

<sup>53</sup> They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. <sup>54</sup> Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. <sup>56</sup> Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. <sup>57</sup> Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: <sup>58</sup> "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" <sup>59</sup> Yet even then their testimony did not agree. <sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" <sup>62</sup> "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." <sup>63</sup> The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. <sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death. <sup>65</sup> Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

Truth can only be convicted of being the truth. Trying to make a lie out of the truth might produce a useful rationalization for the moment, but it cannot stand the test of time. While the truth is eternally consistent, lies are inherently contradictory, especially at the level of repeatability. Truth does not need to defend itself, all it has to do is be present.

*Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree... Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.*

In the face of a question that calls for a truthful answer, the truth must be declared for silence would be a lie.

*... the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus.*

Speaking the truth has consequences in a world that trades on lies. It takes courage to challenge the lies, for such a challenge will always provoke anger from those whose lives are bound up in lies.

*The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy."*

Pray that integrity and truth will rule your life. Pray for the courage that is born of the hope that is found in the truth of the resurrection. Remember that the first enemy of the truth lies within you and must be confronted ruthlessly.

**Lord Jesus, give me the courage to recognize and deal with the lies that have become a part of my life. I am not going to like it, but free me from such bondage so that I might live as a witness to your truth. Amen.**