

“Trials & Denials”

I. **INTRO:**

A. **I hate Inky sins!** - *Inky?* Yah, those sins set **in print** for all to see.

1. What was the **darkest time** in your life? What **act** are you most ashamed? Maybe it was something you **said**? Maybe a **habit** that once had you in its grip? Some moral problem that haunts you to this day? **Think about it. Look at it. Now picture it** on the front page of the **Californian** or **Press Enterprise**, or worse **USA Today**, or **LA Times**.
2. **Abraham's** lie; **Noah's** drunkenness & indecent exposure; **Moses's** rage that left an Egyptian dead; **Achan's** thievery; The sexual scandals of **David**, **Samson**, **Amnon**, & **Gomer**. Jonah's defiance, & on & on. **Inky sins!**
3. We've **all** had a "**Peter's Denial**" hidden somewhere in our past!

B. **OUTLINE:** *Lessons* from **Peter**; a **Priest**; & a **Pilate**.

1. From this point on Jesus is no longer free. He becomes the property of the state, railroaded through the most fallacious, unfair, disorderly, illegal trials in the history of jurisprudence. (Swindoll, John; pg.52)
2. **6 trials** (3 Jewish & 3 Roman) - the charge in the Jewish trials is **blasphemy**; the trials in the Roman courts is **treason**.

C. **Prayer:** Praise God 1 failure doesn't make a flop!

II. **TRIALS & DENIALS!**

A. **PETER!** (15-18; 25-27)

B. As we talked about last week, "Peter **fought** when he should have **yielded & followed** when he should have **fled**." In spite of his brave talk, he was swept off his feet.

C. (18) **Do not warm yourself at the worlds fire!**

1. **Peter stood** w/them; **warmed** himself w/them; **then sat** w/them (Lk.22:55).
2. **Read Ps.1:1** (note: **walks**; **stands**; **Sits**)
3. **Lot** 1st **looked toward** Sodom(Gen.13:10); then he **moved toward** Sodom(13:11,12); then he **moved into** Sodom(14:12);
 - a) Lot was more interested in his **tents** then an **altar** (Gen.13:4,5).
 - b) He never asked if Sodom was a good place to raise his **kids**, just if it were a good place to raise **cattle** (Gen.13:10).
 - c) Next time we hear from Lot (Gen.19:1) he is **sitting** in the gates of Sodom (city official).
 - d) You've heard of **Pilgrims Progress**, this was **Pilgrims Regress!**

- D. Peter in the **Upper Room** had boasted **3 times** that he would remain true to Christ.¹
- E. Peter in the **Garden** had gone to sleep **3 times** when he should have been praying.²
- F. Peter **denied** his Lord **3 times** & thus had to confess his love for Christ **3 times**.³
1. In the **Upper Room** Peter fell to the **snare of the devil**;
 2. In the **Garden** he yield to the weakness of the **flesh**;
 3. In the **Priests Courtyard** he would surrender to the **pressures of the world**.⁴
 - a) How important it is to *watch & pray!*
 - b) Do not **warm** yourself at *the worlds fire!*
 - c) Do not be deceived, *“Bad company corrupts good morals.”* 1 Cor.15:33
- G. (25-27) **Your talk gives you away** (Mt.26:73). His Galilean accent stood out like a **Texan** in **New York**.
- H. **PRIEST!** (19-24)
- I. (19) **Annas**(former High priest; 6-15ad; Caiaphas was son-n-law) awaits the return of the expedition in the hall of his palace. **He conducts the 1st interrogation**.
 1. He at once began a preliminary inquiry.
 2. Maybe he'd extract something on which to base a case against Him.
 3. Maybe upset at the 2 times Jesus *cleansed the Temple...payback time???*
 - J. (21) **Ask those who have heard me** (i.e.the pack of tracking dogs you sent to sniff me out)
 - K. (22) **The blow to the face was illegal!** - *John record several of the illegal details of Jesus' religious trial.*
 1. **[1]** It was held at night(2 were held between 2-6am) **[2]** Jesus was assumed guilty **[3]** The court hired false witnesses to testify against Jesus **[4]** Jesus was mistreated while bound **[5]** The authorities did not allow Jesus a defense.
 2. **Yet Jesus doesn't cry mistrial, He demands no appeal.** He teaches us how to **bear up under suffering unjustly imposed**.
 - a) **His key: Trust!** - not in the *legal system*, or the *religious institutions*, but in *“Him who judges righteously.”*
 - b) **Are you going through trials & persecutions right now? Have friends betrayed or deserted you? Are your enemies having a field day w/your reputation? Are they spreading lies about you?**

¹ Mt.26:33, 35; Jn.13:37

² Mark 14:32-41

³ John 21

⁴ Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of the NT; John 18.

- (1) If so **look to the Father. He sees. He knows. He judges righteously.**⁵
- (2) 1 day your case will be heard in heaven & then you will be vindicated.
- (3) *For now, He cares & loves you & will not let this injustice go on forever!*

- L. **PILATE!** (28-40)
- M. (28) **Such religious hypocrisy!** Their purpose was to have an **innocent man** put to **death**; **yet** they wanted to avoid becoming **ceremonial unclean** by going into the palace of the Roman Governor (Gentiles!).
1. **Wow, I wonder in which ways we craftily pull this same thing off today?**
 - a) How to **get away with sin & still look spiritual** to our friends.
 - b) Now, stop thinking of someone else, & ask Him how you're doing it!
- N. (30) **The full charge** brought against Jesus is given in **Lk.23:2** (read).
- O. (31-33) **P52** - oldest known *manuscript fragment* we have of the NT (John Rylands text).
1. Greek; Front & back side; Jn.18:31-33; 37,38; (3.5 L x 2.5 W); papyrus; dated 125-150ad; found in Egypt/Alexandrian text.
- P. (33) As a Roman Governor, Pilate was worried about the threat of another kingdom.
1. **But how little he realized the momentous issues to be decided that day!** (FBMeyer)
- Q. **Are you a king of the Jews?** - I'm sure w/a tone of satire it came across more like this, *"You poor, worn, tearstained outcast, forsaken by every friend in Your hour of need,...are you a king?"*
- R. (36) **My Kingdom is not of this world** - He did not mean that it had nothing to do with this world, but that it did not **originate** here. [**starts spiritual in hearts; ends on earth**]
1. **It has descended from heaven & seeks to bring the inspiration, principles, & methods of heaven into all the areas of human activity.** (F.B.Meyer)
- S. Speaking in terms Pilate could understand, Jesus admitted being a king, but a king of far more than an *earthly, temporal* realm.
1. Many people throughout Christian history have misinterpreted the kingdom of God in earthly terms [It's as **old** as the Crusades & as **new** as all who believe they can speed up the pace in ushering in the kingdom]
- T. **My servants would fight** - **But we don't fight!** We *sacrifice*, we *suffer*, we *surrender* for the maintaining of the kingdom!

⁵ Chuck Swindoll; John; pg.54

- U. (37,38) This was nice for Jesus to clearly lay out His whole **mission** to Pilate.
1. That His kingly role was identified with **testifying to the truth**.
 2. Was Pilate's question serious or sarcastic? We don't know.
- V. Truth? - Jesus says **I am the truth**(Jn.14:6); **Your word is truth** (Jn.17:17); **The Spirit is truth** (1 Jn.5:6). [**The Spirit & the Word point to Christ, the Truth**]
- W. The gospel of John records **3 major conversations** between *Jesus* & persons who were confronted with the truth & claims of the gospel.
1. **Nicodemus** - Jn.3. Seems to represent **religious people** that truly desire spiritual truth.
 2. **Samaritan woman** - Jn.4. Seems to represent those who represented **worldliness & moral self-indulgence**, those **indifferent to spiritual things**. Those living a life of moral self-indulgence.
 3. **Pilate** - Jn.18. Seems to represent the **modern secularist**. *Hardened to what would speak to their soul*. Those who are **neither open to, nor inquisitive** about, the gospel.
- X. (39,40) **The twist Pilate didn't anticipate**. He honors the crowd's choice. The people's choice. "Survey says". Text in your answers everyone. **"But Jesus, they all wanted it, not me."**
1. **But if you are going to work in a leadership position, you ARE accountable!**
 - a) This goes down as ***Pilate's cowardly indecision***.
 - b) **How many sinners will be in hell cuz they feared people & sought to please them!**
- Y. **God of a second chance**: [1 failure doesn't make a flop!]
1. At Pentecost, Peter wielded *a spiritual sword* (the word of the Spirit) & won a victory.
 2. **And so thankful** for being given this 2nd chance, Peter would **carry the gospel** all the way to **Rome**, where they crucified him upside down!
- Z. Peter was known as **"the rock"**. The Gibraltar of the disciples. Yet, the rock was not w/o its cracks!
1. **Hairline fissures** lead to crumbling under pressure & Christ had detected the crack in Peter's character.
- AA. **4 quick Lessons from this:**
1. [1] No one - *not even a spiritual rock* - is immune to failure!
 - a) **Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.** 1 Cor.10:12

- b) **Illustration: Robert Robinson** (saved under George Whitefield's ministry) wrote the hymn "*Come thou Fount*". Robinson wandered away like a prodigal son. Until, one day while riding in a stagecoach & sitting beside a woman who asked him what he thought of these words, "*Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love.*" Bursting into tears Robinson said, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, & I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then."
2. [2] God knows our precise breaking point! (Kel's ring)
- a) Ps.103:14a "For He knows our frame;"
- (1) And He knows the **stress points** on that frame.
 - (2) He knows what parts are subject to **metal fatigue**, which can be **bent**, which can be **broken**.
 - (3) Jesus wants us to **be aware** of our weak points, so we can **brace ourselves** when that time comes.
 - (a) "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."
3. [3] When surrounded by wrongdoers, doing wrong comes easy!
- a) *It's difficult to walk through a coal mine without getting dirty or to lay down with dogs without getting fleas!* - Careful who you run with!
- (1) Prov.13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.
4. [4] The 1st step toward correction is not act like we're **strong** but to admit we are **weak**!

BB.Communion: (Hold we'll take together)

1. Bread:
 - a) Ask Him to reveal your breaking points.
 - b) Anyone that's bringing you down, rather than you bringing them up?
 - c) What area do you need to quit acting like you're strong & admit to Him you are weak?
 - d) Admit your failures to Him now.
2. Cup:
 - a) Thank you for **revealing** our breaking points, before we snap.
 - b) Thank you for giving us **second chances** like with Peter.
 - c) Thank you for **loving prodigals**.
 - d) Thank you that you will answer our prayer **thy kingdom come**.