

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"TWO TRIALS: THE ROCK AND THE MARSHMALLOW" | MARK 14: 43-52 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Would you rather be on trial yourself or watch someone you love be on trial? Why?

"The Rock" Mark 14: 53-65

Jesus was led before the high priest and many witnesses could not agree on their testimonies about Him. Jesus remained silent.

What are reasons for why Jesus stayed silent? How do you know when to stay silent and when to speak up?

Jesus finally answers the high priest, saying He the Son of God and will come back in power. He is then found guilty and is beaten.

What does the high priest's reaction show about him? How do negative reactions impact your willingness to speak God's truth?

"The Marshmallow" Mark 14: 66-72

Peter followed the guards and stayed outside the house at a distance. **What motivated Peter to stay at a distance? What are ways people follow Jesus at a distance today?**

Peter is asked about his connection to Jesus, and he denies it 3 times. He then breaks down emotionally. **Why did Peter weep after denying Christ 3 times? When have you been emotional over failing to stand with Jesus?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus faced injustice at a religious court and was condemned for blasphemy while Peter stayed at a safe distance and denied his connection to Jesus 3 times. **Are you following Jesus? Are you close to Jesus or staying at a safe distance? What are ways you have denied Jesus lately? What are ways you can rely on the Holy Spirit for strength so you can face persecution for your faith? Ask God to forgive you for denying Him and giving into fear and to give you strength to live out your faith in Jesus.**

Mark 14:53-72

9-28-25

Two Trials: *The Rock & The Marshmallow*

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online 2nd.
- B. Slide1-4 Lar: Harvest Festival. Women's. Men's. MOMs.
- C. Slide5 Baby Dedication: Micah Tribble. Parents: Havilah Speidel & gfdgfd.
 - 1. Micah = *who is like God*. Don't know much about him personally. He wrote Micah. But Jeremiah talks about him 26:18 (This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says,) Warned Israel, *result?* they turned from their sins and worshiped the LORD. [**make Micah like U Lord, & use him to invite others to worship You!*]
- D. Slide6 Baptism: Today we start baptizing at 3pm, at the Terry's home in Murrieta.
- E. Slide7 Monthly Sunday Prayer: Join us next Sunday at 1:30p in the Agape Room
- F. Slide8 Prayer: gfdgh

II. Slide9 Intro: Two Trials: *The Rock and The Marshmallow*

- A. After His arrest, Jesus was *paraded around to 6 illegal or dishonest trials* in less than 6 hours - Justice? More like a *Show Trial, or a Kangaroo court, the 1st 3 ignoring due process*. Slide 10
- B. The 1st 3 trials were *Religious in nature* and held by the **Jews** (all 3 found guilty/no evidence), while the last 3 trials were *Civil in nature* and held by the **Romans** (all 3 found innocent).
 - 1. The 1st trial took place at the home of **Annas** around 2 am. (Jn.18:12-24)
 - 2. The 2nd trial was held in the home of **Caiaphas** at 3 am. (Mt. 26:57-68)
 - 3. The 3rd trial was a formal hearing before the **Sanhedrin** at 6 am. (Lk.22:63-71)
 - 4. The 4th trial was before **Pilate** around 6:30 am. (Jn.18:28-38)
 - 5. The 5th trial *quickly occurred* before **Herod**. (Lk.23:6-12)
 - 6. The 6th trial went back to **Pilate** and was done in just a few minutes. (Jn.18:39)
 - a) **This is the 2nd Religious trial. But this morning* we'll look at **2 Trials** that are happening *simultaneously/concurrently/upstairs-downstairs*.

III. Slide11 **THE ROCK (53-65)** *Read*

- A. **Background:** We visit this place in Israel, *Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu / at cock's crow*.
1. **Slide12a Caiaphas' limestone Ossuary** (small box holds the bones of 1 person). Discovered in Jerusalem by archaeologist. **It bore his name.**
 2. **The Palace of Caiaphas** - according to the model at Jerusalem. **Slide12b**
 3. **A beautiful RC Church was built over the proposed site.**
- B. **The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of the Jews.** They normally met at a place called *The Chamber/Hall of the Hewn Stone*. This is the only time in recorded history that they met at night for a trial (illegal) and that they met at the high priest's house.
- C. **But here they meet at Caiaphas 2 story Villa**, with a courtyard down below. This was a witch hunt. They were only looking for dirt, not truth.
1. Oh, and **a trial couldn't** be held on the Sabbath, or on a feast day, or on the eve of either. - **If it was a capital crime** the Sanhedrin had to meet on the next day again to confirm it. - **And** according to OT laws you have 2 witnesses and those 2 had to agree.
- D. **Slide12c The Trial** – A Kangaroo Court
1. Jesus is dragged before the Sanhedrin in the middle of the night.
 2. Lies, false witnesses, twisted testimonies - *justice distorted*.
 - a) **Reminder:** Jesus stood *silent while falsehood raged*. (What are they saying about you? and How do you respond?)
- E. **The Rock of our Salvation ... did not crack.** Kent Hughes pg.182
1. Jesus stood Rock-Solid - Guilty of only *1 thing* Guilty of **Love in the 1st degree**
 2. **For us to stand the same** - we must live in *profound moment-by-moment dependence* upon **the Father**. Paul summed it up best, **for my power is made perfect in weakness ... for when I am weak, then I am strong**.¹
- F. **Slide12d The Fly** – Peter *Followed Him at a Distance*.

¹ 1 Corinthians.12:9,10

1. Peter slips into the courtyard, “*the ultimate fly on the wall.*” Not usually a negative when we say it, *we’d just like to listen in.* But I’m saying it in the sense of him having, **proximity** w/o **commitment**, **warmth** w/o **risk**.

a) *Peter has forsaken costly discipleship, for safe observation.*

2. Why at a distance? To stay safe!

a) There are a lot of followers around the world that *play their Christianity safe and follow Him at a distance.* But to follow Christ closely in a fallen world is to possibly invite persecution, and in some places invite death.

3. The 1 reason Peter was following at a distance was to save his life. Yes, the one who swore, “*I will follow you to the death.*” (vs.31)

a) Instead, Peter follows Jesus to His death ... as an observer.

4. Many of us try to follow Jesus at a “safe distance.”

a) How do you know if you’re following Jesus closely or at a safe distance?

(1) Ask yourself: do the people that you work with know you’re a Christian? (that you play with?).

(2) I’m not asking if you wear your Christianity on your sleeve. Sproul I’m not asking if you pester/badger/annoy them with your Christianity.

(3) Do they know that your allegiance is to Jesus, and His love, and His grace, and His goodness. And you communicate it through the fruit of the spirit showing in your life. (no not flawlessly/perfectly).

G.(62) I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

1. Here is the guarantee that there will be another trial, their trial. Except the roles are reversed where He has ALL authority over them.

H.(63) Tore his garments - we don’t do this today. But maybe this was close.

1. In the 2016 Olympics, Mongolian vs Uzbekistan wrestler. The Uzbekistan coaches were losing their minds over bad calls. Right towards the end of the match the Mongolian wrestler was so excited about winning, he started celebrating early. (illegal because his opponent couldn’t get any

more points). The time ran out and he was still celebrating, when the refs discussed it and gave 1 point to the Uzbekistan wrestler, and I guess it's the last point that wins. The coaches were so mad that their wrestler was stripped of the bronze medal, **they started tearing their clothes off**, down to their skivvies in protest.

IV. Slide13a **THE MARSHMALLOW (66-72)** *Read*

A. **Background:** Here's the 2nd trial. This trial was being held by a servant girl ... *with no status, no power, and no authority.*

1. Here is Peter **warming** his hands at the enemies fire. When the fire got hot, Peter didn't stay a **rock** *he melted like a marshmallow.*

B. **The Marshmallow** – Steps to Toasting/burning It. (Think: campfires/S'mores).

- a) **1st** the warmth of the flame, all is well for Mr. Marshmellow. Then comes the 1st small burn, he feels the heat of the 1st incriminating flames (but quickly its blown out) "*I'll be ok*". But next time that burn is a lil bigger, Mr. Marshmellow is sweating now (& you realize what a close-call that was). But the 3rd time, sure enough, it is **out of control** & he's **fully engulfed in flames**. Then you're left w/nothing but **the charred remains**. **13b!**

- b) Those seem to be Peter's 3 steps to getting burned: *From warmth to weeping*. (or like *the finding game*: your warm, warmer, Hot!) [It's Peter standing by the fire, sitting at the fire, on fire!]

2. **Sin** often grows in *progression*, **not** in one giant leap. [we have all **melted** under pressure].
3. Truman popularized, *If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen?* But I'd say to us ... We can't stand the heat - by ourselves - **so** ask the HS for power, pray, & watch. There will be times where *your spirit is willing*, but where *your flesh will be very weak*. **You need Me!** Jesus says.

C. **Slide13c The Fissures** – cracks in the Rock.

1. The **Rock/aka Pete** starts to crumble just as Jesus foretold (14:30).
2. **Self-confidence** gave way to **self-collapse**.

3. **Jesus** called Peter **Rock**, and Peter thought he was *solid as a rock* ... **but** on closer examination there was hairline fissures only Christ could see. Which lead to crumbling under pressure. Jesus saw the crack in Peter's character. **Meanwhile**, Peter didn't **know** and couldn't **see** his fissures.

D. **Slide13d The Denials – 3 for Peter, Countless for Us!**

1. (71) **Curse** - he was saying, *Let me be under a curse if I am not telling the truth*. - **Swear** - means *to swear an oath*, as one does in court. [formal - legal denial]
2. **Peter** denied 3 times. **But** let's be fair to Pete: **How far would we have gotten?** He fell in the courtyard where the others dared to set foot. He failed, **not** under **normal pressure**, **but** in Satan's own **heavy winnowing pressure**. **Q:** Now how many times have **you** denied Him? **A:** We deny Christ **so many times** more ... **Daily!**
 - a) Through silence, compromise, fear. When we are **too busy to pray** (we're **denying** that **He** is the center of our life). When we **neglect God's Word** (we **deny** **God** is competent enough to guides). When we **worry** (we **deny** that **He's** not the Lord of our circumstances). When we **turn our heads to those in need** (we **deny** **God** that you have put us here to be Your hands in Your feet). **Yes, we deny Him daily!**

(1) Yet God **still** restores fallen disciples :)

E. **Slide13e The Thoughts – Remembering and Weeping**

1. Peter **remembered** the words of Jesus. He **thought about it**. When he was finally alone with his thoughts.
 - a) Sometimes God speaks loudest when we **stop to reflect**. **Not usually** when we're **red-faced** ... **but when** we are alone with our thoughts. Alone w/Him.
 - b) His **weeping** was the first step toward his restoration (Jn.21). **And** I think **that** **1st tear** down his cheek, was the one that **cleansed his dirty soul!**
2. Yes God **still** restores fallen disciples :)

V. **Slide14 CONCLUSION**

A. Closing Challenge.

B. **What is your decision?** (from vs.64)

1. The **Sanhedrin** condemned Him. **Peter** denied Him. The question remains: *Will you follow Him?*

C. So to you this morning, **What is your decision?**

1. These men could've been saved. If when asked, *what further witness do we need?* They should've answered, **Nothing! We believe that He is the Son of God, the Son of man, the Christ, the Messiah, the I AM!**
2. Some have *a microwave quick Damascus Road experience*. **But** it seems most don't. It seems more of *a slow Crock-Pot experience*. Either way, Today, *What is your decision?*

D. **Prayer:** Father, forgive us for trying to *live out our Christianity at a distance*. *Seeking safety and comfort, instead of Seeking You. Lead us not into temptation.* Build a hedge around us. **Jesus**, pray over us *a prayer of protection* from our *enemy*. All because ... *we belong to You!*

E. Keywords: Trials, follow, denial.