

Which Way is Up?

John 11:45-57

vs. 45-46, Many of the Jews who came to Mary

John 4:39 Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, "He told me everything I ever did."

and saw what he did...

Believed in him

Some of them went to the Pharisees

vs. 47, Sanhedrin

- Consisted of seventy men
- It was modeled after Moses and the seventy elders.
- The highest ruling body of the Jews
- They answered to the Roman governor while at the same time tried to stay popular with the majority of the people.

Psalm 2:1-2, 4 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? **2** The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers conspire together against the Lord and his Anointed One: **4** The one enthroned in heaven laughs;

God uses the sinful choices of humanity to accomplish his purposes.

From the moment sin entered the world humanity has tirelessly pursued selfishness.

vs. 48, If we allow this to continue the Romans will take away our power and influence.

For those who embrace Jesus...

For those who humble themselves and listen to the nudging of the Holy Spirit...

For those who practice the values of the kingdom...

There is a more rewarding pursuit!

- When we practice the way of Jesus, we will be able to endure the days of trouble.
- When we quiet our spirit before a righteous and loving God, we will be able to rest patiently despite the chaos.
- When through the power of the Holy Spirit we refuse to participate in the rebellion, deceit, and blasphemy of our world, we will find a peace beyond understanding.
- When we view the world through a kingdom lens, we will not lose hope because the evil intentions of humanity can be *turned upside down* through the goodness of God (Genesis 50:20)

vs. 49-53, Caiaphas

- Caiaphas (a Sadducee) served as high priest for nineteen years.
- He was able to satisfy both Rome and the populace.
- Personal security and comfort becomes an overpowering motivation. Jesus is a threat!

vs. 50, It is to your advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish.

-> The Sanhedrin is motivated and acts out of selfishness.

Religion -> good or evil?

Micah 6:8 Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Colossians 2:6-8 So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, **7** being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude. **8** Be careful that no

one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Deuteronomy 27:19 (NLT) 'Cursed is anyone who denies justice to foreigners, orphans, or widows.' And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

Isaiah 1:17 (NLT) Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

Zechariah 7:10 (NLT) Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other.

Malachi 3:5 (NLT) "At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

Matthew 25:35 (NLT) For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.

-> Jesus is motivated and acts out of self-sacrifice.

The sheep are in danger. The shepherd will give his life for the sheep.

The upside down reality of the kingdom of heaven.

- Through the corruption and evil of human selfishness will come the greatest blessing ever given to the world.
- The plan to eliminate Jesus will have the opposite intended effect.
- If we eliminate Jesus people will not follow him.
- 12:32 And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.
- Any attempt to disrupt God's plan will simply help fulfill it.

Proverbs 19:21 (NLT) You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail.

John makes it clear that Caiaphas is speaking truth even though its reality could not be further from his intending meaning (11:51).

****The upside down reality of the kingdom of heaven.****

Exodus 1:10 Come, let's deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country.

Exodus 2:23-25 After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor, they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. **24** God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. **25** God saw the Israelites, and God knew.

vs. 55-57, Many are traveling to Jerusalem for Passover
Will Jesus come and purify himself at the temple?

Question: How do you not get caught up in the cultural values of power and influence?
What are tangible ways you are embracing Jesus, humbly listening to the Holy Spirit, and pursuing the values of the kingdom?

Does your relationship with Jesus produce good religion?

Can you trust in the upside down values of the kingdom of heaven? How? Are you participating with Jesus in the 'already'?