

Jesus on Trial & Peter's Denial

Matthew 26:57-27:11; Mark 14:53-15:15; Luke 22:54-23:25; John 18:12-19:16

PPT Title

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Main Point: Without God's power, it is impossible to do God's will.

Key Verse: *I pray that (the Father) will use His glorious riches to make you strong. May His Holy Spirit give you His power deep down inside you.* - Ephesians 3:16

Props: two electric lamps; a note with the message, "Don't have anything to do with that Man. He is not guilty. I have suffered a great deal in a dream today because of Him." (Matthew 27:19)

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Jesus knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane and agreed to follow to the plan of His Father. The events of the most important week in history had begun. It was as if a great storm loomed in the distance, and the first winds began to blow. Through a fake smile, Judas greeted Jesus in the garden. With a single kiss on the cheek, He betrayed the One who had come to save him. Perhaps the most amazing thing that happened that night was that Jesus held back His own power and allowed the guards to seize Him.

Ask: Who remembers what Jesus told His disciples to do in the garden? **Pray. Say:** Jesus said, "Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing. But the body is weak." (Mark 14:38) **Ask:** Did they obey His instructions? **No. Say:** They were exhausted, and they fell asleep. I must admit, I understand how the disciples felt. There have been times when I have felt too tired to pray.



But Jesus knew what was about to happen. Jesus knew that no matter how much His disciples wanted to obey God's will, they were too weak to do it in their own power. He knew they needed God's power to get them through the terrible days that were ahead.

Let's use electricity for an example of God's power. Most of us don't understand that much about electricity. We can't see it, but we're sure that it exists. **Teacher: Show your lamp. Do NOT plug it into the socket yet. Call up a volunteer. Say:** Let's say this lamp is one of the disciples; let's say it's Peter. He really wants to obey God. We'll say that when this lamp shines out light, that is like Peter doing God's will. **Ask your volunteer to use the switch on the lamp to turn it on. (Kids may shout to plug it in when it doesn't work.) Ask:** Why doesn't it turn on? *It isn't plugged in; there is no power. Say:* Oh, right. It needs power to do what it is supposed to do. Well, what if Peter tries to rely on himself? **Try "plugging" the plug into the side of the lamp. Ask your volunteer to turn it on now.** Well, that didn't work. Maybe he should try relying on another disciple, like John. **Hold the plug up to another unplugged lamp. Ask your volunteer to turn it on now. Say:** Well, I give up. **Ask:** What should he do? *Plug into an outlet. [Caution: ONLY the teacher should plug the lamp into the wall!] Teacher: Plug the lamp into the wall socket and ask your volunteer to turn on the lamp. Say:* Finally, we got it right! **Thank your volunteer. Set the lamps aside.** Of course, God's power is SO much greater and more powerful than electricity! It is the power that created the universe, and raised Lazarus from the dead! And, just as a lamp can only work when it is plugged into the correct power source, Peter can only obey God when he is plugged into God's power (1 John 5:14-15). The way to do that is through prayer - time alone with God, talking

and (even more importantly) listening (Colossians 4:22b). Without God's power, it is impossible to do God's will (John 15:4). But Peter, and the others slept. **Unplug the lamp.**

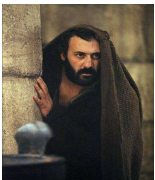
Teacher: Begin today's lesson with prayer. Dear Jesus, the Scripture that we will read today is very difficult for us to hear. We don't even want to think about everything You went through on Your way to the cross. But it is so important for us to understand everything that happened. Please open our hearts and minds and help us to see what you were willing to do to bring us back to God. Amen.

JESUS QUESTIONED BY THE SANHEDRIN & PETER'S DENIALS (Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-65; John 18:12-27)



Say: So Jesus was arrested. This was not the way the disciples thought things should happen, even though Jesus plainly told them it would (Matthew 26:2). Just a few days before this, all the people in Jerusalem were welcoming Jesus, and shouting praises to Him. (We celebrate this on Palm Sunday.) The disciples didn't know what to think. In fear, they left Jesus and ran away (Matthew 26:56).

The guards led Jesus to the house of the Jewish High Priest. Peter followed, but he stayed far enough behind so that no one would notice him. Here, in the middle of the night, a group of Jewish leaders, called the Sanhedrin, were going to put Jesus on trial.



Meanwhile, Peter stood outside in the courtyard of the house.

The woman at the door spoke to Peter. "You are not one of Jesus' disciples, are you?" she asked him.

"I am not," he replied.

It was cold. The servants and officials stood around a fire. They had made it to keep warm. Peter was also standing with them. He was warming himself. - John 18:17-18

I can just picture Peter, rubbing his hands together over the fire, trying to blend in with the crowd. The whole time, he was nervously trying to catch a glimpse of what is going on inside with Jesus.



We have all seen courtroom scenes in movies. The purpose of a trial is to find out the truth. Witnesses are brought in to testify, or tell the truth, about the person who is on trial, so a judge or jury can decide if he is guilty or innocent. Sadly, this trial was not held in order to find out truth. Ever since Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees and chief priests had been looking for a way to get rid of Jesus (John 11:53). At that time, the high priest, Caiaphas, said it would be best if Jesus were killed (John 11:49-50). **This trial was held just to find an excuse to kill Jesus.**

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for something to use against Jesus. They wanted to put Him to death. But they did not find any proof. Many witnesses lied about Him. But their stories did not agree. Then some stood up. They gave false witness about Him. "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made by human hands. In three days I will build another temple, not made by human hands.' " - Mark 14:55-58

This was not true. The witnesses had twisted Jesus' actual words. Jesus was actually talking about His own body - when the religious leaders would destroy His body, He would come back to life three days later (John 21). At the trial, the leaders demanded an answer from Jesus. But Jesus remained silent.

Again the high priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ? Are you the Son of the Blessed One?"

"I AM."

"I AM," said Jesus. - Mark 14:61-62a

Notice the wording of Jesus' answer. **Ask:** Where have we heard these words before? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** "I AM" is the name that God proclaimed for Himself when He spoke to Moses through the burning bush.



Upon hearing these words, Caiaphas tore his clothes in anger. Caiaphas said Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and He should be put to death. Blasphemy is telling lies about God. *Caiaphas* called *Jesus* a blasphemer. But, in fact, it was *Caiaphas and the chief priests* who had encouraged people to blaspheme against Jesus - God in human form. The Jewish law said that anyone who lied about God must be put to death - by being stoned (Leviticus 24:13:16). All the Sanhedrin agreed that Jesus was guilty and should be killed (Mark 14:64).



Then they spat in Jesus' face. They hit Him and slapped Him. The guards took Him away and beat Him. Just imagine: Jesus, the Truth, was called a liar! He was beaten and made fun of. Yet, Jesus controlled His own power and allowed these men to mistreat Him. Think about it. How could He *allow* all of this to happen? Here is the key: Jesus had been abiding with His Father. He was like this (**Teacher: Clasp your hands together tightly, and hold them up for everyone to see.**) with His heavenly Dad. Jesus had agreed to follow God's plan completely (Luke 22:42). His mind was aligned with God's mind. His will was God's will. And God's will was for mankind to be saved from their sin because God is SO GOOD and He loves us SO MUCH.



Outside, a second person asked Peter if he was a disciple. "I am not!" he said (Luke 22:58).

A little while later, some people realized that Peter spoke with a Galilean accent. Someone said his accent was proof that he was one of Jesus' disciples (Matthew 26:73).

But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know Me." And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly. - Luke 22:60-62

This was certainly the lowest moment in Peter's entire life. He was weak, and he was bitterly disappointed in himself.

Let's look at our two examples. Jesus prayed continuously that He would do what God had sent Him to do. **Teacher: Plug in one of the lamps and turn it on.** In His human state, He was relying on God's power. Jesus was able to submit and do exactly what He needed to do to fulfill God's plan. On the other hand, the disciples did not pray. **Show the other lamp. Hold up the plug to show it is not plugged in.** And they did not have the strength to stand by Jesus' side. They gave into their fear and ran away. Peter had great confidence in **himself**, but that was not nearly enough. **Show that you can't plug the lamp into itself.** He should have listened carefully to Jesus' command to pray so he would have had **God's strength** to stand up and say that He did believe in Jesus.

Application: Our lives are also full of temptation and struggles. We are tempted to lie, talk badly about other people, put our needs before others, and to deny being a follower of Jesus, just to name a few. Some of us are put in very difficult situations like divorce, abuse, and sickness. Through all of this, God wants us to abide with Him. No matter what situation we face, we can either bring God glory, or fail to do so. The difference is this: You will either rely on your own strength (**point to unplugged lamp**),

or plug into God's power source (point to plugged-in lamp).

Note to Teacher: Matthew 27:1-10 tells us that as soon as the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus, Judas was filled with remorse. He returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and confessed, "I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood." The religious leaders reacted with smug apathy to his confession - further proof that they were not after truth, but only a way to kill Jesus. Judas threw the coins into the temple and went out and hanged himself.

JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE (Matthew 27:11-27; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 22:66-23:25; John 18:28-19:16)

Note to Teacher: The Jews had a very strict rule that trials were to be held during the day. Bringing Jesus to trial at night broke their own rule. Also, no one was allowed to be tried and found guilty on the same day. The Sanhedrin broke this rule also.

Say: While the Jewish people were under the rule of Rome, the Jewish leaders did not have the power to kill someone for a punishment (John 18:31). So the Sanhedrin took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pilate. Pilate was not a Jew, but he ruled over them at that time. The leaders wanted Pilate to kill Jesus. Back then, the Romans punished criminals by nailing them to a cross until they could no longer breathe.



Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes. It is just as you say," Jesus replied. - Luke 23:3

Pilate knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong. He knew that the chief priests only brought Jesus to him because they were jealous of Him (Mark 15:10).

Note to Teacher: Longing to defer responsibility for this matter, Pilate raised the question of jurisdiction as soon as he learned Jesus was from Nazareth. He sent Jesus to Herod. (This was the grandson of King Herod who tried to kill Jesus when Jesus was a baby.) Herod was thrilled to meet this Jesus he had heard so much about. Herod hoped to see some miracle performed before his very eyes. Herod also knew that Jesus was not guilty (Luke 23:15). As a joke, Herod's soldiers dressed Jesus up in an elegant robe, and sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:6-11).

The Jewish leaders made up more lies about Jesus. They said that Jesus told people to start riots, and not pay their taxes to the Roman government (See Matthew 22:21). But Jesus remained silent. Pilate was amazed that Jesus refused to defend Himself against the charges that were made against Him (Matthew 27:11-14).

While the chief priests were pressuring Pilate to kill Jesus, Pilate's wife sent him a message. **Teacher:** Hand your note to a volunteer and ask him or her to stand and read it aloud. *"Don't have anything to do with that Man. He is not guilty. I have suffered a great deal in a dream today because of Him."* (Matthew 27:19) **Say:** How about that? It wasn't every day that Pilate received a hand-written message from God! God had given a dream to Pilate's wife, and she let her husband know about it.

Pilate felt completely torn between doing the right thing and doing what other people wanted him to do. Pilate asked Jesus more questions, but Jesus was silent.



"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you understand? I have the power to set you free or to nail you to a cross." - John 19:10

Pilate did not understand what he was saying! **Ask:** Who had the power? *Jesus did!* **Say:** Pilate only had power over Jesus for this short time, because Jesus **allowed** him to have it.

Jesus answered, "You were given power from heaven. If you weren't, you would have no power over Me. So the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."
- John 19:11a



Over and over, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the large crowd that had gathered would not stop shouting for Jesus to be killed.



Perhaps there was a way out of this sticky situation. Every year, at the time of the Passover, it was the custom for the governor to release one prisoner. The people were allowed to choose whom they wanted to be released. Pilate offered to release Jesus. But, the chief priests and the leaders persuaded the people to call for a prisoner named Barabbas to be released instead (Matthew 27:20). Barabbas was in jail for rebellion and murder (Mark 15:7).



With one voice the crowd cried out, "Kill this Man! Give Barabbas to us!"...Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. So he made an appeal to the crowd again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate spoke to them for the third time. "Why?" he asked. "What wrong has this Man done? I have found no reason to have Him put to death. So I will just have Him whipped and let him go."

But with loud shouts they kept calling for Jesus to be crucified. The people's shouts won out.



So Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. He set free the man they asked for... Pilate gave Jesus over to them so they could carry out their plans. - Luke 23:18-24

Pilate was the one in authority. The Jewish leaders, themselves, said that they could not put Jesus to death without Pilate. Pilate had a choice to make: side with God or side with men. Pilate gave in to the cries of the people. It seems he was afraid of what the people would do if he did not give in to their demands. He may have been afraid that they would begin fighting. He may have been afraid they would not like him anymore, or that he would lose his job as governor. But he should have been much more concerned about what God wanted him to do.

Application: Pilate's situation was not so different from our own sometimes. There are times when we find ourselves in a sticky situation where we must choose to side with God or side with people. Many times in our lives, we are afraid that people will think we are weird, or uncool, if we stand up for what God wants. The Bible says not to be afraid of people, but instead, have respect for God. He is SO much more powerful than any person (Matthew 10:28). Worrying about what people think over what God thinks is sort of like worrying about a few rain drops while you are standing in a lightning storm. We should put obeying God and following His plan above anything else in our lives. We can only do this when we tap into His power.

PPT Key Verse

Key Verse: *I pray that (the Father) will use His glorious riches to make you strong. May His Holy Spirit give you His power deep down inside you. - Ephesians 3:16*

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Without God's power, it is impossible to do God's will.

Note to Teacher: In these events, we see the fulfillment of prophesy given in Isaiah 53:3, "He was despised and rejected by men." Christ was rejected by the Jews when He was subjected to the religious trials by Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin; He was rejected by the state when He was on trial with Herod and Pilate; and perhaps worst of all, He was rejected by His closest friends, especially, Peter.