

Before the Grand Jury

John 12:31-32

Palm Sunday – April 14, 2019

It is the hour of judgement; the case against Jesus of Nazareth has been called!

For the Roman authorities, of course, the case against Jesus was “no big deal!”

Routinely, they had to execute men whom they had found guilty of sedition and Jesus was only one among many hundreds!

The “jury,” if one may be permitted to use that word to describe those who were participating in the judgment of Jesus, were the interested parties in this trial.

And this morning, we are going to look at them, to see if we can identify with any of them; **while at the same time, we need to remember that there were thousands of people in Jerusalem at that time—that were not one bit interested in this trial**—just as there are thousands of people out there in the world, whom you and I rub shoulders with every day, who are not, one bit interested in it either!

Again, and again, the cry rings out: ***“Now is the judgment of this world and now shall the prince of this world be cast out!”***

And yet, sometimes, it seems that the trial is going to go on forever. The jury is always out. And so let’s take a close look at these people who are participating in the judgment of Jesus to see if there is any way that we can identify with any of them!

FIRST OF ALL, THERE WERE THE FRIENDS OF JESUS; THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. THEY HAD WALKED WITH Jesus. They talked with him. They had journeyed with him. They loved Jesus, although their love for Jesus was often beset by fears and bewilderments and constant misunderstandings. What do you think their verdict was: that of the disciples?

Was Jesus an innocent man? Why, of course, he was an innocent man!

Why he was so innocent that he was now walking like a lamb into a den of lions with no provision for a way to escape.

What was the hardest for these disciples to understand is why the whole world was not drawn to him because of his great love? His love seemed to be such an impotent force. And why wasn’t the Heavenly Father, to whom he appealed constantly, busier doing what his beloved Virgin Mother said that he would do at the hour of her Son’s birth: ***“Putting down and scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts” (Luke 1:50-53)?***

These closest disciples of Jesus loved him. They admired him. They walked with him, BUT they were not with him all the way!

We, too, don’t we: admire Jesus. We walk with Jesus! We walk with him! But will you be with him all the way again to the cross and follow him all the days of your life?

Where you there when they crucified my Lord?

SECONDLY, THERE WAS ANOTHER SECTION AROUND THAT JURY—THEY OFEN GATHERED AROUND JESUS IN THE COMPANY OF HIS DISCIPLES—AND THESE WERE THE “BANDWAGON BELIEVERS!”

They were caught up in the excitement of a new charismatic leader! They were emotionally stirred by the large crowds and those shouts of: *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who is the King of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

These are typically the people who respond to any new personality; anything that seems to be exciting in the world of religions; anybody who claims to have direct access, no matter what they have to say or teach!

These are the people who are always ready to go along, typically, with any new personality; anything that seems to be new or exciting in the world of religion; anybody who claims to have direct access to God, no matter what they have to say or teach. These are people who are always ready to go along, with whatever the case may be, UNTIL IT GETS DARK AND THE DAYS OF CRUCIFIXION COME! And then they are the first ones to drop off of the bandwagon. I wonder if I may not be talking to anyone here this morning on a Palm Sunday or on another Sunday, many years ago, who made a confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

You were ready to join the bandwagon of believers. But when things got dark, when some real trouble began to find you in your life, you jumped off that bandwagon of believers. But when things got dark, when some real trouble began to find you in your life, you jumped off that bandwagon as quickly as possible. And you have ever been really loyal, or faithful to him since!

Let me ask you: **“Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”**