

Behold Your King!  
John 19:12-16

We have been going through the trial of Jesus for a number of months, and today we come to the conclusion of that trial. We have seen on several occasions Pilate has sought to release him. We saw that several charges were levelled against Jesus, but Pilate realizes the innocence of Jesus. But it is the last charge that the religious leaders make that carries the most weight, not as far as the guilt of Jesus, but the repercussions for Pilate in releasing Jesus. And we saw that last time in verse 12, **“From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.’”** Notice the personal nature of these words — “If you release him.” The charge now is against Pilate rather than Jesus. You are no friend of Caesar because this one opposes Caesar. What is in that accusation is the threat that if he does not put Jesus to death than he would suffer, maybe even execution. Which has so much irony in it because that is exactly what Jesus’ death is. It is a substitutionary death. He is dying in the place of the sinner.

Look at verse 13 in our text and see what Pilate does, **“So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.”** So this brings the whole trial of Jesus to an end. Notice the words, “So when Pilate heard these words.” There it is. Pilate heard these words. It is no longer about the innocence of Jesus. He is not fearing about the judgment to come, but fearing the Jews and Rome. He takes his official place to make his judgment known. The Stone Pavement is the place where the official representative of Rome handed down judgment in the name of Rome. This is high tension and high drama that is taking place here.

Now look at the first part of verse 14, **“Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour.”** Now there are a couple of things here. One is the designation of the day, “Preparation of the Passover.” If this is true then it is the day before the Passover. And if it is, then Jesus and his disciples didn’t celebrate the Passover but ate that meal on Wednesday. But the word “preparation” was always used as the day before not the Passover, but the day before the Sabbath. It is never used of the day before any feast, but exclusively of the day before the Sabbath, when the Jews would make preparation not to work. So the day before Passover is indicating what day this is during the Passover week. Also, the time designation. We see it was about the sixth hour. The problem is that Mark said that Jesus was crucified on the third hour. Some have maintained there different ways of telling time — on a Palestinian clock and the other a Roman, but there is not evidence of that in the ancient world. You have to remember that people did not have watches or clocks back then, so often they measured time in three hour windows. They have approximations. And here both the 3rd hour and the sixth hour in that approximation window. There is overlap in both.

Now the last couple of verses are to get us to the final dialogue between Pilate and the religious leaders. And it is amazing because much of it seems like a gospel appeal. There is a call and a response to who Jesus is. And we realize in preaching or testifying to the reality of who Jesus is, there is always a call to respond. You must do

something with Jesus. And we realize the repercussions of this call are great because heaven and hell are in the balance. But even in this life — our whole lives are shaped by how we respond to Jesus. If there is a trust in Jesus then our lives take a different path. Because we follow Jesus, everything that would have been about our future changes and continues down that road. But if you reject Jesus then there is a path that your life takes and even a hardening away from Jesus. And it begs the question even today — what have we done and are doing with Jesus? How have we responded to him? How are we responding to him? And I want us to look at this final appeal and see the glory of the One who took our place so that we might have life. And my goal is not that we would look back and see what we have done with Jesus but that we would see what he has done, and respond in trusting and following him. So, behold your King!

1. We need to see the offer rejected. Vv. 14b-15.

I can remember witnessing and testifying of the need of Christ to this gentleman, and talking about sin, and saying that we all have sin in our lives. We all have things that we have done that we wish we could take back. And I can remember that he crossed his arms and he said that there was nothing he had done in his life that he wished he could take back. And it is amazing, some of the things that we will say and we will do in order to get what we want or just be right. It is seen in our anger with other people. We make judgments about them, and in our anger, bitterness and refusal to forgive, we are not thinking about Jesus but thinking about our own righteousness. And the more someone preaches that message the more a person rejects Jesus. And that is the same with the religious Jews. They are convinced of their own righteousness. No matter how clear the evidence that they are sinners, they deny it, and therefore these “righteous ones” conspire in unrighteousness to murder the very Messiah and Saviour of their souls.

And look at the pronouncement of Pilate here, “**Behold your King!**” Now look back just for a second at verse 13, “**So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha.**” Notice here he brought Jesus out and says “sat down.” Now this could be referring to Pilate or it could be referring to Jesus. If it is referring to Jesus, it is quite the scene. Here is the bloody and beaten body of Jesus, a crown of thorns on his head, and here he is seated on the seat of power. And this is Pilate’s doing, because no doubt he hated the threat of the religious leaders about going to Caesar — his superior and king. His king has power. But look how weak and pathetic your king is. Look at him — powerless and beaten. It was to taunt the Jews of how weak and insignificant and pathetic they were. Now there is irony here, especially if Jesus is sitting upon the judgment seat, because the very people who are judging him will one day appear before Jesus because he is not just the king but the ultimate judge. Listen to what Jesus says in John 5:26-29, “**For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who**

**have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.**” Jesus is the great judge whom everyone will one day appear before. No one will escape appearing before the King.

And the meaning of “Behold your King,” is really an amazing statement because like Caiaphas who earlier made an unknowing prophesy about the need of the death of Jesus, Pilate speaks more truth than he realizes. This is the long awaited king. This is the one who was predicted to come and has come. This is the one who is the fulfillment of passage like Isaiah 9:6-8, but also Isaiah 53. And the call here is almost like a summons isn’t it? Because this same Jesus is proclaimed today, and we are told to behold, look, and consider the one beaten and abused, the one who takes the wrath that we deserve. And each of us daily in our lives are called to look, consider, behold Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. that is the call right now. It is present active — behold Jesus! And what other things have become greater than the great One presented by Pilate. There is such a clash of powers here if I can put it that way. Jesus appears so weak and helpless and impotent, but there is none more strong and powerful than he. His power is still known. Through him and his suffering, our sins are blotted out through simple faith in him. But the key is in him. It is so easy to begin our Christian lives beholding and glorying in Christ but let other things take precedence. Are you behold the glory of the King. No king ever appeared more glorious and grand as King Jesus.

But look at the response to this offer to bow before the King of kings in the first part of verse 15, **“They cried out, ‘Away with him, away with him, crucify him!’”** They cried out, in other words there is hostility here, and there is no way that they will settle for anything less than crucifixion. “Away with him” has the meaning — lets be done with this and let’s be done with him. He is not worthy to be in our sight any longer or alive any longer. And they want the worst and most humbling death possible. And think of it because there are two wills coming to pass. There is the will of the religious leaders, and they are motivated by hate and a desire to see Jesus put to death. They would love nothing more than to see this happen. But there is another will being accomplished, and that will also has a desire to put Jesus to death, and that is the will of God. It pleased the Lord to crush him and put him to grief. But the desire and motive behind both of these wills could not be farther apart. A.W. Pink writes, **“Nothing but His blood would satisfy them. He must die: so had God decreed; so they demanded. The decree of the One was from love; the insistence of the other, was from hatred. The design of the One, was mercy unto poor sinners; the aim of the others, barbarous cruelty to Him who was sinless.”**

Now look at the end of the verse, because this is so telling, **“Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’”** Now that is quite a shocking statement. And it is incredible that when the offer is made of accepting Christ over and over, for those who reject that offer of Christ as Lord and Saviour there is a downward descent. You can see it in people’s lives, it may come out in that moral decline or decent. It may come in that they are even more staunch and blinded by their so-called righteousness. But there is always, when Jesus is rejected as king, a descent into sin in way one or another. And it is a shocking statement. We have no king but Caesar, because who is to be their king? Remember the nation of Israel was a theocracy and their king is none other than God. So this is

not only a rejection of Jesus as Messiah but a rejection of God. It is the rejection of all those Old Testament prophecies that spoke of the coming of Christ.

They do not want a Messiah or King like Jesus because they would rather have their own righteousness. And it is incredible how deep they go in sin. They become more staunch in their own righteousness, and become more blind in to their unrighteousness. They are willing to not only kill Jesus but want him brutally put to death. And now they even reject the rule of God in their lives. Think of it, because rejecting God they were basically putting themselves in the same place as the unbelieving Gentiles. They have no king except Caesar. This is a massive descent.

And that is what happens when we reject the Messiah. There is a downward descent. And we can see that in others. But can we see that in ourselves? If we reject Jesus as King in one area of our life then it will affect other areas. Think about anger. Think about sensuality. You know it is wrong, but that sin is not left by itself. It is accompanied by lying and hiding and even planning. It has a snow ball effect that takes you hurtling down the hill away from Christ. And where are you rejecting Christ? Today is the day of repentance. Today is the day to trust him. That one who is on the judgment seat will be your judge in some way. The way of the transgressor is hard, and it even becomes more difficult. Trust our king, follow him today. I beg of you, don't go down that same road as the religious leaders.

2. We need to see the sentence carried out. V. 16a.

We cannot fathom how monumental this whole statement is. We realize that Jesus was delivered over for our transgressions. He was crush for our iniquities. And of course in our study of John, all that has happened has been leading up to this point in time where Jesus will give himself up for us. Richard Phillips quotes Mark Johnson as writing, **"It is for this moment that the whole of the Bible has been preparing us. From the time of the Fall, throughout the whole Old Testament revelation, God was leading his people towards that day when he would send a Saviour and through him bring about salvation for all time. Similarly, from the moment of the conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary, right through to the climax of his ministry in Jerusalem, the Gospels have been preparing us for this—his death, and everything that it would achieve."** The whole Bible has been preparing us from these few words recorded here that Jesus was delivered over to be crucified.

And look at the words again, **"So he delivered him over to them to be crucified."** "So" is speaking of the outcome of the religious leaders badgering and threats and insistence that Jesus must die. Pilate delivered him over to them. And it is not that Jews took him out a crucified him. It was still done by the Roman soldiers, but he delivered him over to them in the sense of having their will done. Over in Matthew's gospel just before he is delivered over we read in Matthew 27:24-25, **"So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'"** Amazing isn't it? Pilate tries to cleanse himself of the guilt through ceremonial washing but nothing could take away his sin. The only one who could is the one he was willing to die and suffer for us. And the people say his blood be

upon us and our children and nothing could be so true as far as their immediate history and the destruction of the nation.

And Jesus is to be crucified. Now it is amazing that there are no accounts of the grizzly details of the crucifixion itself in any of the gospels. There are some details as far as his statements on the cross, and some of the details about the people there but none of the struggle with the pain and brutality of the man on the cross. And there are a couple of things here. One is the vast majority of people had witnessed or had come across someone being crucified. They knew the horror of this kind of execution. And for many it was enough to say Jesus was crucified without the details. The love for Christ in reading these details would be too much. The other thing is the gospels not only emphasize the physical suffering of Christ but also the anguish of his soul before God. Because he drank not just death itself but the full cup of the wrath of God against sin. What that suffering was like none of us could ever fathom. He drank fully what we deserve for all of eternity, and there is no one who could have paid that debt and drank that cup but Christ alone.

And let me end with a couple of challenges. One is the language that is used here is language of intent and purpose and power. Jesus was delivered over to the will of the religious leaders. That is why Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:23, **“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”** You killed. You demanded this death that was carried out by the Roman soldiers. You crucified. The death of Jesus was not enough, but he had to die in the most barbaric and humbling manner imaginable. And here is my whole point, sin held onto and protected, sin prized about God and Jesus, this is where it ends. It does not matter what that sin is. It could be immorality or vice or love of money. I want to do my own thing and go my own way. It could be self-righteousness, or whatever. The downward descent of sin ends in individuals in one way or another trying to kill the voice and testimony of God. People in our society don't put people in jail for preaching Christ, but it could come to that in the near future; but many times ridicule, shame or taunt those who seriously and joyously follow and proclaim Christ.

But it is a warning for us. Sin will take us to places you would never thought we would go, do and say things you never thought you would do or say. And sin will cause you to go further and further from Christ until it reaches that stage where you are no longer any longing for him, but hating him. He is king. He is Saviour. Don't undervalue the sin in your life. Sin wants to be king. Today is the day of repenting.

The second challenge is to look to King Jesus, because that language that is used here in this verse, **“So he delivered him over to them to be crucified,”** the language “delivered over” is often used of God and his absolute sovereign control over all the events of the cross. We just read, **“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”** He was delivered up by God's predetermined plan. And why is that so significant and important for us to see? It is because God has a definite plan to save and pardon and even welcome sinners like us. Think about it. We are no different than the religious leaders. We want to make a God of our own liking. We want a king that will do our own bidding. And the sin of our own foolish hearts has led us to do and say

things that we never thought we would do, that very sin that brought us joy now we see and feel that sense of shame. But here is the amazing thing about God's grace, Christ not only voluntarily lays down his life for us but the Father has planned all of this for our eternal good and his eternal glory. Our good comes in forgiveness and acceptance, and the king will receive unending glory for how he has loved and cared for his people.

So the key of responding rightly to the king, the key to not living a life believing the lie of sin, is really seeing Jesus. Jesus was there all along. The truths of the gospel are all through the history of this chapter. The only question left is are we willing to see king Jesus. We placate ourselves that we have bowed the knee to him in the past, but the validation that we really did that is are we willing to bow our knee to him today? Is he still our Lord, Saviour and King? May God revive our hearts as we look to Jesus. He really is the King. He really is the Author and Finisher of our faith. No one ever cared for us like our King. Let us trust and follow him. He really did give his life that we might have life!