

Follow – Walking in the Way of Jesus

When Justice Stood Trial

Mark 14:53-72

Pastor Ben Hall – Saanich Baptist Church

March 15th, 2026



If Peter is the source behind Mark's Gospel, the ongoing description of his denial reveals that:

- The early church proclaimed truth rather than protecting reputations
- Christian leadership begins with repentance, not heroism
- Discipleship often collapses under pressure
- Salvation depends entirely on the faithfulness of Christ

The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish governing and judicial body in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus.

- Composition: About 70–71 members, including the high priest, chief priests, elders, and scribes.
- Function: It served as the supreme religious court, responsible for interpreting the Law, judging serious cases, and maintaining religious order.
- Authority: It had significant religious and internal legal authority, but under Roman rule it could not carry out capital punishment without Roman approval.

The Sanhedrin is described as actively seeking evidence: ***“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death.”*** BUT: The goal is already determined. They are not seeking truth but justification for execution.

Jesus UNDERSTANDS what it means to be the victim of injustice. Before the Sanhedrin, Jesus experiences a deeply unjust process.

- The verdict is decided before the evidence.
- Witnesses contradict each other.
- The leaders twist his words.
- When the truth is spoken, it is answered with violence.

Distance leads to denial. Peter's three denials show increasing intensity:

1. Denial of knowledge
2. Denial of association
3. Denial with curses and oaths

Mark 16:7, “Go, tell his disciples and Peter...” Mark intentionally builds Peter's story as a three-stage arc: Calling → Confession → Collapse → Restoration.

Peter's story shows something important. Faith does not usually collapse because someone suddenly stops believing in God. It collapses because; fear, pressure, shame, and self-protection expose what is already happening in the heart.

Jesus endured injustice so that sinners who fail him can receive mercy instead of condemnation.

- He bore the judgment so that those who deny him can be forgiven.
- He absorbed the rejection so that those who falter can be restored.

And because of that, your worst moment of spiritual failure does not have to be the defining moment of your life.

The hope of the gospel is that Jesus never fails us. And the one who was condemned in that courtroom now stands; risen, reigning, and ready to restore all who turn back to him.

Date: March 15th, 2026

Series: Follow

Title: When Justice Stood Trial

Primary Passage: Mark 14:53-72

Big Question: How does Jesus deal with injustice?

Big Idea: Jesus willingly suffers injustice so that those who have rejected him can be forgiven and restored.

Keywords: Irony, Trial, Justice, Distance, Denial, Deconstruction, Calling, Confession, Crisis, Restoration.

GOING DEEPER – Life Application Questions

Where did you see God working around you this week? How did that increase your HOPE?

Read Mark 14:53–65. What details in the passage reveal the injustice of Jesus' trial (false witnesses, predetermined verdict, mockery, abuse)? Why do you think Jesus remains silent and does not defend himself? What does this reveal about how he deals with injustice?

Read Mark 14:66–72. Verse 54 says Peter was following Jesus “at a distance.” Where do you see distance from Jesus beginning to form in your own life (fear, busyness, reputation, pressure, disappointment)? What would it look like this week to move closer rather than remain at a distance?

Peter was confident in his loyalty earlier in Mark 14, but under pressure he denied Jesus three times. What kinds of situations today put pressure on believers to distance themselves from Jesus? (workplace, social circles, cultural pressure, intellectual doubt, etc.). Where might you be tempted to stay silent or downplay your faith?

How is Peter's crisis in this passage similar to or different from the doubts or struggles people experience today? How can believers bring their struggles to Jesus rather than walking away from him?

In the middle of injustice, Jesus declares: **“You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”** How does Jesus' identity and future victory change the way we view the injustice he endured? Why is it important that Jesus willingly suffered injustice so that people like Peter, (and us) can be forgiven and restored?

Peter failed in this moment, yet Jesus later restores him (John 21). Is there any place in your life where you have been hesitant, silent, or distant in your relationship with Jesus? What is one concrete step you can take this week to openly identify with Christ rather than deny or distance yourself from him? Eg. Confessing sin, speaking about your faith, reconciling with someone, returning to prayer or Scripture, asking for help in a struggle.

Share that step with a friend and then asks them to pray for you.