

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 26:57-66 (Mark 14:55-65; John 18:12-14)

Vs. 57 - Those who had arrested Jesus took him to **Caiaphas**, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.

Vs. 58 - But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

Vs. 59 - The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

Vs. 60 - But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward

Vs. 61 - and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

Vs. 62 - Then the high priest (Caiaphas) stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"

Vs. 63 - But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Vs. 64 - "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Vs. 65 - **Then the high priest tore his clothes and said**, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.

Vs. 66 - What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

Vs. 67 - Then they spit in HIS face and struck HIM with their fists. Others slapped HIM

Vs. 68 - and said, Prophecy to us Christ. Who hit YOU?

**GREETING:** Jesus says: Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest – Rest for your soul. (Matt. 11:28-29)

As we continue with the Sermon Series for this Lent Season entitled "*The Hands of the Passion*", we are making our way to the cross as we see Jesus Who spreads out His hands upon the Cross of Calvary (John 19:17-18) for the sin of the World (Heb. 10:10, I Tim. 2:5-6, I John 2:1-2), and then the *risen* Jesus, shows those same nail pierce hands three days later to His disciples behind the locked doors as Jesus declared to them "*Peace be With You.*" (John 20:19-27)

This evening we see the hands of Caiaphas the high priest.

The high priest that we know as Caiaphas tore his clothes after he heard the answer that Jesus gave to his question.

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In the Old Testament, when we hear of someone tearing, "renting" their clothes, it is a sign of sorrow and grief and anguish.

In the account when **Joseph** was put into the pit by his brothers, and then sold into slavery, the one brother named Reuben, wanted to rescue his young brother and send him home to his father Jacob. But when Reuben went to the pit to pull Joseph out and send Joseph home to his father Jacob, **Rueben** found that Joseph was not in the pit, and so Reuben tore his clothes in anguish (Gen. 37:29).

When Jacob was told – the lie - that his son Joseph had been torn to pieces by some wild animal, Jacob tore his clothes in deep sorrow (Gen. 37:33-34)

When Elisha saw Elijah taken up into heaven with the whirlwind and the chariot of fire and horses, Elisha took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart as he cried out: “**My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!**” (II Kings 2:11-12)

And so we ask the question: What anguish and grief caused the high priest Caiaphas to take his hands and tear his clothing?                      What sorrow did Caiaphas have for Jesus?

Caiaphas was upset because Jesus had declared:

**Vs. 64** - “Yes, it is as you say - I AM THE CHRIST, The SON OF THE LIVING GOD - ,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Caiaphas had demanded an answer from Jesus when Caiaphas said:

**Vs. 63** - “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

It was to the answer of Jesus, that Caiaphas cried out as he tore his clothes:

**Vs. 65** - **Then the high priest tore his clothes and said**, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. (Blasphemy = to speak evil against God)

**Vs. 66** - What do you think?” “He is worthy of death,” they answered. (The teachers of the Law and the Elders and the whole Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is the highest Jewish court)

Jesus had said that He was and Is God, and Caiaphas did not like the answer.

Caiaphas in reality was calling Jesus a liar!!!

[Yet at the same time Caiaphas DID like the answer of Jesus, since NOW they could put Jesus to death. - Lev. 24:16]

Caiaphas the high priest is the same one who said: “**You do not realize that it is better for you (the Sanhedrin) that One man die (that is Jesus) for the people than that the whole nation (of Israel) perish.**” (John 11:50; Jn. 18:14)

Caiaphas was the high priest. He was the son-in-law of Annas the high priest. (Jn. 18:12-14)

As high priest – Caiaphas would have been responsible for carrying out the duties of the high priest, and he would have been well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. Those duties of the high priest included the sacrifice of animals which were a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God,

Who would come to take away the sin of the World. (Le 16:6,24; Eze 44:27; Le 1:4-17; 2:2,16; 3:5,11,13,16; 4:5-12,17,25,26,30-35; 1Ch 16:40; 2Ch 13:11; 29:34; 35:11-14; Ezr 6:20; Heb 10:11).

The work of the priest also included instruction of others in the Word of the Lord. (Le 10:11; De 24:8; 27:14; 31:9-13; 33:10; Jer 2:8; Mal 2:7)

And so, when Caiaphas saw the miracles that Jesus performed during HIS Ministry, and now as Jesus is standing before him, and Jesus clearly declares that HE IS the Son of God, Caiaphas should have declared loud and clear, the wonderful message of salvation, that Jesus is the Christ - the Savior of the World has come.

Instead Caiaphas does not fulfill his duty of bowing down to the Lord Jesus.

Instead, Caiaphas called Jesus a liar!

Caiaphas is a hypocrite for the office of the high priest. All his training in the Word of the Lord was for naught.

As we view the hypocrisy of Caiaphas on the pages of Scripture, are you tempted to say: "Boy, am I glad that I'm not a hypocrite like Caiaphas!"

Perhaps you have watched the news which depicts the sins of the world quite clearly as we see murder and rape and defamation of others. As we see violence and robbery, we may have found ourselves saying:

"Boy! Am I glad that I'm not like all of THEM!"

The fact is, when we see on the news or read about the worst examples possible of cruelty and violence in the world, we are seeing a clear picture of the Sinful Human Nature.

There are various descriptions in Scripture of the sinful human. One description of the sinful nature is given in **Romans 1:29-31**: "**They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.**"

When we see those terrible things on the News Reports, we are seeing what our own sinful nature is. BUT - when we are able to resist doing those things, we can give thanks to the Lord God that in His grace and Love, He has kept us by faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, from actually doing them.

Even when we may do a great job of hiding our sinful nature from others, God still knows and sees the deepest and darkest secrets of our hearts. (Gen. 6:5; I Sam. 16:7; 1Ki 8:39; 1Ch 28:9; Ps 7:9; Jer 11:20; 20:12; 17:10; Ac 1:24)

It is because Jesus, Who is God, knows how sinful we are, that He allowed Himself to be killed on the cross of Calvary.

During this Kangaroo Court before the Sanhedrin.

Caiaphas asked the Sanhedrin:

Vs. 66 - What do you think?"

And they answered: "He is worthy of death,"

Vs. 67 – Then they spit in HIS face and struck HIM with their fists. Others slapped HIM

Vs. 68 – and said, Prophecy to us Christ. Who hit YOU?

After Jesus rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven where He sits at the Right Hand of God the Father, Ruling all things with His Almighty and Powerful Word. (Acts 5:31; Acts 7:55; Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; I Peter 3:22)

One day, “*On That Day*” The Lord Jesus will come again, only not as humble servant, but as glorious and powerful Judge. (I Thess. 3:13; I Thess. 5:23; I Cor. 1:8; Isaiah 11:1-12)

Praise be to the Lord Jesus that He has covered all our hypocrisy with His Holy Precious Blood (Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9; Heb. 9:12-14; Col 1:14; I Peter 1:18-21) and we can look forward to spending eternity in heaven because of HIM! AMEN

**THEME:** The Hands of Hypocrisy. (Caiaphas)