

**Sermon or Lesson: Matthew 26:57-67, with 1 Peter 2:21-24 (NIV based)**  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Railroaded

INTRO: Have you ever been railroaded - in the sense of "to convict with undue haste and by means of false charges or insufficient evidence" (*Webster's* 954 - "railroad")? At your job? In school? Was it very unfair, unpleasant, and perhaps even abusive?

TRANSITION: In being railroaded, you are not alone. Jesus went through being wrongfully railroaded even to the extreme of being brutalized and publicly executed. Perhaps some of what Jesus went through will sound familiar to you.

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READ: Matthew 26:57-67 - the account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin

[Lesson Question: What were the tactics that Jesus' enemies used against Him?]

SECTION POINT: Even though they were supposed to be righteous, Jesus' enemies railroaded Him to destroy Him through the implementation of a variety of evil tactics, despite His complete innocence.

Tactics of Jesus' enemies:

- - These enemies were fellow religious leaders with Jesus - His peers and equals in the same occupational field - professionals, experts. (vv.57,59)
- - These enemies were supposed to be righteous and godly men.
- - They were thoroughly trained in the Scriptures, holding the highest rank positions in their religion, and regularly performing the religious ceremonies and duties on behalf of the people before God.
- - They even went to extremes to teach and apply the Scriptures, fanatically upholding the righteous living prescribed in Scriptures.
  
- - But contrary to all of their knowledge of Scriptures and in gross violation of the teachings in Scriptures, the enemies of Jesus were looking for false evidence against Jesus to convict Him. (v.59)
- - Their strategy was to come up with enough supposed evidence to use and manipulate the legal system to terminate Jesus, "put Him to death". (v.59)
- - So these religious leaders used the facade of their religion to incite, rationalize, motivate, and hide their evil intentions and evil actions.
- - They produced many false witnesses who presented false evidence, but that evidence was not useful. (v.60)
- - Finally, two false witnesses came forward and misquoted Jesus, exaggerating some of what He had said. (v.61; see John 2:18-22)
- - The enemies of Jesus tried to force Him to say what they wanted to hear, something they could use against Him. (vv.62-63)

- - Ignoring the good deeds and miracles Jesus had done in the past, they among themselves quickly judged Him guilty, condemned Him, and pronounced Him worthy of termination - death. (vv.65-66)
  - - And not being satisfied with this condemnation, they further resorted to verbal degradation, hurling insults, mockery, physical abuse, and violence towards Him. (v.67; 1 Peter 2:23)
  - - Still not content, the enemies of Jesus then convened and extended a private meeting among themselves to decide and concoct a method to utterly and permanently destroy Jesus, having Him put to death. (v.27:1)
  - - So they kidnapped Jesus, and then recruited uninvolved outsiders to torture Him severely, culminating in a brutal prolonged execution. (vv.27:2,27-31)
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TRANSITION: Perhaps, you have experienced a situation similar to what Jesus encountered. Maybe you had supposedly righteous persons railroad you out the door, using their religious or lofty positions to unjustly destroy you, ruining your career, your ministry work, your reputation, your life.

Let's examine Jesus' response within His unjust suffering to determine how best for you to respond in these kinds of situations.

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#### APPLICATION:

READ: 1 Peter 2:21-24 - the example of Jesus' response

[Lesson Question: Following the example of Jesus, in what ways should we respond to the tactics of our enemies?]

SECTION POINT: In the midst of unjust suffering, we are to follow the example of Jesus and not commit any sin while entrusting our situation to God.

#### v.21 - READ

- - We believers are called to endure unjust suffering. (vv.20-21)
- - From the account and example of Jesus, when we are being railroaded we should endure the unjust suffering in the same manner that Jesus endured it.

#### v.22 - READ

- - We are to commit no sin - no sins are acceptable reactions or responses.
- - We are to maintain innocence and blamelessness before God, even though your adversaries are committing sins and are supposed to be righteous.

- - Do not deceive - in any form.
- - Do not lie or deceive to squirm your way out of the unjust suffering.

#### v.23 - READ

- - Do not retaliate - in any form.
- - Do not take revenge - even if you can. (cf. Matthew 26:53)

- - In accordance with divine purpose, the unjust suffering is intended to be one-sided - all against you, with no suffering being returned or inflicted by you back upon your adversaries.

- - Do not make any threats, especially when you are most vulnerable and prone to - in the midst of suffering.

- - Entrust yourself and your situation to God.

- - He will bring justice - one day - when He brings your adversaries before Him to be judged.

v.24 - READ

- - Take upon yourself the suffering or outcome God has ordained for you - like Jesus did.

- - Accept it.

- - Adjust to it.

- - See it from God's perspective.

- - And by extension then, all of this means that you are not to turn the confrontation into a 2-way power battle, exerting coercion to dominate, control, and prevail in a manner that God disapproves of.

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**BIG IDEA: When being railroaded, we should follow the example of Jesus and respond like He did - say nothing, let it happen, and trust God to work it out somehow.**  
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Works Cited:

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*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1973.  
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