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Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

The Trial of the King – Part 1 **Pastor Ty Blackburn** **John 18:28-40, John 19:1-16** **October 25, 2015**

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 18. We'll begin reading at Verse 28, John 18:28. We are covering a larger passage, much larger than normal. We are going to go all the way through John 19:16. Actually, 29 verses—the last 13 verses of Chapter 18, and the first 16 of Chapter 19. So I guess, fasten your seatbelts. We probably will, don't be too discouraged, we probably will take 2 or 3 weeks to go over this. We are taking that large of a text because this is the trial of Jesus before Pilate. These 29 verses cover the trial of Jesus Christ before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Let me just make a comment, just to observe something at the very beginning, and it is interesting, you know we talk about how we compare the Gospel accounts, and that by comparing the Gospel accounts, you are getting 100 percent truthful testimony to what actually happened in all four Gospels. The Bible is inerrant, it is completely true, but you have, in the various Spirit-inspired recollection, you have different portraits presented, different angles on the wonder of our Savior's work.

So it is true when we look at the trials. One of the things that is really striking about the way John records the trials versus the way Matthew, Mark, and Luke record Jesus' trial, is that he almost ignores the trial before the Jewish authorities. Annas and Caiaphas, which were basically two preliminary pre-trials, get six verses, and Pilate gets 29. John seems to be saying that the real trial was the trial before the Romans. Now he is going to expose the Jews, and the evil of what they've done, but there is the sense in which he is saying, "Listen, Jesus was tried by the representative of the greatest government, the most powerful government on the face of the earth in His time, and that God, in His providence, orchestrated the events so that this would happen."

Now, with that said, I want to continue to kind of introduce our thoughts a little bit before we read the text, and I want to ask this question: *How does the Kingdom of God advance?* Because one of the things we're going to see in the trial, and the title of the message is 'The Trial of the King – Part I', we are going to see that at the centerpiece of this trial is Jesus' revelation of His Kingdom. Repeatedly, Pilate refers to Him as 'The King', 'The King of the Jews', which is really, that is really

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the charge for which He died. Even though Jesus points out, and of course we see that He is the one laying down His life clearly, it is not an accidental thing that He is to be crucified, of course not. But He points out, in talking to Pilate, that the nature of His Kingdom is not of this world, that His Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. In a sense saying, “Pilate, I haven’t come to overthrow you, I’ve come to overthrow the prince of the power of the air. I’ve come to overcome the real enemy of all humanity.” I mean, Rome is small potatoes, relatively speaking. Jesus has come to do battle with the ruler of this world. And so the question then that is permeating this passage, and we’re going to look at today, and then in weeks to follow is: *How does the Kingdom of God advance? How does it go forward? How does it assault the gates of hell?*

I ask that question, I think it is a very relevant question always, but particularly it feels especially relevant today when it seems that the kingdom of darkness is advancing so rapidly, does it not? I mean, the spiritual darkness, the moral confusion, the intellectual blindness that is around us is staggering, and it has come with such suddenness, and such force it feels like. I mean, the irrationality is stunning to me. You listen to the news report, or you consider the realities of what is going on, I’ll hit a couple of these, and I don’t want to get off on the politics of it, And please understand, I’m trying to explain the intellectual, there are spiritual powers at work in our world, and it is evident.

The trial, this stuff about Benghazi, it is clear that the Secretary of State lied repeatedly for her own well-being. And ironically, she was part of the Watergate, she was the lawyer that helped prosecute Nixon. I mean was on the team like an underling. Nixon needed to be prosecuted, but what she has done is far worse, in my opinion, than what Nixon ever did. That was about an election, and breaking into the democratic offices. It was wrong, and the cover-up was wrong, and he should have been put out of office, absolutely, but what she has done is more heinous and ugly, and yet no one seems to see it. I mean, some people do, some of us do, but isn’t it amazing how people could be so intellectually darkened to just not seeing? It is as plain as the nose on your face.

Now move beyond that to these Planned Parenthood videos. I mean, God has graciously exposed the wickedness of the abortion industry. He has pulled back the veil and made it so clear. These guys that pulled this off, you know the hidden cameras and all that, they had them, but what happens? The propaganda campaign of darkness just drowns it out. How can that be? And you can sit and get frustrated about it until you’re blue in the face, it doesn’t do any good.

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Creation evolution, the inerrancy of Scripture. In Sunday morning Bible study we had a video presentation about just the incredible archaeological evidence for the Exodus, the biblical account of the Exodus of God's people from Egypt. But to me one of the things that is staggering, the more that you read what is happening in the areas of science, the more that you see that creation, intelligent design is so incredibly obvious, and yet they deny it. How can that be?

It is because they are in bondage in the kingdom of darkness. The god of this age, 2 Corinthians 4:4, has blinded their eyes, lest they see the light of the Gospel. And you see, we are seeing that with greater clarity than generations before us have seen that in American history. It has become so clear that we are involved in a spiritual war, and so what is the answer? The answer is the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The only way that they are ever going to, and those things are really secondary, I mean it is important, and justice needs to be served, and certainly unborn lives need to be protected, and so there is a sense of brokenness and righteous indignation that we feel. But the question is really: *What is the root solution?*

There are things that need to be done. I mean, protests, and the ballot box, and all of that is important, but those really are things that are like stopping the bleeding. What really will deal with the malady, the surgery is spiritual. It is the Kingdom of God, they need to come into the Kingdom of God, and how does that happen? It happens through the proclamation of the Gospel. It happens as you proclaim that there is a king. His name is Jesus and God has testified to all men that He is king by raising Him from the dead. And you proclaim that with your words, with your mouth, and with your life, and what happens is the Kingdom in God's sovereign will advances. People go from darkness to light, they go from being under the domain of darkness to being delivered to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, and it happens through the proclamation of the truth. And we see an amazing, astounding example of this in the trial of Jesus, and the encouraging thing is, that when you look at the circumstances in which Jesus is, and you realize what God is doing, and what the Son of God is doing in these awful circumstances, to think about the Kingdom work that is going on, and that has gone on through the proclamation of this, these circumstances, the trial under Pilate. Because what is really happening is, I said 'The Trial of the King', and that is the title, and the title itself is paradoxical. Jesus is on trial, He is being tried, and as the drama unfolds, and we're going to look at it, the Jewish authorities are the accusers. Jesus is the one on trial, Pilate is the judge, but as we walk through the text, and observe it carefully, what we see is, that in reality Jesus is the judge, Pilate, and the accusers, are on trial.

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He exposes them, and what we are going to look at this morning is particularly, next time the plan is to look at Pilate and Jesus. We are going to look at him briefly today, but really focusing on Jesus versus the Jewish leaders because what you are going to see, as you walk through this, is you are going to see Jesus simply proclaiming the truth. And the truth of who He is being proclaimed again and again, even by the ungodly man, Pilate, who says, “Behold your king. Here is the King of the Jews,” and what you see is, the Jewish leaders, who in the beginning appear to be the righteous ones, unmasked through the drama in the most astounding way. So that what happens is, the simple proclamation of the truth leads to the exposing of the lie, and with that, the implication is that there are people observing that who see it, and are brought into the Kingdom. And that is exactly John’s purpose in writing this, because John, the Gospel author, one of Jesus’ disciples, is writing to Jews, and Jewish proselytes.

Now think with me about this for a moment. He is writing to Jews and Jewish proselytes about 85 A.D. The death of Christ was between 30 and 33 A.D. we believe. Probably 30 or 33 based on what we can tell about the calendars, so that John is writing 52 to 55 years, roughly, after the events. He is writing about something that everyone knows about, all the Jews, and Jewish proselytes have heard of Jesus, but they are basically victims of a propaganda campaign. I mean, these are Jews and Jewish proselytes. These are the people going to the synagogues throughout the 1st Century world, in the Mediterranean world, okay? So they are going, and they are hearing the Jewish party line. They are being told that Jesus was an evil-doer, He is not a king, He is not their king, He was a fraud. And so John is writing this to those people who have been misled, and He basically shows them the trial and says, “Look at the people you are following.”

This is where the Jewish leaders versus Jesus, the accusers versus the accused, and watch the drama unfold. What you have then is the force of it was to say, “What in the world are we doing following those guys?” Because they are exposed as Jesus simply speaks the truth, and you see the power of the truth. He speaks it, and He lives it, He embodies it, His calm, and confidence. And so what it says to us, what we are going to see that it says to us, the implications we are going to look at, is it tells us how to live in a day like this—confident and calm, resolve to speak the truth in love, knowing that our God is on the throne. That is the way that we make an impact, and it is in circumstances like this that God makes the greatest impact. When the darkness comes in like a flood, God loves to let His light shine ever-brighter.

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Now, what we're going to do, I'm going to read the first, we're going to read it in sections. So we'll read the first section, the first scene. I want to walk through, there are basically six scenes we have to make our way through, and so we're going to *Observe the Action* in six scenes, so we have six points there, Scene 1-6, okay? Then we are going to *Consider the Implications*, really just briefly kind of summarize what this means for us, and think about how it applies. So let's say that there are two main points, *Observe the Action* and *Consider the Implications*. That is the outline that I've been using lately. You find something that is good and you just stay with it, right? So observing drama like this, I think it is a helpful thing to do, to look at it as it unfolds. So *Observe the Action* and *Consider the Implications*. *Observe the Action*, we'll observe it in six scenes, and rather than read it all at the beginning, I'm going to read it one at a time, okay? One scene at a time. So let's read the first scene, and then we'll ask the Lord to bless us in our time.

John 18:28-32 ~ Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. 29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" 30 They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you." 31 So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," 32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that You might open the eyes of our hearts to see more deeply into Your truth, to see more clearly the glory of Your Son, the power and majesty of the Savior. We pray this in His name, Amen.

1) Observing the Action:

Scene 1:

Now what we want to do, we're looking again at the contrast between the Jews, the Jewish authorities, and Jesus, the accusers and the accused. What we're going to see, as you walk through this, and I want to kind of help you as we look at the beginning by saying, what you are going to see is an increasing franticness about

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the Jews. They come to Pilate, and they are hatching this plan, and they've really tried to just rush it through because if you think about it, how suddenly things have changed. Last night, Jesus was having, just hours before this verse, Jesus was having the last supper with His disciples, He is washing their feet. Then Judas leaves, and goes to find the chief priest. He tells the chief priest where Jesus is going to be in the garden. The chief priests apparently then go to Pilate, before they go to get Jesus, and say, "We think we need a detachment of soldiers because we are afraid there might be a riot." So Pilate then sends the Roman cohort, we looked at last time, probably a minimum of 200 soldiers, possibly as many as 600. Astounding that many soldiers. Say 200 Roman soldiers, plus the temple security forces, probably several dozen of them. So 200-300 men, armed, go and descend upon Jesus in the garden.

They take Him in the middle of the night to Annas, the high priest, and they do what is unlawful, they try Him in the dark of night. Annas tries Him, then he sends Him to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, and as I said, John barely touches on these. He gives just six verses, 19-24, of Chapter 18, six verses on those trials, those two trials. Then they send Him to Pilate early in the morning because the rush is on to get Him condemned and crucified before the day of preparation for the Passover begins at sundown the next night. They are determined to do away with Him and so what you are going to see then is, as events unfold, you are going to see Pilate's great reluctance to cooperate. He knows from the beginning, he distrusts their motives, we're going to see that in Scene 1 when he asks them, "What is your charge? What accusation do you bring of this man?" They are thinking, "We already told you we needed to arrest Him." They were just hoping he was going to rubber-stamp their plan, but Pilate says, "No, there is going to be a real trial."

So they offer this weak accusation. "If He were not an evil-doer, we would not have delivered Him to you." That is a real clear charge, isn't it? "He's done some bad stuff. He needs to be put to death. He has done some bad stuff." "What has He done?" "Well, He's done some bad stuff." That is essentially their charge. 'Evil-doer', 'to do bad, to do damage', and look at the contrast. They accuse Him of being an evil-doer, and they, the picture is really astonishing, they go to the Praetorium, which was the palace that Pilate used when he came into Jerusalem. Normally he was in Caesarea, but during the high and holy holidays, he would come down to Jerusalem to maintain order, and he would bring a cohort, at least, of soldiers from up there to add to the soldiers already in Jerusalem.

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So they go to see the governor, but they are Jews, and they are taking the Jewish extrapolations of the law, in the Mishnah, not necessarily what the Bible says. The Bible says you need to be clean to eat the Passover, they inferred that if you go into a Gentiles house you are unclean, so they won't go into the house because they are so pure, and they are so determined to celebrate the Passover. And here the supreme irony of John, they want to celebrate the Passover, and yet they are murdering the one who is the Passover. But they are the ones who he clearly points out, they don't want to be defiled. "Here is the man that has done evil." Pilate, seeing through their motives, realizing that all that they are really about, which John explained to us in John 11, after the resurrection of Lazarus, the last few verses of John 11, like Verses 52 to the end of the chapter, show that what they were really interested in was their place of authority. They were envious and Pilate seems to see through that. "Well, go ahead and take Him and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." They are determined to kill Him, and to kill Him at the hands of the Romans. "We want you to crucify Him, Pilate."

Now here again, this is where you see the sovereignty of the king. The king is on trial, we are going to see that the real charge they put before is apparently that He claimed to be the king. They knew that would appeal to Pilate. You couldn't have a Jewish king, so, "He claimed to be king." So the king is on trial, but the king is really ruling because look at Verse 32, when they said:

John 18:31-32 ~ "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," 32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

John uses a formula that all the apostles used to speak of Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled. The word is '*fulfilled*', you'll read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, something happens, and they say, "This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet." "This was to fulfill the word of Jeremiah." "This was to fulfill the word of the prophet." "This was to fulfill the word of God. God spoke this word through the prophets, and this had to happen." So what is he saying here? "God spoke and it had to happen." Jesus, when He said in John 3:14, ***...the Son of Man must be lifted up;...*** was signifying by what means He was going to die. When you look back at John 3, He is talking to Nicodemus and He says, Verse 13:

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***John 3:13-14 ~ ...but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. 14
As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of
Man be lifted up;***

“And what is happening is that word of Jesus is being fulfilled,” John says. So He is reminding us that He is God. Look at His word being fulfilled, which even goes along with something he said earlier in this chapter because it looks like this storm is just overtaking Jesus, like He is being caught up in the floodwaters. It is amazing all of the floods that are happening around, now it is in Texas, like it was in South Carolina. You hear about all of these cars getting swept away, or bridges getting swept away, roads, instantly gone. And it feels like, as you look at this at first glance, it looks like that is what has happened to Jesus, but in reality, He has not been swept away against His will. He is actually ordering all the events that are bringing about his death.

John had said, actually, in Verse 9 of Chapter 18, remember when Jesus said, “Hey listen, you came to get Me. If You seek Me, let these go their way,” This is 18:8, remember when they came to arrest Him? John says in Verse 9:

John 18:9 ~ to fulfill the word which He spoke, “Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.”

That was Chapter 17, Verse 12, John saying, “Listen, you know the way the Old Testament word of God is fulfilled in everything, always, what God says comes to pass, the word of Jesus is the same—when He speaks, it happens. He is God.” So this scene then, His word is fulfilled, that is Scene 1, the contrast is set between Jesus, the accused, and His accusers.

Scene 2:

Then Verse 33, what happens is Pilate had to go outside to talk to these guys. That would have been irritating to me if I were Pilate. Wouldn't that have been irritating to you? “These guys want to come talk to me, but they're so hoity-toity they can't come inside to talk to me. I'm the Roman Governor.” Well, they were used to dealing with this. They knew this was the way that the Jews were, so he just went out and dealt with it, because he knew he needed to stop any kind of riot. He goes out and talks to them. Verse 33:

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John 18:33 ~ Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

This is where we see that clearly they’ve made this charge against Jesus.

John 18:34 ~ Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”

Now, what’s happening here is Jesus knows Pilate’s heart, but Jesus wants Pilate to know his own heart, and what’s happening here is the one who is being judged becomes the judge. “You’re asking Me if I’m the King of the Jews. The real question is what do you believe about Me? That’s the question you need to be concerned about.” That’s what Jesus is saying. “This is what will determine your eternal destiny is what you believe about Me.” He says it very gently and graciously, but the authority is there. Pilate answered Him, though, and shows his own evil heart.

John 18:35 ~ Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”

And then Jesus simply proclaims the truth.

John 18:36 ~ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

He talks about the origin of the kingdom and the character of the kingdom.

John 18:36 ~ ...“My kingdom is not of this world. ...

He ends up by saying at the end of Verse 36:

John 18:36 ~ ...My kingdom is not of this realm.”

That could be translated literally, “My kingdom is not from here. My kingdom didn’t originate in this world. It’s come from outside.”

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John 18:37 ~ Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world,...

He’s saying, “Yes, I’m a King, and this is the reason I’ve been born. This is the reason I’ve come into the world, to be the King.” You have here the incarnation, and the phrase ***...I have come into the world,...*** Do you see that? “I wasn’t in the world. I came into the world. I came from outside the world. My kingdom is from outside the world, but My kingdom has come into the world, and My kingdom is a completely different kind of kingdom. The origin is from Heaven.” This is a great claim to authority. And then how does His kingdom advance? He tells us here, because in Verse 37, when He says ***...For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world,...*** He’s linking up His, “I came into the world to be King. I was born to be King.” And yet what does He say right after that?

John 18:37 ~ For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.

What He’s saying is, “The way that I exert my Kingship, and the way that I bring people under my Kingly authority is through the truth.” There’s a parallelism going on there. Both center in that double statement, “For this I have been born. For this purpose I have been born. For this purpose I have come into the world, to be King and to proclaim the truth.” And He says:

John 18:37 ~ Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” 38 Pilate *said to Him, “What is truth?”

And that ends that scene. Pilate has not responded to the truth because he is not of the truth. But Jesus is telling us the way His kingdom advances is through the proclamation of His Kingship. It’s simply the truth. Jesus Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings. That proclamation, His victory in the cross, His victory over death, that proclamation is how the kingdom goes. So when we look at the world around us, that’s what we’ve got to do. We’ve got to proclaim that message.

Scene 3:

Now, Scene 3, Verses 38-40. It says in the middle of Verse 38:

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John 18:38 ~ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and *said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.

Now, the real judge of the real court, what does he say? “I find no guilt in Him.” You’re going to see Pilate says that three times in the passage. “I find no guilt in Him.” And this is where the Jews become even more uncomfortable. They feel like their plot is unraveling, because Pilate is basically saying, “Look, I don’t find anything worthy of death in this guy. He’s not guilty. His kingdom is not of this world. He’s not challenging Rome. He’s not done any evil. I find no guilt in Him.” Just look on down at John 19:4. It says:

John 19:4 ~ Pilate came out again and *said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.”

Verse 6:

John 19:6 ~ So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, “Crucify, crucify!” Pilate *said to them, “Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.”

Three times the representative of the Roman authority says, “I find no guilt in Him.” John records every one of them, because something repeated three times takes the superlative. The representative authority, the highest authority on the face of the earth, was Rome. And so when Pilate speaks, it’s as if Caesar speaks. They look at Jesus and they say, “He’s not guilty. He’s not guilty. He’s not guilty,” and pronounce Him spotless. So this first time they say that, back to Verse 38, the Jews become more nervous, and Pilate is confident, because he thinks the Jewish leaders have trumped up these charges, that he’s going to go out and find a way to let Him off the hook, and let Jesus go.

John 18:39 ~ But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?”

I love that he says, “The King of the Jews.” He doesn’t say, “...release for you Jesus,” or, “...the one who claimed to be the King of the Jews.” But speaking, he can’t say anything but the truth. ***...do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?”*** If God could speak through Balaam’s ass, donkey, He could speak through Pilate, truth.

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John 18:40 ~ So they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.

Here you find the Jews stooping. According to John, they’re the ones that suggest Barabbas. At first Pilate didn’t say, “Jesus or Barabbas.” They said, “Barabbas,” and then he said, “Jesus or Barabbas,” when you put the Gospel accounts together. They had already conspired, “If he comes up with that, we’ve got to have somebody we’re going to say. Let’s say Barabbas.” Barabbas was a robber, John says, one who takes by plunder through violent means. The other Gospels tell us that he was an insurrectionist. He wanted to overthrow Rome. He was a murderer and a thief. And so they choose the murderer and the thief to be released. These are some righteous guys, aren’t they?

In fact, in God’s amazing providence, the original readers would have seen this when they read it, because remember, they’re Jews and Jewish proselytes, so they’re native tongue, they would be familiar to some extent with Aramaic, because they would read their Bibles often in Aramaic. They also had the Greek Old Testament too, but they knew Aramaic terms. The name Barabbas is Aramaic. *Bar* means son. What does *abba* mean? It means father. Barabbas’ name, when they heard it, meant *son of the father*. “Release for us Barabbas, the son of the father.” Here again, irony. They ask for Barabbas to be released, rather than the only one who is the one and only begotten, true, Son of the Father. So they continue to condemn themselves and expose themselves. The next scene.

Scene 4:

John 19:1 ~ Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.

Then he turns Him over to the soldiers, and the soldiers, you see the wickedness of their sinful hearts and the mockery. They put a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe on Him.

John 19:3 ~ and they began to come up to Him and say, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and to give Him slaps in the face. 4 Pilate came out again and *said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.”

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I think Pilate is again trying to release Him. He's basically saying, "I know you guys are upset. I'm going to scourge Him and allow Him to be beaten and mistreated, and now surely that will have assuaged your anger." This is his second attempt to release Him. "I find no guilt in Him."

John 19:5 ~ Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate *said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

But look what the chief priests do.

John 19:6 ~ So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!"

But Pilate is more noble than they.

...Pilate *said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him."

So the Jewish readers reading this who are Roman citizens in the late 1st Century see that Pontius Pilate is more righteous than the leaders that they've been following.

...Pilate *said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." 7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

Look at Pilate's reply. That's the end of Scene 4. Now Scene 5 is Verses 8-12.

Scene 5:

John 19:8 ~ Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid;

You see Pilate is really wavering all along here. Now, what he does is wicked and evil, but it shows in his insight he realizes this man is not guilty. And when he hears that He has claimed to be the Son of God, something flashes across his soul in a sense of awareness. "What am I doing?" And so though he had put Him out there and was ready to have Him released, or they're saying, "Crucify Him!" and

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he could have sent Him away to be crucified then, no, he says, “Wait a minute. Come back in,” and he questions Jesus.

John 19:9 ~ and he entered into the Praetorium again and *said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate *said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” 11 Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

Do you see the control of the Son of God? “You have no authority over Me but such has been given you.”

John 19:12 ~ As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying,...

Pilate sees, “He’s innocent. I can’t murder this Man.” But they cry out:

John 19:12 ~ ...“If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.”

Now, the question here is this. The Jewish readers reading this, they’re trying to decide, “Who is the one that I want to follow to be a faithful Jew? The synagogue leaders that are telling me today the same things that the Jewish leaders said surrounding the events of Jesus the claimed Messiah, that said that He was a sham and a liar? Do I want to follow them to be faithful to Yahweh?” Look what those who were so supposedly zealous for their purity, saying, “We can’t even go into the Praetorium, so we can eat the Passover.” They say this:

John 19:12 ~ ...“If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.”

It’s astonishing that Jews would say that. Such was their being overtaken by the evil in their hearts that they speak out, “We’re not really faithful Jews. We just hate the Son of God.” The Jews reading this would have thought, “Well, how in the world?” But it gets worse. Look at the next scene.

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Scene 6:

That was a powerful way to influence Pilate, to have it reported that this king, if he releases Him, he's himself, Pilate opposing Caesar.

John 19:13 ~ Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he *said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" 15 So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate *said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

These supposedly faithful Jews answered:

John 19:13 ~ ...The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

They might as well have said, "We have no king but Satan," because that's in reality what they were demonstrating. The mask is completely off. They have shown the evil of their hearts. It has come pouring out in the rage against God's anointed. And the picture in Psalm 2 that was prophesied more than a thousand years before this, the picture of the nations raging, the peoples in an uproar against God, the Lord, Yahweh, and against His anointed, is happening. The Romans and the Jews are gathered together against God's anointed King. The beauty of this is, this is one of those moments where God, in an outbreak of evil that is overwhelming, and when we see it happen, we want to respond in kind. How do you fight fire? People say, "With fire." Not for the Christian, and really does that make sense? You fight fire with water. You fight fire with the truth. You don't fight the flesh with the flesh. You don't fight the kingdom of darkness with the weapons of the kingdom of darkness. You fight it with the truth, the confidence that God is sovereign and that God is reigning.

When we have the confidence that Jesus had walking through these circumstances, and that His apostles would have in their own lives, and that faithful Christians throughout the centuries have had even in the darkest times. When we know that God is on the throne and we can say things like, "You have no authority over me but such as has been given to you by my Father in Heaven," and we can say, "Listen, I mean you no harm. I'm just telling you that it's become clear to me that there is a God in Heaven, and He's revealed Himself in His Son, the Lord Jesus

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Christ, and there's no one like Jesus. He can forgive your sins and make you clean. He died and He lives." That proclamation is the most powerful thing that can be unleashed at any moment in any place.

The Gospel, what is it? Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel," in Romans 1:16, "for it is the power of God." The only thing in the Bible that is referred to as the power of God, is the Gospel. It is the power of God, the power that created the universe. The power of God is unleashed when you proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, when you in confidence, humility, and love, speak the truth. Jesus is the way. And this is how it comes. It doesn't come through resorting to the same kind of weapons that the world uses. The fact that they're blind and they can't understand, we think if they yell back at us, if we just yell louder, maybe they'll hear. No, they won't. We need to realize that God is in control. God is on the throne. This darkness that's sweeping over our land, this darkness that may envelope you on a particular day at work, maybe where suddenly you're in a situation where you're being surrounded by people who maybe they're appalled at your views of sexuality, that you believe that God has made man and woman as compliment, that marriage is for one man and one woman, and you're surrounded. The answer is not to shrink back and say nothing. The answer is not to yell. The answer is not to become angry. The answer is to confidently just speak the truth in love. God is the one who has made us, not we ourselves. It's not up to us. It's not about what we want. If we follow our own hearts, we're just making things up as we go along. God has given us His word. His word is precious. Let me tell you about it. It's fantastic. Every word of it is perfect. And the good news is that Jesus Christ is a Savior that will save us from the foolish thoughts and desires of our hearts, because we all have them. And when God's people speak God's truth with their words and with their lives, powerful things happen.

One of the great examples of this in church history is in the 1550s in England. We're going to celebrate Reformation Day on Wednesday night even though Reformation Day is technically next Saturday. It's also known as Halloween. But Reformation Day, October 31, 1517, was the day that Martin Luther nailed his 95 statements of protest, the 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, sparking the Protestant Reformation. Well, the next decades of that 16th Century were tumultuous times as the Catholic Church, and the Counter Reformation, and the Inquisition was killing people that believed and propagated the things that Luther did. William Tyndale, for example, was burned at the stake. Hundreds of people died for their faith throughout the 1500s. And in England in the 1550s it came to a head, because after Henry VIII died, his son Edward took

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over, and Edward was pro-Reformation, and then after he died, though, after he reigned about seven or eight years, his sister Mary took over, and Mary was a staunch Catholic. You may have heard of her. She's known as Bloody Mary, and she began a systematic persecution of Protestants and killed hundreds of Protestants in the mid-1550s. I think that the youngest was like 12 years old, to all the way up to 85 years old, people murdered, burned at the stake for the Gospel. But historians show us that what happened in the 1550s under Bloody Mary was that a nation that was wavering back and forth between Catholicism and the Reformed faith, Catholicism and the Bible, that after the actions of Bloody Mary, and after the actions of those hundreds of martyrs, that England would never again flounder. For centuries it was settled, Protestant. Why? Because they watched the people die. They watched the people testify with their own blood. When it says in Verse 37:

John 18:37 ~ ...for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.

That's *martyreo*, to proclaim, to testify as a witness to the truth. We get the English word *martyr* from that word. It means one who testifies, and of course, we use that word *martyr* to speak of those who testify with their own blood, their life. They bore witness to the truth, and the Gospel went forth. It was a period of great darkness, when darkness came in like a flood. In reality, it was the victory of the light, and it's the same in our personal lives. I mean, think about this. You're dealing with sin in your own heart. You're dealing with sin in your family. Say there are certain things you're trying to change in your child. Anger does not work. Greater intensity or yelling does not work, does it? It may work to change behavior, but it doesn't bring about the righteousness of God. I was talking to a brother this week who was sharing that verse from James 1, where it says, "The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." So when you try to take up the weapons of the flesh to battle, you're not going to get anywhere.

I remember hearing a testimony of a young man who had come to faith, but who early in his life, his dad was a minister. And this young man now 18 or 19 years old was rejecting the faith, and his dad was brokenhearted over it. His mother was brokenhearted over his rejection of the faith. The young man told about the day when things began to change. He was at home, they were having dinner, and his mom had asked him to get the jello mold out of the refrigerator. There was a jello mold on a tray, and he got it out, and as he was walking he turned a little quickly, and the jello mold slid off the plate onto the floor. It's funny how quickly those

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things happen, isn't it? Splat. He could have just sat down with a spoon and just eaten it off the floor. If Patti wasn't around, that's what Jon and I might do.

But anyway, the jello mold hits the floor, and the young man, 18 or 19 years old, said at that time that he braced himself inwardly and closed his eyes for the wrath of his father to come flying out, that he had seen so many times when he did something wrong, his father reacted in just anger. He didn't hit him but yelled at him so that he was terrified of his father's anger. So he braced himself and actually closed his eyes. Nothing happened. There was no yelling, and when he opened his eyes, he saw his father on the floor cleaning up the mess. And then he watched as things like that happened over the weeks and months to come, and that young man said, "I want to know the God who can make my father change from a man of anger to a man of meekness like that."

The proclamation of the Gospel with our lives and with our words, that's how the Kingdom goes forth, when we know that He's sovereign, when we know that Jesus Christ is who He says He is, and He's dear to us, He's precious to us, and we trust Him that He knows what's going on, that there's nothing out of schedule, then the Gospel will go forth. It's wonderful to know nothing can change that. No matter how bad or dark the world gets, the light is always the answer, and our responsibility never changes.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

Father, we thank You for this time. We thank You for the glorious power of the Gospel. We pray that You would help each person here to be a follower of Jesus Christ in truth, granting repentance of their sins, and trust in His sufficient, saving work on the cross. Thank You that His blood is able to wash us completely clean, and His righteousness makes us stand before You holy. We pray in His Name, Amen.

"Trial of the King – Part I"

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