



John 19:12–16

12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.’ 13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. ‘Here is your king,’

Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, 'Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!' 'Shall I crucify your king?' Pilate asked. 'We have no king but Caesar,' the chief priests answered. 16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

Reflection

We are about to kill the author of life. A great crowd, incited by the leaders of God's people, are baying for the blood of the Son of God just outside Pilate's palace in Jerusalem. Inside are two kings, a Roman king and a Jewish king. One king is torn, desperately wracking his brain to find a way out of this predicament. The other king, his body torn, calmly awaits his fate. The ignominy, his impotency, his

powerlessness against this turn of events is eating away at Pilate, the Roman king in Jerusalem. In contrast, there is no more powerful being in all of the world than Jesus Christ, the king of kings who is calmly submitting himself to his Father's will. Today he will sacrifice his life for the sins of the world. At any point twelve legions of angels could utterly annihilate all opposition, but instead, he is about to submit himself to the vilest of deaths for us.

But Pilate is not done yet, even though he can see the writing on the wall. Jesus' words, his dignity in suffering, his silence as he's led like a lamb to the slaughter – pure and blameless, white as snow even as blood streams down his face and back and sides – and the intensity of his presence have finally gotten to Pilate. Pilate

has pronounced Jesus' innocence three times. His wife has sent him an urgent note telling him that she had a dream and that he mustn't have anything to do with this innocent man. He must do something. The final moments of Jesus' life continue in John 19:12–15,

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Pilate might not fully grasp or believe what Jesus has been saying but one thing is sure: he is convinced that Jesus has done nothing to deserve death. And so in verse 12 he exhausts every remaining avenue to set Jesus free. But the Jewish leaders have his measure. They have saved their best to last, their trump card that seals Jesus' fate.

'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims

to be a king opposes Caesar.’

Historians tells us that Tiberius Caesar had a paranoid temperament. He was known to be quick to entertain suspicions against his subordinates, and swift to exact ruthless punishment. And the Jewish chief priest Caiaphas, the one behind the charges against Jesus and the frenzied crowd, was a shrewd political operator. The Jews have already complained to Caesar about Pilate’s heavy handedness in the past. But this time, to openly defy the highest court in the land, the Sanhedrin (who were not exactly known for their love of Caesar), who have delivered over to him one guilty of claiming to be king in Caesar’s place, and to not put this traitor to a swift death, well this would likely be the final straw for Pilate in Jerusalem.

Seeing his defeat writ large, Pilate taunts the Jews to the last, presenting them with their king, a prisoner king on death row, the only king these Jews would ever have under Rome rule,

‘Here is your king,’ Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, ‘Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!’

Beaten, Pilate doesn’t miss a final opportunity to taunt them some more.

‘Shall I crucify your king?’ Pilate asked. ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ the chief priests answered.

...to their eternal shame, as the Jewish crowds bay for the blood of the Son of God.

‘Shall I crucify your king?’

Matthew 27:25,

25 All the people answered ‘His blood is on us and on our children!’

Think & Pray

Consider this scene. John 1:11, as John began so he finishes,

11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Consider this scene. Pilate’s words ring in our ears as he speaks better than he knows.

‘Here is your king,’

Here is our king. Bloodied and bleeding, willingly laying down his life for the sins of the world. Here is our king. Do you see your king standing there? He’s about to die for you. I’ll leave the last words today to the great preacher Dr S M Lockeridge who teaches us about our king:

The Bible says my King is a seven-way King: He’s the King of the Jews - that’s a racial King. He’s the King of Israel - that’s a national King. He’s the King of Righteousness. He’s the King of the Ages. He’s the King of Heaven. He’s the King of Glory. He’s the King of kings and He’s the Lord of lords. That’s my King. Well, I wonder do you know Him.

David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." My King is a sovereign King - no means of measure can define His limitless love. No farseeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shoreless supply. No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His blessings. He's enduringly strong. He's entirely sincere. He's eternally steadfast. He's immortally graceful. He's imperially powerful. He's impartially merciful. Do you know Him?

He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world. He's God's Son. He's the sinner's Saviour. He's the centrepiece of civilisation. He stands in the solitude of himself. He's august and He's unique. He's unparal-

leled, He's unprecedented. He is the loftiest idea in literature. He's the highest personality in philosophy. He is the supreme problem in higher criticism. He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology. He is the core and the necessity for spiritual religion. He's the miracle of the age, He's... yes He is. He's the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him. He's the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient Saviour. I wonder if you know him today?

He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and the tried. He sympathises and He saves. He strengthens and sustains. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He cleansed the lepers. He forgives sinners. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captive.

He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He serves the unfortunate. He regards the aged. He rewards the diligent. And He beautifies the meek. I wonder if you know Him? Well, my King---

He is the key, He's the key to knowledge. He's the wellspring of wisdom. He's the doorway of deliverance. He's the pathway of peace. He's the roadway of righteousness. He's the highway of holiness. He's the gateway of glory. Do you know Him?

Well, His office is manifold. His promise is sure. His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His Word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous and His yoke is easy and His

burden is light. I wish I could describe Him to you.

But He's indescribable - yes He is! He's God. He's, He's indescribable, yes, He's indescribable. He's incomprehensible. He's invincible. He's irresistible. Well, you can't get Him out of your mind, You can't get Him off of your hand, You can't outlive Him, and you can't live without Him.

Well, the Pharisees couldn't stand Him, but they found out they couldn't stop Him. Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him. The witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree. Herod couldn't kill Him. Death couldn't handle Him and the grave couldn't hold Him. That's my King! That's my King!

Pray to our King this morning. However you are led by his Holy Spirit.