Crucify Him!
John 19:6-7

We have come to chapter 19, the crucifixion chapter. And we have just read and witnessed last time the plan of Pilate to release Jesus, and that was sending him to the soldiers and having him flogged, and then he was dressed like a king by the soldiers in mocking worship. And it is hard to process and read and think on this text. But we also realize that it is profitable for us to do so. We realize this is a picture of the depravity of man. The innocence of the Lord Jesus has been seen and we saw seven different individuals state his innocence, and we even see Pilate himself state it three times in our text. And here we see the wickedness and depravity of man in its fullest in the rejection of Jesus. And we are also seeing what sin deserves. We realize that Jesus is our great sin bearer, and this is all leading to the cross. Sin deserves punishment, and it deserves eternal punishment from our great God.

And it is incredible that you really see the rejection of Jesus from all people in this section. You have the Jews who would accept nothing less than the most painful and humiliating death and that is crucifixion, and then you have the Gentiles with Pilate in his weakness refusing to release him, and the treatment of the Holy One by the Roman soldiers. Jesus truly is rejected and despised of all men, even though he is the One who came and preached salvation for everyone, went about doing good, and giving the clearest picture of the love and grace of God. It is incredible to look at this passage. You really see the worst of humanity. But again, you really see the glory of Christ — he is so majestic, compassionate, and there is such dignity around him.

And the last thing we looked at last time was the proclamation of Pilate — "**Behold the man.**" And it was not a man or any man but the man. And here was the opportunity to recognize their Messiah and their Saviour. This is the One they waited centuries to come, and he is right before them. This is the One who came to make sacrifice as the great priest King for the people. And I want us to look at the response to Pilate's statement. And remember for Pilate, he thought they would have sympathy, that they would we satisfied that he had suffered enough. Whatever he had done to them to anger them, Pilate had him beaten and this must have abated those feelings. It is natural in us, even seeing our worst enemies in pain to have compassion. But the sinful heart is stronger and can overcome those passions.

It is easy to look at this passage and all that we see is the rejection and the fury of the crowds against Jesus, but there is so much grace in this section. We must always look at these sections with an eye of faith. Our God is always in the details. It was the Lord who was pleased to crush him. It was the Lord who had orchestrated and brought him to this place. And there is a contrast that the reader realizes. It looks like man is in control, whether it is Pilate who is ruling or the people who will not accept anything but the death of Jesus. But we realize that our God is in control. He is sovereign. There is no one greater than God in this scene, because there is no one greater than God.

And as you look at this awful scene, you realize God is in control. But you realize that God is good. He is not partially good or mostly good but all good. That means his plan, right here is an all good plan. What man means for evil God means for good. He exercises his power in a good way. He plans and wisdom always have good ends. God

is good. And I wonder if we miss so often the goodness of God? I wonder if we miss the goodness of God not only in this scene but also in our lives. Life can be hard. People can be cruel. Individuals if they do not get what they want can turn against you. And we can see and even rehearse all of that. But do we see the goodness of God in our lives? Do we realize that he has literally showered us with blessing? Do we realize he is always with us and he is always up to good in our lives? Think of this section — has God's love for his Son failed? And the answer is God's love for His Son can never fail! So why do we think God's love can fail for us? God's love can never fail for us any more than it can fail for his Son. So I want us to see the grace and goodness of God in two ways.

1. We need to see the grace of God in the response of the crowds. V.6.

One of the things I try to do, and I do not do it perfectly, but when I am going through pressure or disappointment or adversity, and I start to feel myself getting upset or angry or frustrated, I try to preach to myself what I know about God. And I intentionally go through the gospel of God's sovereign and good grace. I remember that God has orchestrated the events in which I am frustrated. I remember that he is good. I remember if he could plan and orchestrate all the events around the cross, which is the greatest evil and that result in the greatest good for us and the greatest glory to Christ, then he is up to good and Jesus glory in my life. I can trust in him. I do not need to be angry or frustrated. I pray and ask him to calm my heart and put my faith and trust in him — he is up to good. There is reason and purpose and it is a good reason and good purpose.

And no doubt Pilate salves his conscience that he has had an innocent man beaten and abused. He brings him out to the people thinking that they would have compassion on him, but that is anything but what takes place. Look at the response in verse 6, "**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.'**" It is incredible the other gospels skip over this intermittent time of Pilate trying to release Jesus and just combine his presenting of Jesus the first time and then his crucifixion. I do not think this is a long time but all these things, such as the beating of Jesus took place very quickly.

Here Jesus is brought out again, and here are the chief priests and the officers. The officers would have been servants of the chief priests and also officials in the Temple. They would be loyal to their masters and also have very comfortable positions. And they were joined by others. And it is incredible that there is no compassion. But as the text says, "they cried out." The meaning is an impassioned and loud response. You can imagine Pilate speaking and these loud and emotional cries drowning him out to crucify him. Again, the closer you get to Jesus the more you will have this kind of response. And what I mean by that is that you are either going to fall down with impassioned praise and worship, or you are going to rise in great anger. You cannot remain neutral or not impassioned with Jesus in one way or another.

I do think it is amazing that it highlights the chief priests and the officers here, because the greatest persecutors of Jesus and of believers throughout the history of Christianity has always been those who are religious. You see it through the gospels — it is the Pharisees. You see it through the Book of Acts — it is always the religious Jews

that are inciting the people against Paul and the other missionaries. You see that in the Middle Ages and into the Reformation that it was the Roman Church that persecuted and even put to death those who were believers in Christ — those who preached that we are saved or justified through Christ alone. And as our society becomes more pagan and more antagonistic toward Christianity there is also a Christianity that will rise that will condemn and strongly condemn salvation through Christ alone. Those who claim to know God and truth are impassioned against that very truth.

And Pilate says here, still not wanting to execute Jesus, "**Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.**" Now I do not think that Pilate is giving them free rein to take the law into their own hands, but I think this is a kind of mockery where he is indicating that he is the power that happens to be. Rome held the power and the ability to crucify exclusively. It was a sign of their power. You are powerless and I find no guilt in him. But he just wants to be done with the whole situation. You brought him to me to be tried and I have made my decision — live with it. They are powerless and they know it. That is why they say what they say in the next verse. This is not going the way the religious leaders had hoped.

And you can imagine because the crowds are growing before Pilate's residence. People from all over the city are waking up, and many are coming into the city, and the cries and commotion would be heard far and wide. People and more people were gathering. And as the people gathered, many of these would have been the ones who lauded Jesus just a short time before as the Messiah as he entered Jerusalem. But they were looking for a military leader who would overthrow Rome. Well, this man looks defeated by Rome. They would have joined the chants to crucify him.

And there are two things to keep in mind. One is that the only hope of the crowds and of all sinners is that the innocent One be crucified. His innocence again is front and centre. But the very One who is before them would voluntarily lay down his life taking the punishment that we deserve and that we could never pay on himself. The reader knows this, but the angry crowd would not know this.

And there is a wonderful illustration of this, because there is a third cross that is ready that morning for another victim to be placed on it. And that third victim that the cross was prepared for was not Jesus. But about fifteen hundred feet away from this whole scene is where Barabbas would have been imprisoned. He knew this was the day of execution. He would not have been released yet. But knew this was the day and he knew the people thought of him as a notorious sinner. And think of it because there is no way he could have heard all the debate going on. But he could here the blood thirsty cries of "crucify him!" He might have heard, Pilate trying to silence the crowd, but more cries — "crucify him!" They got louder and louder. Now who do you think he thought they were for? Now think of the guards marching, and the key going in the door, and the prison guard coming in. This is it. And then the words — you are free to go. Can you imagine what must have gone through his mind and heart?

What had happened? Here in the message — there was another that took your place. There was another that got what you deserved. What did he deserve? Crucifixion. What do you and I deserve? Crucifixion. But here is the glory of the gospel — someone else took my punishment. And what I deserve is eternal crucifixion — eternal punishment, but someone else took the full brunt of my punishment. Listen to 1 Peter 3:18, "**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the**

unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." Listen to those words, "the righteous (Jesus Christ) for the unrighteous (you and me and everyone)" And the whole goal is to bring us to God. The third stanza of the hymn, "And Can it Be" says, "**Long my imprisoned spirit lay, /Fast bound in sin and nature's night /Thine eye diffused a quickening ray /I woke, the dungeon flamed with light /My chains fell off, my heart was free/ I rose, went forth, and followed Thee /Amazing love! How can it be/ That Thou, my God should die for me?**"

May I say as we look at this verse, it is this gospel that gave us liberty. It is this suffering Saviour that brought us to God. The goodness of God is over every word in the text. And if God is this good, it his goodness is this extreme, than how could we ever doubt that he has good and glorious reasons whatever we are going through? How could we ever doubt his plan and his love for us? All life is momentary. All trial are momentary. What he accomplished through his crucifixion is eternal and for my eternal good. He is truly the sovereign and all good God.

2. We need to see the goodness of God in the rebuttal. V. 7.

What we believe really comes out in what we say. And here it is evident that the Jewish authorities believe a couple of things. One is that they have a law. And here is the incredible thing. They will appeal to that law for justice not even stricken in the least that they are breaking that law by seeking to kill Jesus for their own private and personal reasons. They hated Jesus because he constantly and consistently pointed out their hypocrisy that they were in fact law breakers. And the other is that they claimed that Jesus claimed he was the Son of God. And this is more than just a title. This title was used many times of kings in the Old Testament or those sent from God. But it was more than that, they knew Jesus claimed to be one with the Father, and therefore equal with the Father. For those who think the deity of Jesus is not clearly seen in the gospels have just listen to his enemies and hear what they say about himself. Although they denied he was deity, they knew what he claimed.

You see that earlier in his debate with them. Listen to John 8:58-59, "**Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple."** Why did they pick up stones to stone him. He said those words of himself — "I AM." The most holy name of God. He claimed he was the great I AM. And they took that as blasphemy and therefore the penalty of blasphemy against God was stoning.

So think through this whole point because Pilate is done with the Jews and their condemning of this innocent man. But the Jews are not done with Pilate. Listen to how they reply to Pilate's taunt and sarcasm here, "**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.'**" Now this might not seem that significant here, but it really is. The Jews tried to persuade Pilate to execute Jesus on the grounds of sedition against the Roman Empire. Now they ground their argument in religious and civil law — their law. And they really have Pilate in a corner with this accusation. And the Roman officials or rulers were suppose to uphold Roman Law, but beyond that they were also to enforce local

laws and rights as long as they did not conflict with Roman Law. This had a way of maintaining peace and also earning some loyalty to Rome.

Remember, Pilate has already aggravated the Jews many times and he was on thin ice with Rome, even for some of the questionable comments he has said about Rome. Any complaint made against him at this stage could be detrimental to his position and even to his future. And that is the significance of "we have a law." And it is incredible because the law they are speaking about is Leviticus 24:16, "**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.**" And Pilate is obligated to protect and enforce that law. And it so important to notice that this is not the charge they have brought up. This is a new charge, and one they are demanding be enforced.

And there are a coupled comments we should make as we close. One is that they really have no desire to really carry out the law. They certainly do not have the power and they do not want the people to turn against them. But the penalty for blasphemy was stoning. But they don't want Jesus put to death by stoning. That would be quick and done. But they want him to suffer and be humiliated. Remember, the religious leaders are cultured men. And their hatred and bitterness has turned them into savages. And it is incredible to see how sin left us repented of changed these men. At first, they listen and observe, and then they begin to oppose even in the face of overwhelming evidence Jesus is the Christ. And that opposition turns to controlling anger and rage. And it is incredible that sinful man thinks he controls his sin but his sin controls him. And even as the people of God, we have to realize that bitterness, anger and lust can take us to places and do and say things we never thought we would do or say. Beware, your sin will find you out. Your sin wants to master you.

But the other thing we see here is the accusation they level against Jesus, "**he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.**" The question really is not whether Jesus claimed to be the Son of God — in other words — the Messiah, he certainly did, but whether if that statement of himself is true or not. If it is not true than everything he has said should be rejected and he should be forgotten by us and by history. You can imagine someone today who claims to be God and One with God — we would worry about their sanity. But if it is true, then he should be revered. And through all the signs and wonders he has shown himself to be the Messiah. All these things were done openly and irrefutably. But here is the glory of Christ. Here is the grace in the text. The reader knows that Jesus is the Christ. The reader knows he God in human flesh. And right here you see something of the glory of Christ. During all the debate going on between the religious leaders and the people and Pilate he never offers up a defence. He knows where all of this is leading. And he knows the only hope people like you and I would ever have is if the Lamb was silent before its shearers.

Think of the power present as you have the civil authority and the religious authority but the power of the One who is silent; the one who is beaten and bloody is the ultimate authority and the one invested with all power. And we often say this in a very cliché way — this was done for you. And it is so true but sometimes we have to look and see and revel in the grace and love that drew salvation's plan and the one who accomplished it.

And for me, the more I meditate and concentrate on these truths no matter what I am going through, the more it causes my joy, love, and confidence in my great God. My plea to you is to look to him. See the glory of your Saviour here. In these opening seven verses he never opens his mouth but he is still the central figure because he is always the central figure. Whatever you are going through, look to him. He and he alone will change your life and give you hope when there seems there is no hope. God is good and sovereign. Christ is good and sovereign. Trust and look to him.