

## Day Twenty-Nine

### Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

#### The Final Stone

**Matthew 27:62-66(NKJV)** *On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, **63** saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ **64** Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.” **65** Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” **66** So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.*

The hectic events of the week have suddenly come to a grinding halt. The crowds of Sunday are gone. The donkey has been returned to his owners. The last meal has been eaten. The greatest kingdom lesson is in the rearview mirror. The prayer of Jesus has been prayed. The last hymn has been sung. Judas has been paid. The pressing of the garden is finished. Jesus has been kissed. The commotion of a false arrest is over. Peter's sword has been cleaned. Malchus' ear has been healed. The false witnesses are dismissed. The spectacle of a kangaroo court is finished. The rooster has crowed. Peter's denial has been confessed. The crowds' screams have been silenced. Barabbas has been freed. Pilate's hands have been washed. His wife's warning has been given. The soldiers' cruelty has been dished. Jesus' cross has been carried. His words from the cross have been spoken. The darkness has subsided. The veil has been torn. The rocks have been split. Jesus' body has been removed. Joseph and Nicodemus have wrapped Him up. The women have left. The tomb has been sealed. The guards have been placed. Now, nothing but silence.

Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of man is lying in a tomb. Jesus has submitted Himself to the final enemy, death. Even though He is laying in the tomb, His enemies are still operating in fear. Their complete loathing of Jesus did not end with Him dying on the cross. It did not end with Him lying in a tomb. While everybody has left, they are still plotting, planning, protecting and negotiating. You see, religion that is based on fear will always express itself in hate. Jesus might be dead, but they know His influence is not. So, they throw the final stone, so they thought...

Fear will make you do irrational things. When you operate in fear, you will behave foolishly. Enter the chief priest and Pharisees. Their hatred for Jesus was rooted in fear. Why did they hate Jesus so much? What were they afraid of? They were afraid of losing their power, influence and, with that, their wealth. Jesus, in their minds, was a threat to everything they held dear, especially their money. **Luke 16:13-14(NIV)** “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will

*be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and money.**' 14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus."*

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some people went and reported it to the Pharisees. We can see in their response that they are motivated by fear. **John 11:45-48(NLT)** *"Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. 46 But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. 'What are we going to do?' they asked each other. 'This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. 48 If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.'"*

**That's just the thing with fear, it makes you look stupid.** They were afraid the Romans were going to come in and destroy the Temple. So, they rejected Jesus only to have their fear materialize. Their fears came to pass about 40 years later. General Vespasian trapped thousands of Jewish rebels inside the city of Jerusalem, and the city literally became one large prison. Then Titus came and finished the job, burning everything inside the Temple, and ordering every stone of the temple to be torn down and pushed off into the valley below. Jesus told them this would happen.

The thing that they trusted in, that was so big and impressive, was destroyed. The very thing that they tried to protect by killing Jesus, they ended up losing. They did not learn their lesson from the stone they tried to roll in front of the tomb. Matthew tells us that the chief priest and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked him to secure the tomb. They were not trying to keep Jesus in, they were trying to keep the disciples out. The words that Jesus spoke to them were still ringing in their ears, and they wanted to squash any possibility of the disciples carrying on some type of hoax. So, they sealed the stone.

The seal was a soft substance, most likely clay, and was imprinted with the Roman imperial seal and attached to the stone with a rope. This was not enough for them; they also placed guards in front of the tomb. Their paranoia caused them to take extra precautions to avoid any and all attempts of deception. Why go that far? I mean, surely if the disciples were trying to perpetrate some kind of deception, they could simply state, "Show us Jesus." You see, fear has a cousin, his name is "Deception." Deception can be confronted with the truth, but it will still embrace the lie. Deception is very difficult to break when it knows that, by embracing the truth, it might lose all that it was built on. So, they crucified the Truth, secured His tomb, and hoped that Truth would forever be silenced. "All that we need to do is make sure that Truth is still in the grave after three days. If we do that, we will be able to attach the label of deceiver to the Truth, and we are in the clear."

“Our temple will be safe, our religion intact and our money secured.” What is it about human nature that when we are confronted with truth, we bristle? What is it about truth that causes us to get so angry? What is it about truth that makes us so defensive? Jesus did not have problems with sinners. He had problems with the religious. When we elevate ritual over relationship, we are in danger of throwing stones instead of building bridges. When we continually embrace a lie, it will always lead to deception. Deception will cause us to behave in ungodly ways, yet, we will justify it in the name of religion.

**John 8:44(NLT)** *“For you are the children of your father the devil, and **you love to do the evil things he does.** He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always **hated the truth**, because **there is no truth in him.** **When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.**”*

Deception will attempt to lock up truth, but truth will always triumph. The Pharisees thought that they were safe, because Truth was sealed in a tomb. But they learned that you can only suppress the Truth for a moment because, in the end, it is your deception that will be exposed. As a child of God, if you feel that you are living in a world that rejects the truth and embraces the lie, be encouraged today. It might be Saturday and it might seem that truth has been completely silenced and locked up in our world. But remember, no matter how many stones are placed as an obstacle to the truth, the truth will always triumph.

**2 John 1-3(NLT)** *“This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to the chosen lady and to her children, **whom I love in the truth—as does everyone else who knows the truth— 2 because the truth lives in us and will be with us forever. 3** Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will **continue to be with us who live in truth and love.**”*

Grace, mercy and peace is with us who live in truth and in love. May you walk in truth and act in love.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that you will walk in the freedom of God’s love and not operate in fear.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you be perfected by His love because perfect love casts out fear.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you build bridges into people’s lives instead of casting stones.**
- **Pray that The Holy Spirit will reveal any place in your life that you are not walking in truth.**