

Ash Wed.

I.N. I.
The Unanswered Questions

Sermon #1984

In Christ Jesus, who even speaks volumes in His silence, like a lamb led to slaughter and even a sheep before its shearer is dumb so He did not open His mouth with the false charges made against Him for you, dear fellow redeemed:

We are going to be examining the questions that were posed to our Lord and His answers during His passion. Interestingly on Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus' enemies asked our Lord trick questions trying to entrap Him into saying things that would erode His popularity among the Passover crowds in Jerusalem. They were desperate after Jesus' entrance to the city on Palm Sunday. They failed in all their efforts. Then Jesus put a question to them about the Christ being David's Son and yet David calls the Christ his Lord. They were unable to answer. Jesus' question took the wind out of their sails: "from that day no one dared to ask Him any more questions".

In their frustration they stopped with these types of questions and even said they were going to wait until after Passover when the crowds would thin out before apprehending Jesus. That plan did not work – Jesus was arrested right after the Passover meal. Also their questions of Jesus resumed, but now they would have a different purpose. While on Tuesday the questions were designed to discredit Jesus before the general public, the questions posed later in the week when on trial were either to seek a conviction by those who hated Him or an acquittal by Pilate, all those who sat in judgment over our Lord.

Mt. 26: 59-63 Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put Him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This Man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'" And the high priest stood up and said, "Have You no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?" But **Jesus remained silent (before the High Priest).**

Mt 27: 11-14 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against You?" But **He gave [Pilate] no answer, not even to a single charge**, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Luke 23: 8-9 When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see Him, because he had heard about Him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him. So he questioned Him at some length, but **He made no answer (to Herod's many questions).**

John 19:7-10 The Jews answered [Pilate], "We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die because He has made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But **Jesus gave [Pilate again] no answer.** So Pilate said to Him, "You will not speak to me?"

"Silent", "no answer", "no answer", "no answer" – The Lamb of God did not open His mouth before His shearers, even His butchers. Either they were false charges or those asking had no authority over Jesus. But before the Roaster of the Lamb, the heavenly Father in the eternal burning wrath toward our sin, Jesus with His holy undefiled blood would eventually give the best answer of all, for all our sins, our death – "It is finished." Now we could say these too were false charges. But the Lamb was offered up as a sacrifice; chosen by the authority the Son obeyed. It was the Father's will that Jesus be named the sinner for all sinners, like us. Jesus was willing to obey that will and be so charged, so that He might receive our full punishment. What animal chosen for sacrifice was ever given the right to object and be pardoned? Jesus would ask if there was another way, but this was the only way for the Father to save you and me.

Jesus also asked the question of His Father: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* The Father's back was turned and there was no answer, except in the faint cries of Christ's Church hanging on the cross to Jesus' right. Why was the Father forsaking His Son? It was for His Bride, the Church, you and me.

You and I often try to avoid the charges made against us. Even after admitting to our sin, we are often found saying such things as: *"But I was exhausted, confused, frustrated, hurt, angry ... etc".*, as though such circumstances would excuse our sin. We have no excuse. Today is a big day in the Church year when we come face to face with the *no excuse policy* of God's Law. We hear and even have the symbol placed on our forehead that *"dust I am and to dust shall I return"* – the latter as a consequence of sin.

Go forward in this holy season of repentance, making no excuses, keeping your mouths shut when accused of your sin beyond, of course, to admitting them and expressing your sorrow. Then trust the Holy One has answered for them all and bore the bitter wrath of the Father for all of them, even those accursed excuses. His holy blood is the only answer that can be

given. As we move on to the answered questions of Christ's passion next week, know that they were the answers given to demonstrate that Jesus alone came to answer for all sin, even the sins of His accusers and condemners. Blessed be the unanswered questions by Jesus and even by our Father, a blessed silence in our behalf indeed! Amen.