



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 19, 2014

Pastor Randy Ott

Midweek Lenten Worship

Sermon Text: [Mark 14:61-62](#)

It's God's Plan From Beginning to End

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Who is Jesus? That's a question Jesus even had his disciples answer. It's a question a lot of people still ask today. Some see him as a great teacher. Some see him as a prophet. Some see him as a revolutionary. If you go watch the new movie *The Son of God*, the only claim you'll ever see Jesus make about himself is when he looks at Peter (after he calls Peter to follow him) and says, "We are going to change the world." Which fits more clearly in the idea of a revolutionary... he's just come to make things better in this world.

It's a pivotal question though really, who is Jesus? It's a question that is of eternal importance in how it's answered. It is the question that leads us to focus on Jesus' cross. It's the question the high priest asks in this sham trial that they had. It's a question that he already had his answer for, what he believed to be true. It's a question that Jesus does not back down from. It's one that he does not answer in parables or riddles. His answer is one that people that aren't even paying close attention can understand what he's saying.

This evening we see that when we look at the cross, we see that cross is God's plan from beginning to end. That cross is focal in why Jesus came to earth. That cross will still be focal when he comes again. That's what we see this evening.

In this trial before the high priest, they had all these people come and give false testimony. They couldn't get them to agree. So finally the high priest cuts to the chase. He asks him the question that needed to be answered. "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" That was the question he had asked.

Christ...a term that comes out of the Hebrew word "Messiah," the Greek word "Christós," Christ, means "anointed one." When he says "Are you the Christ," he's really saying "Are you the one that Scripture has always pointed to? Are you the one that God has promised would come and be Messiah?" The high priest really thinks he's got Jesus here, because he doesn't believe he is. He obviously doesn't believe he is or else he wouldn't have had him arrested. But he knows that during his ministry Jesus had claimed to be Messiah. At one of the Feasts of Dedication when he was there in Jerusalem in John 10, the leaders of the Jews said to him, "Tell us plainly. Are you the Christ?" He said, "I have told you but you just didn't listen to me." They knew what he claimed to be. They knew what he said. Every time he referred to himself as the Son

of Man, he was leading them right back by the hand of Daniel 7 saying, "I am the One who is eternal." He said to them, "Before Abraham was, I AM." (I AM is the word "The LORD" in the Old Testament, the word "Yahweh" that was God's description of himself that he gave to Moses.) "This is the name by which you are to call me." They knew what he claimed. They just didn't agree with him.

So he figures if Jesus says no, they'll point out that he claimed to be it, so then he's a liar and a fraud. If he says yes, then he's committing blasphemy because he says "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Blessed One—he didn't want to use the word "Yahweh" because their teaching had become so literal on the Second Commandment... Don't misuse the name of the Lord your God. They said, "Let's just never say it and then we won't misuse it." So instead of saying "Are you the Son of the I AM," he says "Are you the Son of the Blessed One" to show how reverent he was and how pious he was in comparison to this liar, this fraud Jesus. That's really the dichotomy he's setting up.

Jesus answers him. Jesus gets to the heart of the matter. He doesn't address his false piety of not saying the name when that's not what the Commandment is all about. He doesn't address any of the other issues. He gets to the heart of the matter. The heart of the matter is always, how do you view Jesus? He says, "I AM." There's no way around it. He's saying that he is the Son of God.

When he says that, that he is the Son of the Most High, he also doesn't speak the name of the Lord, to follow their manmade regulations. But he speaks about God's power, because that's also what he is going to speak about in a little bit... the power he has when he comes back.

Of course they view it as blasphemy. They had come to the conclusion that he couldn't be the Messiah. The reason they had was because he didn't fit their preconceived notion of what the Messiah should be. They expected when the Messiah came back that they would get a hearty pat on the back and an at-a-boy because they were the pious people that counted their steps on the Sabbath. They did everything. They were looking at what they did. Their expectation of the Messiah was that someone was going to come back and let everyone else have it and say, "Boy, you guys are great!" Jesus didn't do that. He called them whitewash tombs, which in essence was saying "You don't look like something that makes people unclean, but you are something that makes people unclean and separates them from God. You aren't bringing people closer to God. You are the people that honor me with their lips but their hearts are from me that Isaiah was talking about." They didn't like that. It wasn't what they thought the Messiah would be.

Before we get too harsh on them, maybe we have to ask ourselves, do we ever screw up why we think we've got a relationship with God? Do we ever expect something from God that God has never claimed to give to us? Do we have a false view of who God is and what he should do at times? I think the answer is yes. I think at times we are so much closer to the pharisees than we would like to admit.

I talk with people and say, "Are you ready to meet your Lord?" And they say to me, "I hope so. I've always tried to do my best." Doesn't that sound like a pharisee, looking inward at who I am and what I'm doing? I talk with them about what makes you ready, is it what you do or what Jesus does? "Oh yes, yes, yes, it's Jesus." But we really quickly slip back into looking at ourselves, don't we? It's something that takes forever to get out of the head of a Confirmation class not to keep marking the multiple choice that says you're going to get to heaven by what you do, because that's what they want to do. That's pretty close to the pharisees.

But even at that, even after we know and rejoice that Jesus is our Savior, that he is the Christ who has taken away our sins, sometimes we want to make demands of him that he has never promised to us. Look at everything he says to us tonight. "I AM and I'm going to come back in glory." It's not about this world. It's about the world that's coming, right? He's come to live in our place, die in our place, take away our sins so that we are ready to be in our eternal home, not just the here and now. Oh sure, he blesses us in the here and now. I'm not saying he doesn't. But do you ever find yourself saying "God, why would you let this happen? God, why would you let that happen? God, how can that person who is so good have to go through such a terrible ordeal?" Do we at times act as though God is just the Christ of this world who is just supposed to make our life here and now better? I think the answer is yes, we do at times, don't we?

How different is that? We have a little different misconception of what the Christ means than what the pharisees and the high priest did, but we still are not always just listening to Jesus, focusing on Jesus and feasting on Jesus. We start with what we want Jesus to be and then try to fit him into our preconceived square peg, right?

Focus and feast on Jesus. Look at what he says, "I am the Christ. From the beginning, this has been God's plan. I was going to come to be the Christ that Isaiah talked about, the suffering servant who would endure all of this indignity, who would endure all of these assaults, who would endure all of these attacks so that by his wounds all might be healed, not for time, but for eternity." That's what Jesus tells us he is. When we look at the cross, that's what we are to see... the love that our God has for us that is so deep and so wide and so intense that he does this for us even though at times we are so messed up on who he is and what he should be and what brings us to be close to him. He still is patient and loves us and forgives us.

See how important it is to understand what he is claiming. As you listen to what he says, you can't say he is a great teacher. You can't say he's a revolutionary when you listen to the claim he makes tonight, can you? Here is he, he is bound. He has a mob around him, which still probably has their swords attached to their sides. In the middle of the night, they've seized him. They brought him in there and now he is completely and absolutely under their power. He can't do anything, right? He is at their disposal at that point in time. And he looks at the high priest and says, "I am the Christ, and I'll tell

you what, boys. You're going to see me come again. I am the Son of the Most High, and I'm going to come like the Most High. I'm going to come in his power at the end of the ages."

Can you be a great teacher and claim to have all power and authority when your hands are bound? Can you be a revolutionary when these guys who can't get rid of the Romans have you under their control? If you think that's all he is, honestly you have to say he's a lunatic. That's obviously what the soldiers thought, right? "You're coming again like the Most High? Okay, put a blindfold on him and let me smack him to see if he can figure out, this most high guy he thinks he is, who hit him." They thought he was nuts. They thought he was another fraud.

You can't be left with just saying he is a great teacher or a prophet. You have to say either he's a lunatic or he is what he claims... the Christ who is doing something bigger, better and beyond what we imagine as important. He's not here to fix the here and now. He's here to fix forever.

When we look at his cross, we see not only what he has done for us but what he will do for us. Because of that cross, when he comes again every eye will see him (it says in Revelation), even those who pierced him. Those that blindfolded and beat him. Those that put him on that cross. They'll see him when he returns. They'll see his cross in his return, won't they? It will be to their shame unless they turned from their sin and turned to him.

You and I, when we see him return, we'll see his cross at the instrument that now is the key that opens heaven to us because that's where our sins are forgiven. This is what our Savior is, from beginning to end he wants us to look at his cross and see "I am the Christ. And I'm coming again." God's plan from beginning to end. Amen.