

## **Behold, the Man Jesus!**

John 19: 1-11

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Pastor Francis Bezzam

*<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. <sup>4</sup> Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." <sup>5</sup> So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" <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."*

As we approach Easter Sunday in two weeks, I want to remind us about the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is something *glorious* and *powerful* about the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. *Glorious* because the Son of God took on sinful humanity to lift us up into heaven. *Powerful* because even the most wretched of sinners is able to receive pardon when they turn to the cross. The glorious and powerful message demands a response from the one who hears the meaning of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the response is not all the same from all people. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18). Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 2:15 *"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned"*.

Today, in our passage from the Gospel of John, we see Jesus being presented to the Jewish leaders. And their response when they see Jesus is simply unnerving. Even to Pilate.

*Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged and have a crown of thorns and a purple robe put on, and bring him out?*

First, Pilate did not find any reason that was worthy of Jesus' death. When the religious leaders brought Jesus to the governor's headquarters, it was early in the morning. That's rather unusual. And the first question Pilate asks them is this - "*What accusation do you bring against this man?*" John 18:28

And the accusers don't give Pilate a straight answer. What do they say? "*If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.*" John 18:29

And their reply is filled with such contempt and pride. It's as if they tell Pilate these words. "You better believe whatever we say about Jesus. We have good reason to be here. This man Jesus is not of us. He is an outsider. He doesn't play according to our rules and traditions. He makes very big claims about himself. We believe he is an impostor. We believe he is a fraud." All these claims were not worthy of a death sentence. Pilate knew it. So would have none of it because all these were just surface level accusations.

However, Pilate was able to sense there was something else. Pilate sensed these leaders brought Jesus because of envy (Matthew 27:18, Mark 15:10). John's Gospel does not record this was for us but Matthew and Mark do.

What a strange diagnosis of the human heart?

Pilate is a Roman governor, a secular administrative ruler. He does not follow the Jewish Law. But here we have the religious leaders accusing Jesus. They claim to follow the Law of God. They were experts in the Law. They were teachers of the Law. They know that envy and jealousy is not according to the Law of God. And yet their sinful condition is being diagnosed by someone who does not follow the Law of God. What an irony!

You can have all the religion you want. You can make it to all the Sunday services and Bible studies.

Have all the best bibles in your home. None of those things can transform your heart.

This is what fake religion does. Imposes rules from the outside but no transformation on the inside. Only Jesus can transform the human condition. By faith in him.

Jesus diagnoses the human condition in Mark 7:21-22 "*For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.*" Paul describes the character and life of those who do not acknowledge God. "*They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.*" Romans 1:29. Even children react in envy and jealousy.

Paul writes to Titus that those who were followers of Jesus used to be living in malice and envy but now we have been saved to mirror Christ. Why would you want to live in envy?

The Jewish leaders were not just **envious** of Jesus. They were **mad** at him. In their madness, they accused him of being demon possessed. They were also mad because he did good things on the Sabbath day. And all this madness made them want to kill Jesus. And yet they could not kill him because they were under Roman jurisdiction. So they needed the Roman authorities to sentence him. They try but their plans don't seem to be working.

Pilate had already questioned Jesus inside the governor's office. After he had questioned Jesus, he was convinced Jesus was not guilty. Pilate goes out and tells the Jewish leaders "*I find no guilt in him*". John 18:38. Then Pilate tells them that he wants to release Jesus. But they yell, scream and cry out that Barabbas should be released not Jesus. Barabbas was a robber. Barabbas was in prison for state crimes. Now, Pilate has to justify why he intends to release Jesus.

So Pilate goes back inside to his office to attempt plan B.

Here is what Pilate is probably thinking in plan B about Jesus. Here is an innocent man. Let me make look like a criminal. Let me give him a flogging. Let's mock him. Let's give all the treatment that is fit for a common criminal. Once his accusers see him all beaten up and bloodied, maybe they will give a little grace. Maybe they will feel a little sympathy. Pilate wanted to show those who saw him visually to feel pity for him.

Maybe they'll let Jesus go and not ask for Barabbas to be released.

This is where our passage begins in chapter nine. Lets look at verses *one* through *three*.

*<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands.*

Jesus went into the headquarters without any bruises, any marks on this body, any lashes. He went in with his normal clothes.

*Verse one* – Pilate has Jesus flogged. It is said there are at least two kinds of flogging in those times. One was a very severe form of flogging reserved for the most notorious criminals. And the second one a flogging that was given to common criminals – not so severe. And this flogging was the not so severe one but flogging meant a whip that had bone or metal fragments at the end. It was a painful thing to endure. And what else do they do to Jesus?

In *verse two* – you see they *braided* a crown of thorns. Yes that is how is it described. They *wove*d together a crown from thorns and placed it on this head. And then put on a purple robe. Purple is the color of royalty. Here is Jesus, who Pilate calls the "King of the Jesus". His royalty is displayed lashes on his back and a crown of thorns. Of course, this is all a mockery. And to add insult to the mockery

they call out “Hail King of the Jews” and they begin slapping him. That is what the word means. Giving blows with the palms of their hand.

Keep in mind, though. This is Pilate’s attempt release Jesus not send him to the cross.

So, Jesus is given the flogging. A crown of thorns on his head and a robe.

Pilate is perhaps satisfied with how Jesus looks now. He is bleeding on his back. Blood streaming from his forehead. And he goes out to make an announcement to the crowd waiting outside. Look at verses *four* and *five*.

*<sup>4</sup> Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” <sup>5</sup> So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”*

Pilate had already given his verdict regarding Jesus.

And this is his second attempt to release Jesus.

Pilate is probably is wondering if they might look at Jesus with sympathy.

However, Pilate is met with the most unexpected response.

What do the leaders say?

Look at verse *six*.

*<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.”*

The leaders double down on their demand for Jesus’ blood.

This is quite a disturbing, unsettling and upsetting response from the Jewish leaders. A reasonable human response would be to consider the physical condition of the accused. When they brought Jesus to Pilate, his appearance was something you could say normal. They demanded that Jesus be put to death with their false accusations. Pilate did not buy into their accusations. But this time, when Pilate presents after the flogging, Jesus’ appearance is way different from the time he went in for questioning. Jesus is bruised, weak from the loss of blood, probably swollen in his face and back and hardly able to walk. Human sensibilities would dictate that anyone would feel a little sympathy even they hated him that much. And yet, they tone and their madness increases. Surely this is sinful demonic anger.

There are so sinfully mad that even Pilate is taken by surprise. So Pilate says. You don’t accept my verdict. Take him and deal with him yourselves.

Lord willing, we will pick up the rest of the passage next week. But I have a few questions for us to consider.

What would be your response be in light of how Jesus Christ is presented here?

Should it be like Pilate who found Jesus to be without fault and yet scourged him and mocked him? No.

Should it be like the Jewish leaders who doubled down and demanded his death? Never.

Should your response perhaps be neutral or one of apathy?

There are people who say. Well, I don't really know. This Jesus. I'll just ignore him. Such a response would be even more dangerous.

Well, then what should your response be?

The right response is Conviction of sin. Repentance. Worship. Adoration. Thankfulness. Honor to God.

<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, **you** crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup> God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. Acts 2:23-24

<sup>36</sup> Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom **you** crucified. Acts 2:36

Notice the response of the people on the Day of Pentecost.

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:37-38

Consider the penalty of your sin when you look at Jesus Christ and his suffering.

<sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

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

MESSAGE SUMMARY: **Behold, The Man Jesus.** John 19:1-11

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

1. What is disturbing about the reaction of the leaders when Pilate presents a bruised Jesus to the crowd outside his headquarters?

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

2. Do you see and believe how Christ received the insults and mockery that were directed at God? Go around and share. If God were to judge you, you would have received a just judgment. Instead, Christ voluntarily took the mockery and suffered in our stead. Psalm 89:41, 50, 69:9, Romans 15:3, 1 Peter 3:18
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: What would you change in light of the response of the religious leaders – they responded with envy and their envy led them to murderous thoughts and action.