



**My Private Nation**  
**Matthew 23:33; John 10:17; 11:47-53; 12:17-19**  
**Message from Pastor Martin Hawley**  
**April 16, 2017**

**The Bottom Line:** Saying **yes** to God will cost you something. Saying **no** will cost you more – including the thing you chose over Him.

**Introduction:**

If you're not a Christian or a believer, here's something you should find strange: Christians **resist** the God we say we **trust**. You call this **hypocrisy**.

In the weeks preceding his crucifixion, three men intersect with the story of Jesus. Each one has his own agenda and perspective on the person of Christ. There's a little bit of all of **them** in all of **us**.

We read their stories and wonder how men could be so naïve, so arrogant, so stubborn. Yet, chances are, there is a little bit of them in you.

Each one of these three men had the coveted opportunity to stand in the presence of the Savior of the world. Each was a witness to the pivotal event in human history. Each refused to abandon his petty, ultimately meaningless agenda, pride, and quest for control and surrender to his Creator.

Their stories of resistance actually illustrate the futility of resisting God.

In the end, each left a legacy that underscores the very truth they fought so hard to accept. God is in control. His will will be done. Each played right into the inescapable, inevitable plan of God. It is futile to resist.

## Joseph Caiaphas: Jewish High Priest, 18-36 AD

**Background:** Caiaphas was appointed by the Roman governor. His father-in-law and five brothers-in-law served as high priest. This high office stayed in the family for 40 years. It became a dynasty.

Caiaphas was a grand negotiator. He was always in the right place at the right time. He always looked good. Others envied his confidence and accomplishments. You didn't want to cross Caiaphas. There are legendary stories about his temper. He got his way because he demanded his way. He always won because he refused to lose.

For Caiaphas, the end always justified the means. He wound up in the seat of power, and he had every intention of staying there.

Caiaphas was the most powerful Jew in Israel for 18 years. He was president of the Sanhedrin. He dealt directly with Pontius Pilate. There were many perks, and the flow of money was tremendous.

Everything was fine until ... a lowly Jewish carpenter turned Rabbi from Nazareth showed up.

## Jesus: Jewish Rabbi AD 30-33

Jesus held the Jewish Sanhedrin and Temple ruling class in contempt. Jesus threatened the peace and the peacekeepers. He often rebuked them harshly and very publicly.

Matthew 23:33, "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to **hell**?"

The final straw that threatened the Temple establishment including Caiaphas, was the event when Jesus raised a prominent citizen named Lazarus from the dead. Quickly, the ruling class realized their strategy of discrediting Jesus wasn't working.

John 12:17-19, "Now the **crowd** that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to **spread the word. Many people**, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another, 'See, **this** is getting us nowhere. Look how the **whole world** has gone after him!'"

The success of Jesus threatened the Temple ruling class. They were losing what they had worked so hard to gain.

that aren't even a part of your life anymore.

### **The little gods always disappoint.**

Pressure to preserve the little gods will eventually drive you to self-destructive extremes. It drove Caiaphas to murder an innocent man.

The little gods eventually disappear. While saying **yes** to God will cost you something, saying **no** will cost you more – including **what** you put in the place of God.

### **What have you put in the place of God?**

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- Memorize: John 10:17-18.**
- Answer the question: What have you put in place of God?**
- Surrender these gods to God regardless of the cost.**
- Pastor, today I surrendered my life to Christ.**
- Come back next week for part two of *The Bad Boys of Easter*.**

*And that's where we enter the story ...*

John 11:47-53, “**Then** the chief priest and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. ‘What are we **accomplishing?**’ They asked. ‘Here is this man performing many signs. If **we** let him go on like this, **everyone** will **believe** in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both **our** Temple and **our** nation.’ Then one of them, named **Caiaphas**, who was high priest that year, spoke up, ‘**You know nothing at all!** You do not **realize** that it is **better** for **you** that **one man** die **for the people** than that the whole nation perish.’ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he **prophesied** that Jesus would die **for** the Jewish nation, and not only for **that** nation but also for the **scattered** children of God, to bring them together and make them **one**. So from that day on they plotted to take his life.”

What Caiaphas did not realize is that his death multiplied his influence.

John 10:17-18, “The reason my father loves me is that **I lay down my life** – only to take it up again. **No one takes it from me**, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have **authority** to lay down and **authority to take** it up again.”

One day Caiaphas was told Jesus' body was missing. Years later, Caiaphas lost his place and the Jews lost their Temple.

Now, Caiaphas is just a footnote in the story of Jesus.

#### **Application:**

There's a little Caiaphas in all of us. This little Caiaphas wants to preserve his kingdom at all cost. We tell God, “Help me or get out of my way.”

The pressure to preserve what we have built, created, or accomplished has the potential to drive us to self-destructive extremes.

*Whatever you have replaced God with in your life is already diminishing in value.*

#### **Proof:**

Your greatest regrets are connected to attempts to preserve things