I realized early on that if I was afraid of being hated by people who didn't hold my values, I wouldn't survive this. So I had to be okay with being hated by those who never agreed with me in the first place anyways." Very wise.

First conversation our elders had when this whole thing went down was at my house. "Guys, we're going to tick people off either way we go. I'd rather make sure that we tick the right people off." Namely not God. What can we learn? That's the mob.

Three Radical Claims from the Man

Let's go to the man briefly, Luke 22:63. *"At daybreak the council of the elders and the people of both the chief and priest and the teachers of the law met together and Jesus was led before them. 'If you are the Messiah,' they said, 'Tell us.' Jesus answered, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me and if I asked you, you would not answer.'"* What's Jesus saying?

#1: Radical claim number one, I'm the Messiah. Jesus makes three claims here in this interchange, all of which are explicit and clear and bold and radical. They say, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." *"Jesus answered, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me and if I asked you, you would not answer.'"* What's Jesus saying? "Of course, I'm the Messiah. Of course, I'm claiming to be. Why are we here? I've been saying this every day for three years, but you didn't have the courage nor the facts to confront me in public and arrest me. So we did it at night under cover of darkness. Oh, by the way, because you are of the darkness. This is a sham right now. Why are we doing this? You know this is my claim." By the way, the Messiah was the One who was anticipated, prophesied as the chosen Anointed One that would be sent from God to save the people not from the Roman government, but from their sins.

*God didn't send Jesus to save you from a government.
God sent Jesus to save you from God.*

You ever thought about that? Your biggest problem isn't anything out there under the pay-grade god. Your biggest problem is you will one day stand before and have to give an answer to the Creator. Apart from Jesus, you're toast! Which is why God sent Jesus. You're going to do your whole, I think the good outweighs the bad schtick in front of God, who knows every thought you've ever had? You think as a rational human being that will hold water? How delusional could you be? Jesus said, "Of course, that's why we're here. Isn't it?" You see that. You look at Mormonism, you look at Islam, you look at all of them, all of them center on their definition of Jesus: who Jesus is and what Jesus said and what He did.

If you get the answers to those questions wrong, cults. Mormons say, "Here's the deal. This is the Word of God, but it's not the only word of God." I read this one off their own website. "This isn't inherent. This is flawed and it's not closed. There's additions to it." That's handy. Oh, Jesus is the son of God, totally. Like we're all sons of God. Like God becomes deity and has sex with a junior high girl in the Middle East 2,000 years ago and they have a baby. He's God's son. Then do this Orgon thing. You're like, "That's hugely different from what Jesus said." Islam, "He was a prophet. He was a great prophet." No, no, no. Listen to Jesus's own words. "I am the Messiah. The one, only the anointed, the chosen, the prophesied, the sent Messiah, closed case."

#2: Number two, Jesus said He is the Son of Man. Look at this, verse 69. *"But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of God Almighty."* This is Jesus talking. When He

says that, there's a collective gasp among the elites, "He just claimed to be the Son of Man." You and I hear that and go, "Doesn't make any sense. They heard that and go, "Are you kidding me?" Because He's claiming to be that whom Daniel prophesied would be sent from the Ancient of Days. Look at the text Jesus lifted, this is from Daniel 7. Daniel speaking, "In my vision at night I looked and there before me was one like a son of man." That's Jesus Christ being sent from heaven. Jesus's favorite self-titled for himself was a son man. *"Coming with the clouds of heaven, he approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All nations, all peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."*

You could not get any bigger than that. He's coming from the Ancient of Days. He's been commissioned by God the Father, the Ancient of Days. He's been given authority, glory and sovereign power. All nations, all peoples, all tribes, all tongues, all political ideologies will bow before Him and worship Him forever and ever. He'll have a kingdom that will never come to an end. Jesus is not insecure. Jesus is not so insecure about the future of His leadership that He has to invade other countries to spread His kingdom and to ensure His legacy. He's not insecure. He's not weak. He's not out of control. He's absolutely God and He knows in the end, all knees will bow. He determines your eternity, and whether you bow it now or later, you're going to bow. Argue with me, hate me, leave here frustrated, I don't care. My job is to love you and share the truth. Your job is to respond to it. You will knee bow, bro.

Your knee will bow. If it bows now, you get grace and mercy and life and joy and salvation. You bow later, it's judgment and bitter judgment.

Here's what's so interesting about this. The reason this was so offensive to the religious elite was because they knew this Bible verse. What's the big takeaway? Learn from the Pharisees. Don't be a Pharisees. What's a Pharisee? Someone who knows lots of Bible verses, but doesn't know Jesus. We have entire denominations built around this expression of pharisee-ism. We're going to get all these verses together and we're going to create rules around the verses. Those who do the rules, we're going to give awards to. Those who don't do rules, we're going to look down on and judge. That's self-righteous religiosity.

Friends, don't think knowing the Bible matters, knowing Jesus matters. Now don't take me out of context, the Bible matters because the Bible reveals to us Jesus. If you read the Bible, miss Jesus, you read the end to which it was written. Bible verses divorced from a relationship with Jesus results in hypocritical, pompous, self righteous religiosity in all of its forms of expressions in our culture. Jesus claims to be Messiah. Jesus claims to be the Son of Man.

#3: Lastly Jesus claims to be Son of God. Verse 70, they all asked, *"Are you then the Son of God?"* He's like, look at this response. *"You say that I am." Then they said, 'Why do we need*

any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.' Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate." That's the backstory to the mob story that we read earlier. Jesus said, "I'm Messiah." Jesus said, "I'm the Son of Man." They said, "Does that mean you're the Son of God?" He's like, "Do the math twits. Messiah, Son of Man, yeah, Son of God."

I read an account of one religion this week that said, "Nowhere did Jesus ever claim to be the Son of God. Nowhere did he claim to be a son of God." Then it was, "The accounts we have of Jesus are ambiguous and illicit and questionable in their authority." Like some of the most researched and scrutinized ancient literature in all of antiquity being confirmed by every archeological dig in the history of man, with more secondary references than almost any other work from antiquity that we take as law and as true and as verifiable. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Son of God.

Three Radical Takeaways

Here's a few radical takeaways and we'll be done. Band can come up if they want, play me off the stage like our own version of the award show, except nobody got slapped. Oh.

#1: Jesus's silence is a deafening apologetic of His claim. Think about this. How many of you in the room here have lied before? Everyone raise your hand. I'll give you a chance. All of us have lied. Here's what's true about your lying. You've only ever lied when it was for your personal benefit. You ever thought about that? You never lied to your own detriment. "I'm going to lie and this will mean I'll be crucified." You only lie when you think it can get you ahead, get you an edge or benefit you in some way. We only lie to our benefit. We never lie to our detriment.

So why didn't Jesus say I'm not the Son of God knowing that if He didn't recant, He'd be crucified? Unless He couldn't say that because it wouldn't be true.

There's no reason for Jesus to hold the lie here in this moment. "It's been a good run. Thought I could get away with it. It wasn't spiritual supernatural power from God Almighty. There was a table cloth with a guy underneath handing me a rabbit. It was just smoke and mirrors." He could have said that, if that was true. But Jesus didn't recant his God-ness here, not because He thought it would be brave to die for a lie, but because to reject that would not be true. "No, I am the Son of God and I won't recount to save my skin because that would be lying. Lying saves no one. Lying helps no one. Lying is not what I was sent here to do. So let's get this show on the road. I got an appointment at the cross. Oh, by the way, for you." Jesus's silence is a deafening apologetic of His claim.

#2: Radical takeaway number two, Jesus can identify with the beaten and bullied. You see, I didn't read you two verses that set the context for the story. In verse 63, *"The men who were*

guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, 'Prophecy, who hit you?' They said many other insulting things to him."

The context to the story we read about the sham trial and the mocking, and the ridiculing and the attacking and the mobbing of Jesus came after a sleepless night of being blindfolded and beaten within an inch of His life. Blindfolded, bullied, blasphemed, and beaten was how Jesus spent the night before this public monkey trial. When He is standing before Pilate, blood out of His mouth. When He is standing there before Herod, eyes swelling shut. When He is being grilled by the religious elite, His body and joints are aching and throbbing from being beaten, not by junior high girls, but by Roman seal team six dudes, soldiers. Like, "The cameras are off. There's no accountability here. Boys, have some fun with them." Blindfolded, He can't see where it's coming, boom, blind sucker punch, boom, after blind sucker punch. Fall to the ground. Then they put the boots to Him and then they mocked Him and ridiculed and said, "Prophecy who hit you" to the One who made the one who was hitting Him."

Have you ever thanked God for the self control of Jesus, who could have said, "God, Father, I love you. I can't take it anymore." Boom, Thanos's moment. "Prophecy who hit you. Prophecy, prophecy. I'm melting. I'm melting." Like Wizard of Oz gone. He could have in a moment called the armies of Heaven to come down and step on the weasels who were beating Him. He never once uttered a word. He just sat there and took it. Then you're going to be all, "I think my good outweighs my bad." Friend, don't join the mocking of Jesus, who said, "Actually it doesn't and someone should die and I'll come down and be willing to stand in your place."

If the majority of people's good outweighs their bad, then Jesus is a joke.

Why come die for folks that are, "Oh, getting by." Friends, maybe you've been physically beaten, Jesus can identify. Maybe you've been relationally, emotionally, physically bullied, Jesus can identify. He spent a sleepless night being beaten by Roman soldiers. Jesus can identify with those who've been beaten down.

#3: Lastly, Jesus can identify with the canceled and the condemned. Cancel culture didn't start with the woke mob three years ago; cancel culture started with the original Marxist, Satan, when he was cast down from Heaven as the Accuser, as the one who wanted power and saw fame and oppression so as to wield power, to oppress those in power.

Jesus was canceled and then condemned and friends if you're going to follow Jesus, you probably will be too. You might be canceled from your job. You might be canceled from your school. You might be canceled from tenure. You might be canceled from your friends. You might be canceled from your family. Jesus said, "Don't be surprised when they treat the students like they did the Master." Never forget friends we follow a crucified Savior. Not to be

overly encouraging, but I think it's going to get much worse here before it gets any better. I think one of my jobs and our jobs as the elders of this church is to prepare you for and to put steel in your spine so you can stand and not fold when it gets harder. Jesus can identify with the canceled and the condemned. When they cancel you, He says, "It's okay, hang with me. We win."

Five Lessons from Pilate

Learn from the Pharisees. Don't be one. Don't know Bible verses, and not know Jesus. Learn from Pilate, don't be like Pilate. I'll end with this, five lessons from Pilate a cent a piece.

#1: Points of view are cheap, convictions aren't for sale— which do you have about Jesus? Pilate had a point of view about Jesus. The mob yelled at him so he changed it. If you have a point of view about Jesus, it'll fold in the face of the mob. Point of views are cheap, convictions aren't for sale— which do you have?

#2: Number two, caving to the mob will never go well for you. Pilate caved to the mob thinking, "I'm going to make them go away, get their anger redirected." Then he did and he committed an atrocity, but that's okay because dinner was great and the next day the mob was down the road and he was off their radar. Except, for the rest of human history, he's known as the man who failed in his greatest hour of potential righteousness by condemning unjustly, the most righteous, innocent man to walk the planet to death on a criminal's cross. That's your legacy. Was it worth it? When you cave to the mob, it never goes well for you.

#3: Three, remember that you don't judge Jesus, Jesus judges you. See Pilate's problem was he was sitting here trying to assess the facts. "Let me see if I can get this right." No, no, no. Jesus is your judge. Can you imagine the moment in history, time passed and Pilate died and stood before Jesus. Isn't that a moment? "Once I stood before you beaten and bloodied by your soldiers at your command, where you had acknowledged three times publicly I was not guilty. Then you condemned me to die a public horrific death. But guess what? I'm back and now we're here. Now my word is the final word."

That's a moment. That's a whoops. Put the money on the wrong horse moment. Here's one even crazier. If Pilate acknowledged his sin and confessed before God, his unrighteousness before his death, that moment ends with Jesus saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master." Isn't that crazy? I don't know if it happened or not, could have. That's the scandal of the Gospel.

#4: Fourthly, no one can write defense when it comes to the decision about Jesus. Accept His claims as true or dismiss Him as a fraud and then live with the consequences, but you can't write defense. Pilate tried. The mob said, "No, you got to make a decision." So it will be for you because the mob will come for you and they will demand, "Weren't you with Jesus?" You can say with Peter, "Not me." Or Pilate, "Let's get rid of this." Or like Paul, "Yes, I am." They cut

your head off and it's eternity with the Father. Win. Lesson four, you can't make everyone happy. Choose who you want to offend, the mob or God, then live with it.

Friends, it's going to be increasingly hard to make everyone happy in days to come so just resign yourself to the fact that you're going to love God, follow Jesus, love people, and be hated. Life gets much less stressful.

#5: Lastly, you can know the truth and not respond rightly to it, which means knowing the truth isn't enough; you got to act on it. Did Pilate know Jesus was innocent? Yes. Did Pilate act appropriately? No. I have laid out as clearly as I can for you the claims of Jesus to be Messiah, the Son of Man, Son of God, the Savior of the world. You can leave believing that to be true, but that's not enough. Will you respond to it with repentance and faith?

The Question

Jesus was clear about who He was. The only question left is who do you say that He is? We're going to baptize 30, 40, 50 new believers in Christ this Easter who have said, "I am taking a stand with Jesus and for Jesus to proclaim to the world, I am convinced He was who He said that He was, He is who He said that He is, and He will be who He said He will be. He is from beginning to end, King of the universe, and I want to be on His team come Hell or high water." That's Easter, are you going to be there? It's going to be awesome. It's going to be awesome. The only question left to ask friends is how will you be there? Will you be there as an observer, as a doubter, as an outsider, or will you be there as one who says, "This is my team, because that's my King?" The choice is yours.

Closing Prayer

Father in Heaven, we're grateful for this word from Jesus this morning. We're grateful that He didn't stutter, that He wasn't ambiguous, that He wasn't unclear, that He said with great authority and clarity, "I am the Son of God, your move." Father for anyone here, listening to this and wondering whether or not it's true, would You do what man's words can't and by Your Spirit convince them of the truth?

Father, we ask that You would do this for Your glory, for Your name, that You would draw them to Yourself in such a saving way that miracles could take place of the new-you birth. That You would instill in this group of people, a sense of quiet confidence and boldness to stand in the face of the frothing mob and say, "You know what, come Hell or high water, I know the truth and I will not be swayed." Would You give Your Church courage in the faith of the mob? Would You give Your Church love in the face of hate? Would You give Your Church a deep sense of truth in the face of convoluted lies? Would You give Your Church a sense of mission in the face of a world that needs to hear the good news of the Gospel? We ask that You would do this work, Father, in Jesus name, Amen.

Judgment

Who is Jesus?

Messiah

Son of Man

Son of God

Mobs

Persecution

The True Standard of "Goodness"

The Fear of the Lord

Humanity