

The Sufferings of Christ
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
March 22, 2026

Text: John 18:1-9

Purpose: Jesus suffered at the hands of many men that evening. The echo of Christ's words reminds us how we may handle Christ's invitation.

A woman was waiting for her first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist. She noticed his certificate, which bore his full name.



Suddenly, she remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been in her high school graduating class almost 50 years ago.

Upon seeing him, however, she quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was too old to have been one of her classmates.

After the dentist had examined her teeth, she asked him if he had attended the local high school. "Yes," he replied.

She asked, "When did you graduate?"
He answered, "In 1953."

The woman exclaimed, "Why, you were in my class!"
He looked at the woman closely and said, "What did you teach?"¹



Last week, we examined Jesus' prayer for His disciples in the Upper Room. After the meal was completed, they left the security of the Upper Room to retire to their frequent place of rest, the Mount of Olives. It is there that Jesus goes off to be alone to pray one last time for God to remove this cup of sorrow that Jesus is to drink. It is not the suffering, the mocking or the death that burdens Christ, but it is the fact that Jesus was to be our sin offering. He was to become sin for us. He who had no sin became our sin bearer.

Jesus prayed while His disciples slept. All of a sudden, their rest was interrupted by the sounds of an angry mob. At the front of the mob was none other than Judas.

I. Jesus was Betrayed by the Hypocritical¹ - Judas



According to the dictionary, the word hypocrite means "a pretender, one that pretends to be what he is not." All of us know someone that is a pretender. Judas was no exception. He was able to keep his real nature hidden from the other disciples. But Jesus knew Judas' heart. On the night of Jesus' betrayal, the real Judas came out. He wanted to belong to the group that would be victorious. He felt the time had come to join the other side.

In the Gospel of John chapter 18, we see the final results of Judas' betrayal. "*Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.*" What a fitting sentence for Judas to be placed among the enemies of Christ. What a shameful end for one

of the disciples from the inner circle. Judas stood with the enemies as the betrayal occurred.

Judas came to Jesus as He was with the other disciples at the Mount of Olives and betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Of all the ways to expose Jesus, it was with a kiss!

II. Jesus was Defended by the Passionate – Peter

Once the soldiers came to Jesus, He asked them a question. "*Whom are you seeking?*" The soldiers replied, "*Jesus of Nazareth.*" I love his answer and the results of His answer.



Jesus said, "*I am He.*" All four gospel accounts record the arrest of Jesus. Only one, the book of John, records what happened to the guards when Jesus said, "*I am He.*" John records all the soldiers drew back and fell to the ground.

To me this shows that Jesus WILLINGLY went with the soldiers. Peter, the passionate follower of Jesus wanted to come to Jesus' rescue. Peter was the one that wanted to call fire down from heaven. Peter was the one that said he would die with Jesus. Peter was one that always opened his mouth before engaging his brain.



Peter grabbed his sword and lashed out at those that had come to arrest Jesus. You could tell he was not good at handling the tools of war because he missed the head of one and only cut off his ear. The scripture says, "*Simon Peter having a sword, drew it and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his*

right ear.” Once again, in typical Jesus fashion, He reached out and healed the man’s ear.

Jesus knew the heart of Peter and told him to put up the sword. *“Those that use the sword, will die by the sword.”* (Matthew 26:52) Of the phrases attributed to Jesus, this one stands out as a classic. Whatever means of destruction you use on others often becomes the means of your own destruction. You reap what you sow. If you cheat others, you too will be cheated. If you sow hatred, then you will reap a harvest of hatred. If you sow love and kindness, then you will reap love and kindness.

III. Jesus was Smitten by the Unreasonable – an Official



That evening Jesus was also struck many times by those that were unreasonable. Jesus rebuked his captors that they came under the cover of darkness to arrest Him. He said, *“I spoke openly to the world, I always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed, they know what I said.”*

One of the officers reached out and slapped Jesus with the palm of his hand. *“Do You answer the high priest like that?”*

Jesus said, *“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of that evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”* Can you imagine the judgment day for that official that struck Jesus?

IV. Jesus was Denied by the Cowardly – Simon Peter

As Jesus was being taken from one false trial to another, Simon Peter stood in the shadows. Jesus had told Peter that he would betray Jesus three times before the rooster crowed the next morning.



Standing around the fire warming Himself, a young girl asked if Peter was with Jesus. He said, *“I am not.”* Again, when confronted he replied, *“I have never been with that man Jesus.”* Upon being asked a third time if he was with Jesus since his dialect was similar, he called curses down upon himself if he was lying. *“I DO NOT KNOW HIM!”* Just then, the rooster crowed.

V. Jesus was Shunned by the Self-Righteous – Priests



That evening, Jesus was led to His first trial and was brought before Annas – the father-in-law of Caiaphas the High Priest. Next, He was brought before Caiaphas to determine His charges and punishment. It was agreed a week earlier that Jesus was going to die. What they were having a hard time agreeing upon was what basis they should sentence Him to die.

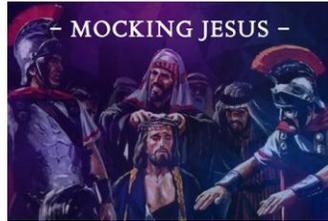
When Caiaphas put Jesus under oath and charged Him to attest to who He was. They asked, *“Are you the Son of God?”* So, he answered, *“You rightly say that I am.”* (Luke 22:70)

The priest now had Jesus where they wanted Him. They took Jesus to the Praetorium, the seat of Judgment before Pilate. These accusers were so concerned about their Holiness that they would not enter into this courtroom because if they did, they would be unclean.

Now Jesus stands before Pilate without His accusers.

VI. Jesus was Mocked by the Frivolous – The soldiers.

This evening would not be complete without the strong arm of the soldiers that mocked and ridiculed Jesus. That evening, the soldiers made Jesus a crown. *“The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head... and said, Hail, King of the Jews.”* (v. 19:2) They took a reed and hit Him upon the head. They took off His clothes and wrapped Him in a purple robe and bowed, mockingly before Jesus as a king.



The frivolous mocked the King of Glory. They belittled the Man that will eventually Judge them on judgment day. They spat upon the face of the One that they will see one day, face to face. They bruised His body that would be broken and poured out as an offering for their sin.

VII. Jesus was Questioned by the Ambitious – Pilate



Pilate was the ruling authority over the region. The Jewish authorities were able to dispense justice among their people but they were not able to administer capital punishment.

That is why they had to bring Jesus to Pilate to administer the death penalty.

Pilate was an ambitious person. He wanted to please Rome, please Herod, and keep the peace among those he governed.

As Jesus was standing before Pilate, he asked Jesus three questions.

1. Are you King of the Jews? (v. 33)

Jesus answered, *“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

2. What is truth? (v. 38)

This question was not directly answered, but the implied answer is that Jesus is the truth.

3. Where are you from? (v. 9:9)

Jesus did not answer immediately, but said, *“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given to you from above. Therefore, the one that delivers Me to you had the greatest sin.”*

Pilate didn't want to make any ruling about Jesus so he sent Jesus to Herod. Herod in turn, sent Jesus back to Pilate. Pilate did not want to sentence Jesus. He offered to release a prisoner as was the custom once a year. The people cried for the release Barabbas instead of Jesus. Pilate tried to set Him free on the basis of Jesus' innocence. He asked what do you want me to do with this man Jesus.



They all cried, “*His blood be upon us, Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” And Pilate washed his hands of the entire affair. They took him out to be crucified the third hour of the day on Friday morning.

Conclusion and Application.

My professor at Campbell would often say, “So what?” What do we do now that we have heard the events of the last evening of Jesus’ life?

- The Priests came and had Jesus arrested in the garden as He prayed.
- Judas was with them and betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
- That evening, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.
- The High Priest had Jesus illegally tried before an illegal council.
- The soldiers mocked Him and spat upon Him.
- Pilot tried to pass the judgement to Herod, but Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.
- Pilate refused to compromise his position of power to free an innocent man. He tried to release Jesus instead the people called for Barabbas to be released. The people cried out, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” Pilate washed his hands of this nasty business and Jesus died later that morning.

In many ways, we all play a part in this drama of the denial, rejection, and crucifixion of Jesus. Who would you be this last evening of Jesus’ life? A sleeping disciple? A betraying Judas? An impetuous Peter? A fearful disciple? A



mocking soldier? A fearful Pilate? Or a buck passing Herod?

Are you like Judas and betray Jesus by your words and deeds? Do you compromise your relationship with God all over a few silver coins?

Are you like Peter? Ready to defend Jesus and die with Him, yet denying Him before those around you?

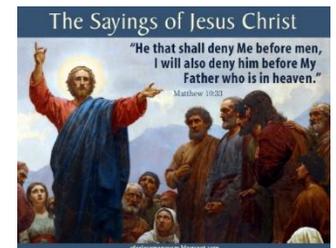
Are you like the disciples that all scattered at the first sign of trouble? Where were those disciples during the last hours of Jesus’ life?

Are you like the soldiers that mock Jesus? Do you mock Jesus by the jokes you tell, or by the way you casually treat God’s name?

Are you like the crowd that wanted a sinner set free and the Savior crucified? If you were there, would you be one that cried, “*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*”

Are you like Pilate, only concerned about number one? If it doesn’t help me, or improve my position, then I will vote with the one that helps me the most.

Examine yourself this week. Are you doing things in your life that deny your identification with Christ? Does your talk about God match your daily walk with Jesus?



In the end, the only thing that matters is have we denied Christ? Jesus reminds us, *“If you deny Me before men, then I will deny you before My Heavenly Father.”*

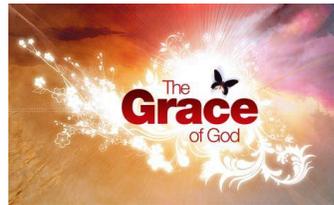
Let us live a life worthy and pleasing unto Him.

Herod was deposed several years later.

The Pharisees’ temple was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans.

As one soldier confessed at the cross, *“Surely this was the Son of God.”*

The chorus of our closing hymn tells us that there is grace that is greater than our sin.



Grace, grace, God’s grace.

Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;

Grace, grace, God’s grace,

Grace that is greater than all our sin.

As we sing our closing hymn, maybe you have been stirred to recognize yourself as one of those that rejects Jesus. All of us have sinned. But Christ has forgiven us. One of the thieves on the cross beside Jesus confessed his sin and Christ forgave that man. Jesus said to him, *“Today, you will be with Me in paradise.”* Today we can begin our journey of faith, if we only ask Him.

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. VII page 223-225.

² Mickey’s Funnies, A “Dentist” Funny, March 11, 2026