

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

January 19, 2022

Before Pastor Tom began the lesson, we had a mini-lesson about the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed.

In 325 AD, church leaders met in the city of Nice because there was a division beginning in the church over exactly what was to be believed. The group known as Gnostics believed that Jesus was a Spirit and that the Incarnation was false (that Jesus did not become a man). So the leaders gathered for a divine conference to set a standard of beliefs that all Christians could understand. The Nicene Creed was a non-denominational summary of what we believe as orthodox Christians. The Apostle's Creed was adopted earlier in the 2nd century AD.

After prayer concluding with the Lord's Prayer, we began our study in John 18.

John 18:28

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

Pastor Tom showed a visual of the Hall of Judgment where the High Priests took Jesus to be tried by Pilate. It was located in the Jerusalem Citadel or Tower of David in the Praetorium (palace or house of Herod and Pilate). According to historian Josephus, this structure was originally built by Herod the Great and when Pilate came to Jerusalem this is where he would stay. So Jesus is taken from the Jewish High Priests jurisdiction to a Roman hall of judgment.

*Doing more research in the other Gospels will further our understanding of this verse in John:

Luke 23: 1 - 5

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. 3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. 4 Then said Pilate

to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. 5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

*When Pilate questions Jesus as to who he said he was, Jesus replies with, "You say I am". Throughout the Gospel of John, we have heard Jesus say again and again who He was and yet these leaders still do not believe Him.

*Much like today: How many people have heard about Jesus but have not believed. How would we answer someone's question, "How do you know Jesus is real?" Answers included:

- Miracles we have seen
- Reading in the Bible
- Locating lost things
- Prophecies fulfilled

*In Jesus' day, the leaders had all seen miracles or read about them in the OT. How could they see these miracles and still fall back into sin and disbelief?

Matthew 27: 1 - 11

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. 11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

*This account includes details about the Betrayer, Judas. He returns the 30 pieces of silver to the High Priests and confesses that he was wrong to betray the innocent blood in verse 4.

*Further study could be done just on the sanctity of God through the blood. From Genesis to Revelation, the blood of atonement for sins is a continuous theme. After Adam and Eve sinned and tried to cover themselves using leaves, God made them garments from animal skins which involved shedding the animal's blood to get the skins to cover the sins. Later in Genesis, Cain sacrificed animals to God, shedding blood as God had commanded. But Abel brought a sacrifice from the land, not what God had commanded. This caused contention between Cain and Abel and the first murder in the Bible. Reading in Leviticus, though tedious, is all about the proper ways to sacrifice, shed animal blood, for the atonement of sins. Hebrews 9:22 (And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.) reminds us of the sacredness of shedding blood. It is God's rule, the Law that blood must be shed whether we agree with it or not. And what did Jesus do for us? He shed His Holy blood for us!

*The devil works very hard to get us to do evil, against whatever God has decreed. Then when his plan is accomplished, the devil throws us out with the trash, he is done with us. Judas had done the devil's bidding when he betrayed Jesus to the High Priests. When he tried to confess and take it all back (including the 30 pieces of silver) the religious leaders had nothing to do with him. So he went out and committed suicide. This is the spiritual warfare (forces of good verses evil) we also face in our lives and the lives of family and friends.

Matthew 27: 18-19

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. 19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

*Pilate knew at this point that the religious leaders were just jealous of Jesus. He may have even seen the forces of good and evil at work. Then his wife comes and tells him of her dream about Jesus. She wants Pilate to leave Jesus alone because Jesus is just/innocent.

*Another interesting study to do through the Bible is how God speaks to people through dreams. "God dreams" they are called. It shows how amazing God is that he can even speak to us while we are asleep. Perhaps that is the only time we are actually able to listen to God!

*Back to the Hall of Judgment: It is interesting to point out that as meticulously religious as these men were, they were not believers. They kept asking again and again who Jesus was. They had seen the miracles and knew the prophecies. They knew who Jesus was. But they ridiculed and tried to bring Jesus down to their level because they were envious of his popularity and power. Just as people may ridicule our beliefs in order to bring us down to their level. Sometimes they may point out our sins before we were believers or our shortcomings. But God (and other believers) are more interested in who we are NOW than who we were BEFORE our encounter with Jesus. Human instinct is to hide the truth, blur it, in order to sway us to give up on the Truth. But the Truth cannot be hidden. Recall how the crowd shouted "Hallelujah!" on Palm Sunday and now just days later they will shout, "Crucify Him!" in order to hide the Truth. Just wait 3 days!

Pastor Tom sang a couple lines of a famous song:

"You ask me how I know He lives....He lives within my heart!"

The Men's Group is another example of how good the spirit of fellowship is and how you cannot deny when God shows up.

Good-night to everyone at church and on the phone!