

Sermon for September 6, 2009

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: Mark 14:53-72

Title: "Denied"

Introduction: Have you ever watched someone do something incredibly "not smart"? I mean so "not smart" that you wonder if you actually saw or heard what you just saw or heard... "Did that just happen?" Maybe it was on the news or maybe it was in person and you cannot help but ask, "What were they thinking?" Is it possible for anyone to be that "not smart"?!?

Have you ever done something incredibly "not smart"? Have you ever done the "not smart" thing and then pretended like it never happened ... maybe no one saw me? Yeah? And then you tell your friends or spouse later... or, you maybe never tell anyone?

Well, today we get to see a couple of Jesus' disciples who will make us say, "What were you thinking?!?"

Let's continue our 8 week tour of Israel. This is week 7. Again (Israel Map), we landed in Tel Aviv. We then used Peter and Cornelius to give us a tour of Joppa and Caesarea by the Sea. From there we went to Jesus' boyhood home, Nazareth. Then we traveled to the Sea of Galilee where Jesus spent the vast majority of his 3 years of ministry... North to Caesarea Philippi where Peter declares who Jesus is (the Son of God / Messiah). Then the past two weeks have been spent in and around the city of Jerusalem where Jesus spent the last week of his life here on earth. If you have missed any of these, you can jump on our website, www.bmzchurch.org and listen to the messages and/or read the notes for those messages.

At this time, I invite you to take the insert out of your passport/program. On one side you will see our Scripture for today (continuation of last week's passage) and on the other you will see a brief outline of how we are going to talk about this section of God's Word. You will notice that there are fill-in-the-blanks. I hope you will take time to fill those in as the answers come up on the screen(s) in front of you. We believe that if you take time to write some things down, that this Scripture will stick with you longer. Then, I hope that you will take this paper home with you and post it somewhere where you will see it throughout the week (fridge, mirror, car visor) so that you will be reminded of the scripture and what we have learned from it. For those of you listening online, the passport/program is available for download off of our web site. I hope you will take time to fill-in-the-blanks as well.

Now, last week we used Mark 14 (MAP OF JERUSALEM) to find out that, as the Jesus and the disciples were leaving the Upper Room and headed out of the city, Peter told Jesus that he would never leave him, even if he had to die for his faith in Jesus. Jesus told Peter that he was wrong. As they went up the Kidron Valley to the Mt. of Olives, they stopped in a garden called Gethsemane (oil press). Jesus prayed, the disciples slept and then Judas came with a mob of Jewish religious leaders and Temple guards to arrest Jesus. Jesus wonders why they came with weapons...

Have you ever wondered "why?" Why did Judas feel a need to betray Jesus and have him arrested? Why would a disciple of Jesus who followed him around for 3 years and experienced all that Jesus did (healing, feeding, bringing back from the dead, teaching, etc.) find it necessary to turn his back on Jesus and have him arrested?!?

Great question! We will talk about that right after we pray...

PRAY NOW!

- I. How Did This Happen?
- A. Okay, so, how would this happen? Why would it come to Jesus being arrested at night in a garden on or near the Mt. of Olives?
- B. Let's start with this; just so there is no confusion ... Jesus knew it was going to happen!
1. Jesus came into Jerusalem to cheers and proclamations about him being the Messiah.
 2. Jesus cleared the Temple and really made the religious leaders mad (losing money!).
 3. Numerous confrontations that showed that the religious leaders either had to get rid of Jesus or their lives were going to completely change! Apparently some people don't like change...
 4. Please know that Jesus crucifixion was not a surprise to Jesus. Jesus knew why he was going to Jerusalem!
- C. Next, let's take into account the leaders of the Jewish religious scene.
1. You know, I'm amazed every time I hear some multi-millionaire celebrity, athlete or business person declare bankruptcy.
 2. How does that happen? They make more money in a year than you and I will see in a lifetime ... yet, they run out.
 3. Do you know what it is? *Lifestyle* (at least that's one reason)! They have chosen a standard of lifestyle that they do not want to give up. People become addicted to a certain lifestyle and it's like a drug ... they will pursue that lifestyle even if it causes them to lose all of their money.
 4. Why did the Jewish religious leaders have to get rid of Jesus? They were addicted to their lifestyle! Before Jesus came along, the people had the utmost respect for the Pharisees and teachers of the Law and their fancy clothes and "holier than thou" attitudes. The Pharisees were making great money by leveraging their positions as church leaders...
 5. Then, Jesus came along and opened the eyes of the people to who these religious men really were. They were not of God. They were looking out for themselves.
- D. Judas ... what about Judas ... what would cause Judas to betray Jesus?
1. I think (just me), that according to Mark, Judas was right with Jesus and the way Jesus was doing things ... Palm Sunday parade ... clearing the Temple ... repeatedly putting the religious leaders in their place ... all that stuff—UNTIL the beginning of Mark 14.
 2. On Tuesday night (two days before the Passover Meal), Jesus is having the evening meal in Bethany at the house of Simon (a man Jesus healed of leprosy).

3. While they are eating, a woman comes in with a beautiful jar filled with expensive perfume. She goes over to Jesus, breaks open the jar and pours it on Jesus' head.
4. Jesus does not scold her ... even though the perfume was worth 300 denarii (1 denarius = a day's wage).
5. The argument is that the money could have been used to feed the poor, but I'm not sure that's what the concern was.
6. Remember the disciple's assumption (Jesus the Messiah taking over their nation, kicking out the Roman Empire, defeating all of their enemies and living in peace). You have to have money to fund military power...
7. This might have been where Judas figured it out and decided that he wanted to be part of something different ... not watching his leader hang on a cross and die.
8. What was Judas thinking?!? We would never betray Jesus... right?!?

Well, this brings us to our Scripture for today. Jesus has been arrested and a naked man just ran out of the garden. Mark 14:

READ MARK 14:53-65 NOW!

II. The Secret Night Meeting

A. Caiaphas' House / The Sanhedrin

1. So, they take Jesus to Caiaphas' House. Caiaphas was the High Priest or the leader of the Jewish religious group.
2. It says that "the leading priests, the elders and the teachers of religious law had gathered (v.53)." These were the men that made up the "Sanhedrin".
3. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish supreme council headed up by the High Priest and it had religious, civil and criminal jurisdiction. 71 men made up the full council, but only 23 were required to have a quorum ... a legal vote.
4. The problem was that the Sanhedrin was not supposed to hold secret meetings, but meet in the Temple at given times. They were meeting at the High Priest's house in the middle of the night ... not according to the law!

B. Where's Peter?

1. Meanwhile back at the ranch ... Peter ignored Jesus orders. Instead of 'scattering' and meeting him in Galilee, Peter followed the mob back to Caiaphas' house and went right into the courtyard.
2. That took guts. Or, maybe, incredibly "not smart"!
3. Peter goes by the fire there in the courtyard to wait and find out what is going to happen to Jesus. I wonder if Peter thought that Jesus would get out of this one too. Then they could continue with his Messiah-ship!

C. False Witness (10 Commandments)

1. Meanwhile, back inside the house, the Sanhedrin (or at least 23 of them) was set on accusing Jesus. They had him in custody and they were not going to let him go.
2. Have you ever had your words twisted so they meant something else? In an argument with a sibling as a kid and then you have to tell your parents, “That’s not what I said!”
3. They were trying to use Jesus’ words against him about the tearing down and rebuilding of the Temple ... they got it wrong. Jesus was talking about His own body, not the stone Temple was the center of Jerusalem.
4. Now, it says in here that members of the Sanhedrin attempted to lie to convict Jesus of blasphemy so they could have him killed. Their own law said that if someone bears false witness (10 Commandments) in a capital case, they were to be given the death penalty themselves ... that did not happen in Caiaphas’ house.
5. They just wanted Jesus gone!

III. The Question He Had to Answer

Jesus stayed quiet through this whole session, until someone asked a question that he had to answer. Someone asked, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Jesus could not deny publicly his own Father! He would have been doing the same as Peter in the courtyard. Jesus had to be true to God.

A. The Answer

1. Jesus answered with “I AM” = their Scriptural understanding of God (Moses was to say ‘I Am’ sent you).
2. Then Jesus referred to himself as “the Son of Man”. This term was used for the Messiah in The Book of Daniel.

B. The Consequences

1. Blasphemy! It was against the Law to claim oneself as a god, much less “God”!
2. The High Priest was required to mourn if he heard such blasphemy ... tearing of clothes.
3. Jesus is declared guilty.
4. They spit on him, blindfold him, beat him, punch him and slap Jesus because he claimed who he really was and is!

READ MARK 14:66-72 NOW!

IV. The Galilean

If he’d listened to Jesus he wouldn’t have been there ... but, Jesus knew Peter.

- A. “I Don’t Know This Man”

1. If we'd only listen to Jesus ... How many of you have gotten in big trouble JUST BECAUSE you did not listen to wise advice?!? How many of you have gotten into big trouble because you were in a place you were did not need to be?
 2. If Peter had been where he was supposed to be, he would not have been tempted to deny Jesus!
 3. "What were you thinking?" Peter denied Jesus three times even after all they had been through together!
 4. "What were you thinking?" But, we do it too, don't we. We go places that put us in compromising positions. We know the things that tempt us, but we go towards them instead of away from them...
 5. Once we are there, what happens? Our actions deny Jesus as Lord and Savior in our lives!
 6. If Peter would have "scattered", he would not have denied Jesus three times!
- B. The Word Hurts
1. Notice that the rooster crowing the second time did not upset Peter ... what upset Peter was when Jesus' words came flooding back to him!
 2. "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."
 3. The Word of God and specifically the words of Jesus can be very painful. God's Word reveals who we really are, and we don't measure up to who God wants us to be.
 4. It hurt Peter because Peter really wanted to serve Jesus ... he didn't want to deny his Lord!

Today we get to take communion together ... a reminder of how much Jesus loves you and me. It's a reminder of the forgiveness that we are offered by Jesus hanging on a cross. It's a reminder that we are to come together in community / communion and be reminded why we live for Jesus Christ ... a reminder to serve God's Kingdom.

Peter denied Jesus three times, and we have a hard time with it. How could he? He lived with Jesus, traveled with Jesus, did ministry and healing and teaching and feeding with Jesus for about 3 years and when it came down to it, Peter denied Jesus. How could he?

I wonder how many of us have known the stories of Jesus for more than 3 years. I wonder how many of us have denied Jesus 3 times or more... a day! How many times do we deny Jesus with the way we talk? How many times do we deny Jesus because we are too scared what people will think? How many times do we deny Jesus by not helping someone that we know is in need ... because we don't really feel like it? How many times have you had a chance to be like Jesus (Christ-like) to someone else and have chosen not to?

Today as you come forward, change that. Ask God for the strength to live a life that does not deny Jesus. Let's Pray!