Title: Who are you?
Text: Luke 22.63-71
Theme: godly power and judgement
Series: Luke
Aim: I aim to call my people to be in awe of the glory of Christ displayed in suffering

My grandson Curtis is our resident story-teller and when the family gets together as we will this week, he will be given the floor to tell us one of his stories. He just makes these things up and yet, they are rather entertaining. However, Luke's story of the life of Christ has a point and ending and we are getting close to it. Our text this morning concludes chapter 22. Chapter 23 is the crucifixion and 24 is the resurrection; two incredibly important events that have forever have changed and are changing our world. We will start 23 in January. Our Advent series is from Galatians 4.4-7.

Luke is writing for a man named Theophilus, to assure him that he could really believe what he had been told about Jesus. This book is Luke's exhaustive research and work under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. And he includes a fascinating event in the final chapter. On Resurrection Day, Jesus spent part of the day with just two men as they walked from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus where they began a meal together. During those 3-4 hours, Jesus explained how the entire Old Testament pointed to him. The Bible is all about Jesus. For Luke, this fact was one of the clinching arguments that locks down the case for embracing Christ. How the OT points to Christ became the content of the sermons that Peter and Paul preached in the book of Acts, (Luke's prequel to Luke). Peter's opening sermon on the birthday of the church was an exposition of Joel 2, Psalm 16 and Psalm 110, which factors into our text this morning.

This year, our Christmas night of Worship on December 15, is as much about Luke 2 and the birth of Christ as it is Luke 24 and the point of his birthday. We are using the Emmaus Road event to display the theme of Christ through the OT. Our Christmas celebration is always a treat and a wonderful event to participate in, enjoy, and invite others. This year, it is particularly timely. Our people did this to bless us, so come and bring as many others as you can. Like the gospel, it is free for all those who want it.

Read text:

1. **<u>The Contrast and Irony of the abuse of Jesus</u>** (63-65)

The Temple in Jerusalem had its own temple guard; Jewish soldiers under the direct authority of the high priest. The Roman authorities were fine with it as it freed them from getting involved in the messy details of exasperating Jewish life. So, "the men who were holding Jesus in custody" (63) were the temple guard. His own country men were doing this to him.

Let's say that your dad invented and patented a device that became essential for data centers all over the world and his company became a multi-billion-dollar corporation. As his son, you enjoyed the benefits, respect and even admiration from this as you were seen to be the heir-

apparent. However, before taking the reins, you went on a mercy mission to Sudan. You heard of the trauma, suffering, starvation, and hopelessness that so many of the citizens experienced and you wanted to see if there was anything you could do. One night a gang of thugs, sons of the very people you had come to help, nabbed you and took you to a compound where they beat you and mocked you for coming to "save them." We don't need your charity! We don't need your compassion! We don't need you looking out for us cause we know that you are actually looking down on us. Left alone without food, water, a place to go to the bathroom and under the watch of guards who would get drunk and beat you, would you wonder why you ever left your world of respect and influence to be hated and mocked? It was quite a contrast.

That example barely begins to explain the contrast in settings for Christ from heaven to this. In his case, he knew what he was getting into. He knew what he would experience. He knew what it would cost and came anyway. As the trial was hastily getting arranged in the middle of the night and people were gathering, the temple guard wanted to have some fun with Jesus. V.63 says they were mocking him as they beat him. Look at the verbs; "holding, mocking, asking and blaspheming." It was quite a contrast to the honor he deserved but also ironic.

They had heard he was a prophet and so they decided to see how good he actually was. They blindfolded him and took turns beating him and then telling him to reveal which one of them hit him. "Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?" When he did not answer, they took it as permission to do more, since it seemed as if he was not really a prophet. Matthew records that they spit on him and attempted to humiliate him. And in so doing, they blasphemed God. In mocking Christ, they mocked God. But here's the irony: Back in Luke 18.31-33, Jesus told the disciples, that is, he prophesied saying "*See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the **Son of Man** by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon."* Jesus went on to predict his flogging, death and resurrection. Jesus prophesied ahead of time he was going to be beaten and spit upon and treated shamefully. And now, these guards, by mocking Jesus for not being a prophet, are fulfilling that prophesy, proving that Jesus was a prophet.

This scene (verses 63-65) is very telling. Who in this picture appears to be in power? It's the men who were holding Jesus in custody. What are they doing with the power they appear to have? They are abusing the one under their authority and whom they consider to be weaker, inferior or hostile to them. The heart of these guys is on full display. How you treat someone who is under your authority and you can apparently get away with it, is quite a character reveal.

Second question: Who actually has the power in this scene? It is Jesus. What does he do with his power? He restrains it. This is meekness. This is strength under control. So, what is the real strength here? How much strength does it take to hit a man who is bound, blindfolded and not defending himself? And, how much strength does it take to not retaliate when you have the right and power to do so? Who is the wimp in this scene? This Lion can roar and will but not yet.

The passion of Christ refers to all that he endured including his actual dying on the cross for us. We are right to consider how much he suffered physically because it was immense and what he

suffered led to his death. But his suffering was more than physical. This scene like many we will see in chapter 23 show us the heart of our Savior. Beloved, this is our King! Here is the all-powerful, setting aside the use of that power, to receive in his body the blows of rejection, and all of the punishment he would accept, in our place. When Jesus told the disciples the bread was his body and the cup his blood poured out for them, he was thinking of this and more. His suffering and death were not just examples for us. His suffering and death was actually for us. He died to pay for our sins. But at the same time, his suffering and death were examples.

Who are the people you admire? Who are the people who form your ideal of what life should be like? (Podcasters, influencers, politicians, entertainers, educators, pastors, writers, athletes, business figures) How do they treat people they don't agree with? Do they use their influence to benefit others? When mocked, do they mock in return? When rejected, do they seek revenge? What kind of jokes do they tell? If they had a big truck or SUV, would they try to intimidate others or help others? How do they treat people who work for them and know them off the stage and behind the scene? Beloved, there are so many terrible examples of leadership for us to reject because their personal values and character look more like these soldiers. It is ironic that even as they caused his suffering, he was suffering, in part, for them.

2. **<u>The Irony and Contrast of the trial of Jesus</u>**. (66-71)

The arrest and early stages of the trial of Jesus feel like a lynch mob and kangaroo court. First of all, it is night, like middle of the night. Courts and trials do not take place in the middle of the night, unless you are trying to hide something or trying to get a rush to judgement which is clearly the case here. But it's not like the local rabble just erupted from the saloon across the street and the mob is in a drunken frenzy. No, it is chief priests, the assembly of the elders, properly known as the Sanhedrin who are deliberately taking steps to arrest Jesus and do specific things in violation of their own laws to secure his death. Here is the irony.

A. **The irony of the defenders of the OT Law breaking it to suit their desires**.

How many times were these guys all wound up about Jesus exposing their hypocrisy by not keeping the traditions and laws they added to Scripture? But here they are and what are they doing?

- They are holding a trial in the home of the chief priest instead of the temple as their laws stated.
- Jesus was tried without a defense even though their law says both sides had to be heard.
- Jesus was accused of blaspheming, although blaspheming is actually using the name of God in a sinful manner. They never showed how Jesus did this.
- Two days were required for a capital trial and they did this in less than a day.
- Witnesses contradicted one another, which should have rendered the testimony invalid.

- Pronouncements of guilt were to be made starting with the least senior member of the court and moving up to the chief priest, rather than the chief priest shouting the verdict over everyone else.

This trial is a farce. These meticulous lawyers are violating their own laws. These OT scholars are rejecting the entire OT story and yet fulfilling it even as they reject Christ and seek to have him crucified. But perhaps the biggest irony is these judges are judging the one to whom all authority and judgment is given.

Notice the first question. "If you are the Christ, tell us!" Christos was the term for Messiah who was known to be the King of the Jews. So, this question was a political set-up. The Jewish leaders were under Roman authority. They can carry out some punishments, but not capital punishment. Only Rome can do that. These guys want Jesus dead. If they can get him to say that he is the Messiah, then they can rat on him to Rome and pretend to be outraged at his insubordination to Rome. Hence the question. They don't really want to know if he is the Messiah, they want something they can use to kill him. This is not an honest conversation. So Jesus simply points it out. If I tell you, you will not believe and if I ask you, you will not answer. Time after time when these guys would challenge Jesus in public, he would answer them truthfully and cleverly and then ask them questions and they would refuse to answer because it would expose their hypocrisy. So, Jesus is simply saying the obvious. You do not care about the truth. This trial is not about trying to actually discover what is right or wrong, this trial is about you finding something that you can use to kill me. They are using (abusing) procedure as a means to express their evil. Ironically, their evil is advancing God's good plan to save us.

B. **The Contrast of the Judge now being judged**.

But then, Jesus says something they needed to hear. It was an admission and a warning. (69) "*But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God*." If there was one ounce of spiritual life in any of these men, they should have been chilled to the bone and terrified about what side they were on. Jesus uses 2 phrases from 2 OT sources that should have sounded like thunder. (Son of man and seated at the right hand of God) Let me explain. (Turn to Daniel 7)

600 years before all of this, after the nation of Israel had been split into two countries (Israel and Judah) and the northern kingdom of Israel was wiped out by the Assyrian empire, the southern kingdom, Judah had for a while remained standing. Judah had Jerusalem so they had the Temple. But the warnings of Isaiah and Jeremiah were ignored and the unthinkable happened. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. Thousands of Jews were killed and thousands were taken into exile into the land of Babylon to prevent Judah from being a threat or hotbed of rebellion. During this time, Daniel was taken captive to Babylon and rose to prominence even to being 2nd in command of the entire empire.

Nebuchadnezzar dies and his son and grandson step in. It is a time of transition, and decline. The sun is setting on the mighty Babylonian empire and rising on the Medo/Persian kingdom. Daniel is in the later years of his life. His country is in ruins, his people scattered, the relative security of Babylon is being threatened. It is around 538 B.C. Daniel is lying on his bed when the Lord reveals to him what is going to take place by means of a vision. In this vision (Daniel 7 – turn), Daniel sees the winds of the earth stirring up the sea and from the sea come 4 powerful animals, each one representing an empire. Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. But there was one more. Begin reading in v.9 through v.14.

9 As I looked thrones were placed,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.

10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened. (go to v.13)

13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.

14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

The Ancient of Days gives authority to the Son of Man who came (v.13) to the Ancient of Days with the clouds of heaven. And the Son of Man is given dominion, glory and a kingdom that rules over the entire world and will never pass away and will never be destroyed. (That helps us understand Son of man. Now the next phrase.)

1,000 years before Jesus, (450 years before Daniel), David ruled over Israel in her glory years. He too spoke of another king and another kingdom that would come and the king of this kingdom would, like the vision of Daniel 7 be given authority to reign by Yahweh. Psalm 110 (read)

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."
2 The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!
3 Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments;
from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.
4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,
"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."
5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

[6] He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.
[7] He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

So, when Jesus said that from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God, he was informing them that he was the Lord that Yahweh was going to install as the King of all Kings. He was the one seated at the right hand of the power of God. He was the Son of Man that the Ancient of Days was going to be giving an everlasting kingdom to. They were thinking that they were judging him, but in reality, he was the Judge and they would be accountable to him. Blinded by their own power and giddy with the possibility of an accusation that will bring the death penalty from Rome and animosity from the Jews, they pounce. "Are you the Son of God, then?" Jesus cannot deny it and be truthful, but they don't care about truth, so he says, "You say that I am." It is a way of not denying the accusation without giving them exactly what they want. But the outcome has already been determined. Jesus must die. What they don't realize is that he must, but not for reasons they understand.

In this scene there are two kinds of judges: There are the judges who are seething with anger, looking for a reason to be offended and outraged, ready to pounce with condemnation and rage on any perceived slight, and dismissive of any evidence that doesn't support their preconceived view of guilt. It sounds much like the dark personality of our culture. People live on edge, ready to explode at one another, assuming that life is going to treat them unfairly and they are ready to fight back, instantly.

Then there is the true Judge, Jesus. He is the one who is actually sinned against. He is the one who has every right to be outraged, offended and filled with anger at the injustice that he is experiencing. Yet, here he is, possessing all power and authority over his enemies, yet not going off on them and breathing fire because he has set his on heart on going to the cross for you. The true Judge was willing to be judged, so you wouldn't be judged for your sins.

Which one would you rather stand before?