

Lighthouse Bible Church

September 28th, 2014

John 18: 39 – 9: 16 Scripture Reading: Mark 15: 1 - 14

‘Who is on Trial?’

Stand – Read – Pray

As we worked our way through John 18, we saw that Jesus had been arrested in the garden of Gethsemane because He was betrayed by Judas who brought 1000 Roman soldiers and officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees to arrest Him.

The only reason that He was arrested was because the Jewish leaders hated Him, they wanted Him dead. Earlier in **John 11: 46 – 53** the religious leader said **what shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.** So with Caiaphas the high priest, they, **Verse 53** says, **plotted to put Jesus to death.**

Earlier than that, according to **Matthew 12: 14** the Pharisees, it says **plotted against Jesus how they might destroy Him.**

Later in **Matthew 27: 1** it says **all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death** and they led Him to Pilate, which **Matthew 27: 18** says he **knew that they had handed Him over because of envy or jealousy.**

Jesus is taken to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. He asks Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine and when Jesus answers him, a soldier strikes Him across the face because He doesn't like the way He answered the high priest. *That would be just the beginning of what they would do to Him.*

Then Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest, who we have seen earlier, is already plotting how he can kill Jesus. Caiaphas asks Jesus is He is the Son of God, **Matthew 26: 63** and Jesus says 'yes'. Then they accuse Him of blasphemy and spit on Him, beat Him and strike Him repeatedly in the face, **Matthew 26: 27** says.

Then Caiaphas brings Jesus to the Praetorium or headquarters or judgment hall of the governor of the land, who at that time is Pontious Pilate. Pilate's job as governor, among many other things, was to oversee the city of Jerusalem and to keep peace between the Jews and the Romans, and as we saw last time, according to historians, had a somewhat difficult time doing that.

They bring Jesus to Pilate because they want Pilate to execute Jesus, because by Roman law, they could not do it. And you remember last time we saw that Jesus had to die by crucifixion as He had said and as the Old Testament had foretold He would. They don't want Pilate to try Jesus, they want him to execute Him.

They are coming to him trying to convince him that they have already tried and convicted Jesus, which they had in their own minds, but not through the legal channels.

So Pilate talks with Jesus and according to **John 8: 33** asks Him if He is the king of the Jews, as the Jewish leaders had claimed. *And you remember when that claim was made by the wise men or magi at Christ's birth, what tension that caused for Herod the Great, who ended up killing all the children 2 years old and under.* So this may be in the back of Pilate's mind wondering what this claim would mean to his authority and to the maintaining of peace in Jerusalem.

Jesus tells Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world, because if it was His servants would deliver Him out of the hands of the Jews who want Him dead, Verse 36 says.

We ended last time with Jesus telling Pilate that He had come to bear witness of the truth and then Pilate's classic response was 'what is truth' and then he walks out. And according to Verse 38 Pilate tells the Jews waiting outside that **I find no fault in Him at all.**

The **Luke 23: 4 – 12** says that the Jews said to Pilate, He **is stirring up the people from Galilee to here.** And when Pilate found out that Jesus was from Galilee, he tried to pawn Him off on Herod. Well Herod doesn't get anywhere with Jesus so He sends Him back to Pilate, but not before his soldiers treated Him with contempt and beat Him a little. That is where we want to pick it up this morning.

Pilate has been trying to get rid of Jesus, because He finds no fault in Him, nothing deserving of death, but he cant. He should have let Him go, but... He told the Jews 'you take Him' and they wouldn't. He told Herod 'you take Him' and he wouldn't. So look what he tries next in Verse 39.

Verse 39: but you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the king of the Jews?

There was in place a **custom** that the Roman government could release one Jewish prisoner in Roman custody as a sign of good will, especially during the Passover time. So Pilate thinks that He can get rid of Jesus by bringing up this custom; think that they would surely chose Jesus.

You have to know that by this time, crowds of people have gathered at the Praetorium and maybe Pilate thought that he could appeal to them, since just a few days ago they were hailing Him as the Messiah coming into Jerusalem. So He apparently brings Jesus and one other prisoner out named Barabbas.

Verse 40: then they all cried again saying ‘not this Man, but Barabbas’. Now Barabbas was a robber. Release to us Barabbas, not Jesus. **Matthew 27: 20** and **Mark 15: 11** adds **the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.** *I don't think Jesus would last in our day either, do you?*

The last sentence of Chapter 18 says **now Barabbas was a Robber.** And if you were to look at all the accounts describing Barabbas, they describe him not only as a robber but **a notorious prisoner** in Matthew, in Mark he is called a **rebel and a murderer**, and in Luke He is accused of **rebellion and murder.** *He would hide on the road to Jerico and rob people and kill them*

That just shows you the sinful heart of envy and hatred that takes a notorious, rebellious, murderer and sets him free and later tortures and crucifies the sinless Son of God. It is the same today, people would chose a murder over Jesus because of their depravity. Now Pilate is still stuck with Jesus. What is he going to do now?

So he asks the crowd in **Matthew 27: 22** and **Mark 15: 12** **what then do you want me to do with Jesus, who is called Christ, the king of the Jews?** And their response was ‘crucify Him’, crucify Him’. Pilate then asks, according to Matthew **what evil has He done** and they continue to yell for Him to be crucified. That brings us to Chapter 19 starting in Verse one.

John 19: 1: so then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. Even though Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent and he found no fault in Him, as he will say again, he still carries out this torturous act against Christ.

And maybe in the back of his mind, Pilate thought that he could appease the people by torturing Jesus through scourging and then they would feel sorry for Him and let Him go. As a matter of fact in **Luke 23: 16, 22** after Pilate tells the Jews that he finds no fault in Him, tells them twice **I will chasten Him and let Him go**. That word **chasten** is different than scourging in John 19: 1, but is similar in what the results of it are. The same word is used by Paul in **2nd Corinthians 6: 9** where he says **as chastened yet not killed**. In **Hebrews 12: 6, 7 & 10** it is used of **severe discipline** as a matter of fact Hebrews 12: 6 says **who the Lord loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives**.

So Pilate tries yet again to get rid of Jesus. He says ‘well if I scourge Him, maybe they’ll feel sorry for Him and want Him back. If I torture Him enough, maybe they will be pacified and I can be rid of Him. Even in **John 19: 12** it says **Pilate sought to release Him ...** He was trying to release an innocent man but he was very much taken in by the pressure of the people to kill Him.

And at this point, maybe even earlier, He is **being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes WE are healed**. right? **Isaiah 53: 5** It began with all the punching, spitting pulling out His beard etc. **When** someone was **scourged** they were either tied to a post by the hands with their back to someone or they were suspended in the air by their hands. Then they were beaten with a stick that had leather straps attached that were weighted with sharp bone or metal beyond it.

The Jews, when they would give someone stripes, according to **Deuteronomy 25: 3** they could only be beaten 40 times and not more, so they would usually stop at 39 so as to not violate the law as what happened to Paul in **2nd Corinthians 11: 24**

But some writers say that the Romans did not abide by that law and could scourge someone with more than 40 hits. Jesus was suffering for our sins long before He was on the cross.

Verses 2 – 3: and the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said ‘hail, king of the Jews and they struck Him with their hands.

A crown of thorns is a vine type plant that can be twisted with long sharp thorns on them. When it is placed on the head the thorns would have penetrated into His scalp and forehead.

They also put a **purple robe** on Him in a mockery of His claim to being a king. In **Matthew 27: 29** it says they also **put a reed in His hand and bowed the knee before Him**, mocking Him.

He says they **Struck Him with their hands** (*rhapisma – could be with a stick*) (the sentence structure in the original language says they repeatedly struck Him) **Matthew 27: 27** says there was a **garrison** around Him that were involved in this. A garrison consisted of at least 600 soldiers. **Mark 15: 16** says they **called** the whole garrison; so they could all mock and beat Jesus.

The other passages add that they spit on Him and hit him over the head with a reed, mockingly bowed down before Him saying hail king of the Jews. **Isaiah 50: 6** says **I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard, I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.**

His hour had come, and the power of darkness, to be treated with contempt by sinful mankind and to the pleasure of Satan; and no wonder, **Romans 8: 7** says **the carnal mind is enmity against God.** Earlier in **Romans 3:** when Paul describes sinful mankind, he says **their tongues have practiced deceit, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood and there is no fear of God before their eyes.** Not so unlike unbelievers today who would do the same to Jesus today, if they could.

He was bearing the punishment for our sins. Our sins deserve the severest possible punishment conceivable, and Jesus bore them all, took them all, was punished for us.

Verses 4 – 5: **Pilate then went out again, and said to them, behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him. Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them ‘behold the Man’.**

This is amazing. Pilate comes out and says ‘**I find no fault in Him**’ and yet He has just sanctioned His scourging and torture and mocking and beating; and he finds not fault in Him.? Tells you what kind of man Pilate was. Why are you doing that Pilate, if you find no fault in Him?

He is trying to play both sides against the middle. He wants to appease the crowd by making Jesus look as pathetic as possible in hopes they will let Him go and at the same time he doesn’t want any part in Christ’s death.

Notice now that he says not ‘behold your king’ but he says in Verse 5 **behold the Man.** He is saying, He is no king, He is no threat to you, as He is standing there bloody and beaten He is the fulfillment of **Isaiah 52: 14** which says **His appearance and body were marred more than any man**

Pilate says He is no king, He is a powerless nobody, just look at Him. He said that in hopes that they would agree and that would be the end of it. But look at Verse 6, this crowd would stop at nothing short of His death.

Verse 6: therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, crucify Him, crucify Him.

That wasn't the response he was looking for. But the blood thirsty mob wanted more than just His blood to be shed, they wanted His life ended. This hard hearted crowd was not satisfied with a bloody, beaten, tortured, unrecognizable man, they wanted Him dead and a slow agonizing death by crucifixion. How callus these people are.

Then Pilate says at the end of Verse 6 **you take Him and you crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.** This is about the 3rd time he has said that. But notice what He says now, in another attempt to get rid of Jesus. **You take Him and crucify Him.** Pilate is now giving the Jews, who never crucify only stone to death, the right to capital punishment Roman fashion. He's lost it. He is in essence saying, again, He's innocent, you kill Him, not me.

Verse 7: the Jews answered him 'we have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.

Pilate knew that law and he knew the problem that false God's were to the Jewish people. 2 other times in Pilates career there in Jerusalem he brought in idols in the form of their Roman Gods. Once was on the Roman standards that he brought in and once on the Roman shields that the soldiers carried.

These god's caused the Jews to become angry and riotous, so much so that word God back to Caesar himself who then ordered Pilate to remove all symbols of their Roman gods, so as to preserve the peace in the area.

Now the Jews are saying ‘this Jesus is claiming to be **the Son of God**. If you think we had a problem with the idols then wait till you see what happens if you let this man go’. ‘He has violated our law in claiming to be God’ which law they had **Leviticus 24: 16** and Jesus had been accused of that several times during His ministry and they tried to kill Him then but His time had not yet come; and now it had.

And they are saying **He ought to die**. And if you don’t crucify Him, Caesar is going to find out that you are allowing a false god and then what will happen to you.

Verses 8 – 9: therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid and went again to the Praetorium and said to Jesus ‘where are you from? But Jesus gave no answer.

What was Pilate **afraid** of, Jesus claiming to be the Son of God, no? He didn’t believe any of that. He may have been fearful of this getting out to Caesar but there is probably something else that made Pilate afraid. Pilate, like many Romans were a superstitious people and they believed that the god’s came to earth and took on human form, just like they believed about Tiberius Caesar and other Roman leaders.

Remember in **Acts 14: 11** while Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra and healed a man there? It says **the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men** and they called Paul and Barnabas **Zeus and Jupiter**. Remember Paul in Malta in **Acts 28: 6** when Paul was bitten by the venomous viper and nothing happened the people said **he is a god**.

And if you think about while all this was going on, Pilates wife had come to him **Matthew 27: 19** says and said ‘**I have suffered many things in a dream because of Him**’.

This is what is going through Pilates mind; and causing his fear. He is thinking, did I just allow someone who is claiming to be a son of a god to be tortured and beaten? Well, little did he know that he had just beaten the only true God in human form.

So, in Verse 9 Pilate goes back into the Praetorium and asks Jesus **where are you from?** Pilate knows where He is from because he tried to give Him to Herod, remember. He is asking this because he wants to know if He is one of the gods and where He would have come from. At the end of Verse 9 it says **Jesus gave him no answer.** Can you imagine the impact of His silence amidst the fear of Pilate?

Maybe He didn't answer because **Isaiah 53: 7** says **he was oppressed and afflicted yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.**

Verse 10: Then Pilate said to Him 'are you not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You and power to release You?

Pilate in essence was saying, don't you know who I am and the power that I have to give you life or death. It is at this point good that Jesus said nothing; because He could have said 'don't you know who I am? I am God and I have the power of eternal life and eternal death.

Well, if he had that power, why didn't he use it if he found no fault in Him? He was a man more concerned about his own life and position and a man more manipulated by the crowd than he was in listening to the truth. So Jesus does answer him in Verse 11. Not so unlike many people today.

Verse 11: Jesus answered, you could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.

Listen, the power to crucify Jesus was Pilates and it was given to Pilate by God. This is God's sovereign design and plan being carried out just the way He had planned. Don't you like that? God is in control, not Pilate, not the Jewish leaders, not Satan, but God.

Then Jesus says **therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.** Who had delivered Jesus to Pilate? The Jews, Caiaphas and the Scribes and Pharisees, the Sanhedrin. They were all involved in the plot to falsely arrest, accuse and turn Jesus over to Pilate to be killed; so they incur the **greater sin.**

The Jews had no right to do what they did, knowing what they knew about Jesus and the motive behind their delivering Him to Pilate, they accrue the **greater sin**, If that is possible to have a greater sin than Pilate, but they do.

And in that since I think Judas himself would have the greater sin because he had been with Jesus for 3 years and totally rejected Him and turned Him over to the Jewish leaders who in turn turned Him over to Pilate.

Do you want to know something? People today are just as guilty as Pilate and Judas and the religious leaders when they hear the truth and know the truth and reject it, the Bible says in **Hebrews 6: 6** that they **crucify to themselves the Son of God again.** **Matthew 11: 23 – 24** it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Ghomorra than for you ... That is why the writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 10 ;29** ..of how much greater punishment...

Somebody who rejects Jesus today is no different than anyone in the crowd of Jesus' day who stood up and said 'crucify Him, crucify Him'. That used to be me and that use to be you and maybe it is still you today.

Verse 12 from then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying 'if you let this Man go you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar'.

These Jews are really putting the pressure on Pilate. They are in essence saying that if you don't have him crucified you are not in allegiance with Caesar and you are allowing this man to represent Himself as a king against Caesar. And what is going to happen to you when Caesar finds out? This man is a traitor and if you want to release a traitor, Tiberius Caesar is not going to like that and he will probably lose his life.

Verse 13: when Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Pilate, fearing for his position and all that he had and even for his own life, begins the process of making a judgment against Christ to have Him crucified. He sits down in the **judgment seat** *the bema seat* and prepares to pronounce the sentence against Christ. The **pavement** is a raised slab of stone or possibly a raised area within the house.

Interestingly enough, there is coming a time when Pilate will be standing before the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20 where Jesus will be sitting and He will pronounce final judgment against Pilate into the burning lake of fire which is the 2nd death.

Verse 14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover and about the sixth hour and he said to the Jews behold you King.

This is the day before the Passover celebration at around 6 in the morning. As the lambs were being slaughtered for the celebration of the Passover meal, the Lamb of God would soon be slain for the sins of the world.

Pilate says **behold your king**. Maybe in one last attempt to get them to stop their relentless pursuit of having Him killed. But they cry out in Verse 15.

Verse 15: away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. They want Him killed. Pilate says **shall I crucify your King?** And the Chief Priests said **we have no king but Caesar.**

That is true, they no longer had the king of kings to speak truth into their lives. They no longer had the God of Israel on their side, they have rejected God and the Son of God.

By the way, in the parallel passage in **Matthew 27: 24** says **when Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying I am innocent of the blood of this just Person, you see to it.** Then listen to what the people said **His blood be on us and on our children.**

His blood is still upon all of those, even today, who reject Jesus, who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, who reject God's plan of salvation. So Pilate gives the final order in Verse 16.

Verse 16: then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.

How about you today? Is the blood of Jesus on you because you have rejected Him? Or are you washed in the blood of the Lamb the cleanses you from all sin.

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Introduction and Review:

John 11: 46 – 53, Matthew 12: 14, 27: 1, 18
Matthew 26: 27, 63, John 18: 33, Luke 23: 4-12

Verses 39 – 40:

Matthew 27: 20, 22, Mark 15: 11, 12

John 19: Verse 1:

Luke 23: 16, 22, 2nd Corinthians 6: 9
Hebrews 12: 6,7,10, John 19: 12, Isaiah 53: 5
Deuteronomy 25: 3, 2nd Corinthians 11: 24

Verses 2 – 3:

Matthew 27: 27, 29, Mark 15: 16, Isaiah 50: 6
Romans 8: 7, Romans 3: 13 – 18

Verses 4 – 7

Isaiah 52: 14, Leviticus 24: 16

Verses 8 – 9:

Acts 14: 11, 28: 6, Matthew 27: 19, Isaiah 53: 7

Verses 10 – 11:

Hebrews 6: 6, 10: 29, Matthew 11: 23 – 24

Verses 12 – 16:

Matthew 27: 24

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Matthew 27: 27, 29, Mark 15: 16, Isaiah 50: 6
Romans 8: 7, Romans 3: 13 – 18

Verses 4 – 7

Isaiah 52: 14, Leviticus 24: 16

Verses 8 – 9:

Acts 14: 11, 28: 6, Matthew 27: 19, Isaiah 53: 7

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