

For Reflection:

And so, begins the trial of Jesus. Everything about this procedure was wrong. It was held in the chief priest's house, not a public place. It was the dead of night--so much for sunshine law. There were no real charges against Jesus. People were bribed to say things that were untrue and threatened if they gave evidence to defend Jesus. The Sanhedrin was supposed to be in charge of protecting truth and prosecuting false testimony.

Meanwhile, Peter is warming himself by Caiaphas' fire. He sat with the servants so as not to be associated with Jesus. Whether he was concerned for Jesus or curious about the events, it was not a good place nor good company for Peter. He had placed himself in harm's way.

The religious leaders are worried that Jesus said he would destroy the temple, while those in charge of the temple have already done a pretty good job of that. What Jesus plans to destroy is the idol they have created and erect places in our hearts for God to abide.

Jesus offers the picture of what it costs to stand for truth. If we look closely, we will also see that having matters our way has a price as well.

(More Below)

Today's Scripture:

They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet even then their testimony did not agree (Mark 14:53-59 NIV).

Question to Ponder:

Have you ever "bent" the rules to secure an outcome that you thought good, and right? Have you been the victim of manipulative strategies? What does God want to say to you about forgiveness (of yourself and others)?

Prayer:

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps 139:23-24) Amen.

(More Below)

Practice: Fasting

To let go of an appetite in order to seek God on matters of deep concern for others, myself and the world. A fast is the self-denial of normal necessities in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. This physical awareness of emptiness is the reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy.

Today, try abstaining from food, drink, shopping, desserts, chocolate and so on to intentionally be with God. Keep company with Jesus in relinquishment. (adapted from *The Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun/Fasting).

