

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.
First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide
“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

24 Hours that Changed the World
Condemned By the ‘Righteous’
March 28-April 2

53 They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled...55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death...the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” 62 Jesus said, “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’ ” 63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? 64 You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?” All of them condemned him as deserving death. 65 Some began to spit on him, to blind-fold him, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him over and beat him. 66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” 68 But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” ... after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” 71 But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” 72 At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Mark 14:53-72 (selected verses)

In yesterday’s sermon we focused on the six hours Jesus spent, from 1-7 am the night he was arrested, on trial before the Sanhedrin, convicted of blasphemy by them, and then beaten, spit upon and held prisoner until morning when he could be turned over to the Roman governor for a civil trial. We also considered what was happening in the courtroom with Jesus and what was happening in the courtyard as Peter denied knowing Jesus. One common thread that emerges in both of these scenes is the silence of both Jesus and Peter: Jesus silent before the Sanhedrin and Peter silent in his confession (denying his association with and to Jesus).

As we looked at and heard these parts of the story we saw the meaning of this story for our lives, and we began to answer the question, “why did the religious leaders want Jesus to die?”

This week we’ll study the trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin and Peter’s denial of Jesus, not simply from Mark’s gospel, but from the other gospels as well. You’ll have a chance to notice the similarities but also the differences in the different gospel accounts of the events that took place between midnight and 6:00 am on the day Jesus was crucified. This will seem repetitious to you. Yet each day read the story with fresh eyes. Look for the differences like a detective. Ask what the differences teach, how they round out the story, or why they are there; but don’t simply focus on the differences. Each day reflect upon the meaning of each part of the story: The Sanhedrin’s condemnation, Jesus’ testimony about himself, and Peter’s denial of Christ.

Monday– Read Matthew 26:57-75

Today we begin with Matthew’s account. Matthew’s account comes closest in agreement with Mark’s account of these events. How are we modern people like the Jewish Sanhedrin? What does it take for evil to triumph? Imagine that you were sitting watching the events of the Sanhedrin – what do you think it would have been like to have been in the room? Why did they beat and spit upon Jesus? How does the account of Peter’s denial make you feel? Can you identify with Peter?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Tuesday-Read Mark 14:53-72.

Why did they blindfold Jesus as they were preparing to strike him? Look at the response of Jesus when he was on the “witness stand” – what did his words in verse 62 mean? What does Jesus’ testimony tell us about how he understood his ministry?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Wednesday- Read Luke 22:54-71

How much courage did it take for Peter to come into the courtyard with the guards who had arrested Jesus? If Jesus was arrested about midnight and finally arrived at the High Priest’s home by 1:00 am, try to imagine the time these various things take place. What hints do you have that help you set a time for this. Notice, Luke tells us Jesus looked at Peter from the place he was being held at the moment Peter denied Jesus the third time. Imagine this look across the courtyard. How do you see this in your mind’s eye?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Thursday- Read John 18:12-27

John does not mention the entire Sanhedrin – he may assume the reader knows about this body meeting to try Jesus, but he doesn’t mention this. Instead, he mentions two trials – one before the former high priest, Annas and a second before the sitting high priest, Caiphas. Reflect again upon the reasons two high priests (first century Popes) called for Jesus’ death. How do you envision the tone of Jesus when he speaks here? What does Peter’s denial mean to you?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Friday-Read John 21:15-19

This takes place after the resurrection. How many times does Jesus ask about Peter’s love? What is the significance of this? What did this story mean to Peter? What does it mean to you?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Saturday- Read Mark 15:1-15

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer:

Dear God,

As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN