

John 18:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Analysis

I spake openly to the world (παρρησίᾳ λελάληκα, parrēsia lelalēka)—The Greek *parrēsia* means 'boldness, frankness, public speech' with nothing hidden. Jesus's defense rests on transparency: **I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple**, the most public venues in Judaism.

In secret have I said nothing (κρυπτῷ ἐλάλησα οὐδέν, kryptō elalēsa ouden)—This doesn't deny private instruction (Mark 4:34) but asserts His core message was never clandestine. Unlike mystery cults or revolutionary conspirators, Jesus taught openly. His appeal to public witnesses (whither the Jews always resort) shifts burden of proof back to His accusers—unprecedented courtroom boldness.

Historical Context

Jewish legal procedure required accusers to bring specific charges with witnesses. By refusing to self-incriminate and demanding proper testimony, Jesus exposed the trial's illegitimacy. Roman law similarly protected defendants from compulsory self-testimony—a principle later enshrined in Western jurisprudence.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's public ministry model contrast with modern tendencies toward exclusive, insider Christianity?
2. What does Jesus's refusal to self-incriminate teach about wisdom when facing unjust authority?
3. In what areas might you need more 'parrēsia'—bold, open witness rather than privatized faith?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐγὼ παρόησίᾳ ελάλησα τῷ
answered him G3588 Jesus I openly have I said G3588
G611 G846 G2424 G1473 G3954 G2980

κόσμῳ ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ καὶ
to the world I always taught in the synagogue and
G2889 G1473 G3842 G1321 G1722 G3588 G4864 G2532

ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ὅπου πάντοτε οἱ Ιουδαῖοι συνέρχονται
in the temple whither always the Jews resort
G3588 G2411 G3699 G3842 G3588 G2453 G4905

καὶ ἐν κρυπτῷ ελάλησα οὐδέν
and in secret have I said nothing
G2532 G1722 G2927 G2980 G3762

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 48:16 (Parallel theme): Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

Matthew 4:23 (References Jesus): And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

John 7:26 (Parallel theme): But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

John 7:4 (Parallel theme): For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

Luke 21:37 (Temple): And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

Isaiah 45:19 (Parallel theme): I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Matthew 26:55 (Temple): In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

Matthew 9:35 (References Jesus): And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Luke 4:15 (Parallel theme): And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.