

## Humiliated and Denied Justice to Bear our Sin

John 19: 7-11

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*<sup>6</sup> When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” <sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” <sup>8</sup> When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup> He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”*

Last week we saw that our Lord Jesus Christ was mocked, insulted and treated brutally by the soldiers under Pilate. Pilate’s intent was to release Jesus. Pilate had Jesus flogged in the hope of appealing to sympathy and grace.

Perhaps, the leaders and the crowd had an opportunity to re-consider their demands.

But when the crowd sees Jesus who is bruised, beaten, mocked and bloodied they became even more blood thirsty. The crowd wanted nothing less than the crucifixion of Jesus.

They delivered Jesus to Pilate because of their envy and hatred. Pure evil reigned in their hearts. The leaders incite the crowd to hate Jesus. And their evil has no sign of abating. They yell, cry and scream for blood. The Gospel of Matthew records for us that “*all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and our children’*” Matthew 27:25.

The crowd had no understanding of what they were saying. Their minds and hearts were completely taken over by hate and anger for the sinless Son of God. Their mouths became trumpets of hatred that knew no bounds. The Romans were brutal in the treatment of their enemies. They would torture, maim and crucify their enemies so that no one would dare rise up against Rome. It is very interesting to note that Pilate does not see Jesus as an enemy of Rome. He declared Jesus to be not guilty.

But what do we see here? The crowd’s hatred for their fellow Jew.

This is what happens when sin dominates a person. James the brother of our Lord tells us, “*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*”.

Their envy has led them to hatred. And their hatred has led them to murder.

This is the same kind of envy and jealousy that led to the first murder. (Genesis 4:8).

Cain killed his brother when he became angry. That anger came from envy.

And how many relationships are destroyed because of some simmering jealousy, envy or anger!

Listen to Colossians 3:8 *“you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”*

*“put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,<sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”* Ephesians 4:22-28

So Pilate tells the leaders to have their own way. However, the Jewish leaders are hesitant to kill Jesus their own way. They want to force Pilate’s hand.

And what do they tell Pilate?

Verse seven.

<sup>7</sup> *The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.”*

The Jewish leaders resent the fact Pilate wants to release Jesus. Jesus has not done anything deserving death much less a flogging. In Pilate’s judgment, Jesus has not broken any Roman law. So the leaders switch gears to another accusation. They say something like this. “Jesus may not have broken the law of the land but he has broken our religious law. He is guilty of blasphemy.” This is a serious charge. This ought to be investigated. And the punishment for blasphemy was death by stoning not crucifixion.

Leviticus 24:15-16 *“And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”*

This is the irony of it all. Even Pilate knows that they brought Jesus because of their envy and hatred.

When the leaders see that they are losing ground, they quote the Law of God.

Now, we have to ask the question if this charge of blasphemy is true.

If the Jewish leaders are quoting the Levitical Law to claim that Jesus cursed God or dishonored God and therefore is guilty of blasphemy, they know they are lying and their claim is false.

Consider at least *five* instances when Jesus claimed that He is the Son of God:

1. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, *“My Father is working until now, and I am working.”* This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. So Jesus said to them, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”* John 5: 16-20.
2. *“It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—<sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father”.* John 6: 45-46
3. *“In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true.<sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”<sup>19</sup> They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”* John 8: 17-18
4. *“Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”* John 10: 36
5. *“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”* John 11:41-42
6. The leaders are blinded to the identity of Jesus. Their sin of unbelief has blinded them. It is not unreasonable to be skeptical of truth claims but plotting murder is going too far without examination. Jesus himself told the Jewish leaders - *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life”.* John 5: 39. The Jewish leaders ought to have searched the Scriptures before accusing him. Nicodemus was on the Pharisees and tried to reason with his colleagues. *“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”* John 7:51. But Nicodemus was dismissed off very quickly. The Pharisees were weaponizing Scripture to kill Jesus. It is sad there are people who do such a thing even today.

So the leaders tell Pilate that Jesus made himself to be the Son of God. When Pilate hears this, what does he do?

Let's look at verses eight through eleven.

*”<sup>8</sup> When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup> He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify*

you?” <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

Notice, Pilate does not engage with the crowd anymore. He rushes back to into his office to talk to Jesus. Pilate wants to know the identity of Jesus.

But Pilate had already heard from Jesus before he was flogged. Jesus said to Pilate these words “*For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice*”. John 18:37. And Pilate said, “what is truth?”.

Perhaps, Pilate now is curious to know where truth comes from.

But Jesus gives no answer. And Pilate is rather irritated by the silence of Jesus.

So, Pilate wants to show his authority. He tells Jesus that he has the power to release him or crucify him. This sounds insincere. Pilate wanted to release Jesus. But he changes his mind so quickly he could crucify Jesus if he wanted to.

And what Jesus says in response is perhaps very intense and weighty. What Jesus says here is the message of the God. It is the core of the Gospel.

Let’s look at verse eleven and unpack it.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

First observation: Jesus is claiming that Pilate that he has no authority over him. Here is Jesus - a weak man, battered by blows and lashes on his back and thorns on his head. Yet, Jesus is so courageous to say that Pilate has no authority. If the claim that Jesus is the Son of God is true, which is true, Pilate knows that he is under the authority of Caesar. That is why he is afraid. Not of the Jews but because of what Jesus said. Pilate’s conscience is stirred. There is no higher authority than God Himself. Jesus is saying he is subject to Pilate’s authority because his Father gave it to him. God gave Pilate the human authority. And Jesus is there willingly and because God the Father sent him on the mission to die on behalf of sinners. This is the greatness and the condescension of God. The Creator became a creature. The Infinite One taking on finite humanity. “*Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*”. Philippians 2:6-8

Second observation: Pilate is guilty but not as guilty as those who delivered Jesus. The man who delivered Jesus was the leader of the Sanhedrin – Caiaphas. Pilate knew that the Jewish leaders delivered Jesus on false charges. The greater sin is those who reject Jesus, those who refuse to believe

that he is the Son of God. That is the greater sin. At least Pilate had a conscience but the conscience of the leaders was hardened. So hardened that they want to see Jesus die at any cost.

But here is the paradox. Even those who hate, refuse and deny Jesus can receive forgiveness of sins when they turn repent and turn to the cross of Jesus. It is his death that made a way for the most wretched of sinners to be reconciled with God. *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

There is no sin that is so great that cannot be forgiven when you turn to Jesus.

Jesus hung on the cross and said, “It is finished”. He finished the mission His Father had given him. His death accomplished what you and I could never accomplish.

Jesus was humiliated and denied justice. He endured great pain for others. For your sake. Jesus endured suffering and pain so that he could bear your sin from the smallest to the greatest.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Humiliated, Denied Justice to Bear our Sin. John 19:7-11

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Why is Jesus' identity as the Son of God crucial to our faith? Why was Pilate afraid when he heard this claim about Jesus? Go around and share. John 20:30-31

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. What do you believe that Jesus' death accomplished on your behalf? Acts 10:43, Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-14, Romans 8:1
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

1. For personal reflection: Do you regularly search the Scriptures to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? What keeps you from His Word?