

**THE BIG IDEA:** When we put God on trial, we're found guilty and he's found good.

### The Take-Off

I haven't spent much time in court

Actually, outside of traffic court for a lapsed car tag or two, I've spent zero time in court (although I do enjoy the occasional "Law & Order" marathon)

In this morning's text, we're going to read about Jesus standing trial.

We'll be reading the last part of Luke 22 and the first half of Luke 23, and while you're finding it, I thought I'd share a couple of actual exchanges from court transcripts to kind of get us thinking legally.

**Lawyer:** "How far apart were the vehicles at the time of the collision?"

**Lawyer:** "Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?"

**Witness:** "No."

**Lawyer:** "Did you check for blood pressure?"

**Witness:** "No."

**Lawyer:** "Did you check for breathing?"

**Witness:** "No."

**Lawyer:** "So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?"

**Witness:** "No."

**Lawyer:** "How can you be so sure, Doctor?"

**Witness:** "Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar."

**Lawyer:** "But could the patient have still been alive nevertheless?"

**Witness:** "Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere."

**Lawyer:** "What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke that morning?"

**Witness:** "He said, 'Where am I, Cathy?'"

**Lawyer:** "And why did that upset you?"

**Witness:** "My name is Susan."

**Accused, Defending His Own Case:** "Did you get a good look at my face when I took your purse?"

**Lawyer:** "You were there until the time you left, is that true?"

**Lawyer:** "The youngest son, the 20 year old, how old is he?"

**Lawyer:** "So you were gone until you returned?"

**Lawyer:** "Were you present in court this morning when you were sworn in?"

**Lawyer:** "Have you lived in this town all your life?"

**Witness:** "Not yet."

This morning we'll see 3 groups standing in judgement over Jesus: the religious leaders, Pilate, and Herod.

It's too easy to see those leaders as "bad" and say we'd never do what they did, so let me suggest 3 things that we see them putting on trial that we often put on trial, as well.

Let's start with the religious leaders...

## 1. The plan of God

- a. Of the 3 groups that will try Jesus, this is the only time Jesus will talk about being the Messiah
- b. He does it by making reference to 2 truths these men would have known:
  - "Son of Man" / a messianic title which pointed to Daniel 7:13-14
  - "Seated at the right hand of God" / a place reserved for the Messiah acc. to Psalm 110:1
- c. In the specific sense, they are putting that specific claim on trial, but in a more general sense, they are putting **the plan of God** on trial
- d. This is what religion does; it has its own plan on how to get to God, a plan that allows us to stay in control, a plan that calls the shots, a plan that feeds the lie of us being "good enough"
- e. I know that we often don't understand God's plan, but we can trust it
- f. Here are a few reasons why:
  - **Isaiah 46:9-10** / He sees the future
  - **Isaiah 55:8** / He has a higher perspective
  - **Psalm 33:11** / His plans are firm (when ours change almost daily!!)

## 2. The authority of God

- a. Sometimes we find ourselves like Pilate, and we put **the authority of God** on trial
- b. The religious leaders played the political card with Pilate
- c. Pilate's question is one that all of us eventually have to answer about Jesus: "Are you the king?"
- d. This is a question of authority; who will sit on the throne of your life?
  - **Romans 3:4** / God is true / He is the authority
  - **Psalm 119:160** / God's word is truth
  - **John 17:17** / God's word is truth
  - **Psalm 19:9** / The judgements God makes are true
- e. We sometimes wrestle with the authority of God, we put it on trial
- f. "I don't care what the Bible says!" doesn't change the weight the Bible carries
- g. It is unique enough to demand investigation and inspired enough to lead to transformation
- h. For Pilate, if Jesus was king, he wouldn't be
- i. The 3 most costly words we'll ever say: "Jesus is Lord."

## 3. The goodness of God

- a. One of the reasons we struggle with the authority of God is because we don't trust his power
- b. We've been abused by people in power over us: teachers, coaches, parents, bosses, pastors
- c. We're afraid of being treated unfairly, and so we trust ourselves to protect ourselves
- d. We find ourselves like Herod; we put **the goodness of God** on trial
- e. Herod wanted to get something good from Jesus - a sign, something fun, exciting
- f. He did a 180 when Jesus wouldn't play along
- g. When things don't go like we'd hoped, how quickly do we turn to God and wonder if he's still good?

### The Landing

And yet he is! If we learn nothing else here, it's that when men were doing their worst, God was giving his best  
Romans 5:20 / where sin increased, grace increased more!

"It's not fair!!" Is a hard thing to say to an innocent man who was killed in the place of a murderer!

What's the takeaway, the Big Idea? That **when we put God on trial, we're found guilty and he's found good.**

And the plan of God, the authority of God, and the goodness of God were all seen when the Son of God laid down his life for the enemies of God (Romans 5:6-11)

Oh, what a good God we serve!

Let's pray.