



## Standing Firm

*They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. . . Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands." ' But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am . . .' Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, 'Prophecy!' The guards also took him over and beat him. (Mark 14:53-65)*

**I**t was all quite orchestrated—the betrayal, the arrest, the “trial,” but it also has an element of comedy about it—the crowd coming up against him who had healed the sick, banished demons, and raised the dead, with clubs and swords; the witnesses who could not keep their lies straight and fumbled on the stand; and the posturing by the chief priest and the council. Ultimately what they were not able to achieve on their own, Jesus simply gave them. “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed one?” the chief priest demanded, and Jesus answered simply: “I am.” With that they claimed victory and the moral high ground, if you can call it that, and proceeded to the next step which was to get the governor to agree to a sentence of death.

It is important for us to remember that it was not all the people of Jerusalem who clamored for his death. Many, if not most, were likely quite unaware of these proceedings and others, though silent, admired Jesus and mourned this terrible miscarriage of justice. Yet, what could they do? Nothing, actually, largely because this was the working out of the will of God for Jesus and even Jesus was not willing to be rescued from the Father’s will for him. That’s hard for us to imagine, but surely there have been times in your life—I know there have been in mine—when there were things that you simply felt you had to suffer for the sake of others. As much as you might have liked, there was no running away. God placed you there and God called you to remain there and by his grace you did.

Prayer:

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, While I am waiting, yielded and still. Adeline A. Pollard, 1907*