

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Amen and Amen

Turn your bibles with me to John 19

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of John – and we are going to pick up right where we left off last week –

As Jesus stands before Pilate – mere hours before being nailed to a Roman cross

In our study this morning, we are going to see a tortured individual, in the life of Pilate, struggling to do what was right – because of his fear of man.

And the good news for us is that God still used Pilate to accomplish His will.

Let's pray...

One of the things we learn as we read God's word is that God lays before us certain choices.

We can choose to take this path in life or we can choose to take this other path in life

We can choose a direction that will bring us closer to God or we can choose a direction that is away from God

I will give you a few examples –

Jesus tells us that we can choose to enter by the narrow gate or we can choose to enter by the wide gate

[Mat 7:13-14 NKJV] 13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Then there is the choice to simply follow God or not follow God

[Jos 24:15 NKJV] 15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

And that choice goes out to all of us.

And we also have the example of the prophet Elijah, standing before the people on Mt Carmel

[1Ki 18:21 NKJV] 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD [is] God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

The word that Elijah uses for falter is the word that means dance –

How long will you dance between the two – how long will you go back and forth between the two?

Elijah is pleading with them to make the decision – pick one!!! and unfortunately we see that the scriptures tell us that the people didn't respond – they didn't want to make the choice.

They wanted to continue living their lives – worshipping both Baal and Yahweh
And in the process – turning their back on God because God is not interested in divided devotion.

Church, we must be very careful in the choices we make toward God

Over the last few weeks in our studies through John

We have seen people make their choices

Peter made a choice

Annas made a choice

The religious rulers and the people of Jerusalem made their choice – at the end of CH

18 –

Pilate asked them Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

And they said – “No, we want Barabbas instead – we want the robber, the life taker instead of the Life Giver”

And then we get to Pilate –

Pilate had already declared to the religious rulers that they had not made their case against Jesus therefore – Jesus was innocent – “I find no fault in Him at all.

So what does Pilate do?

[Jhn 19:1-16 NKJV] 1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [Him].

Moments earlier – Pilate had declared to the religious rulers that Jesus was innocent. He wants to do what is right, but he also doesn't want any trouble with the religious rulers.

Remember, he was a politician, he was a people pleaser

Pilate knew beyond a doubt that Jesus was an innocent man - but he didn't have the fortitude to stand up to the crowd or the religious rulers and make the right choice.

So he orders Jesus to be scourged

That meant that Jesus was tied to a pole

And whipped until His back was ripped open and His organs exposed.

Now, one of the things we have to understand is that this scourging – it didn't take Jesus by surprise.

Turn with me to Mark 10

Here in Mark 10 -

Jesus is speaking to His disciples as they were making their way to Jerusalem

[Mar 10:33-34 NKJV] 33 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 “and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

Isaiah 50:6 – regarding the Messiah

[Isa 50:6 NKJV] 6 I gave My back to those who struck [Me], And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

I gave My back means that Jesus did it voluntarily / He did it willfully for you and me.

The cruelty of verse 1 is more than matched, as we see then, by the mockery that follows in verses 2 and 3

2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put [it] on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. 3 Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

There's some incredible irony here,

Because the first time that we see thorns mentioned in the bible – is in the garden of Eden, after the fall of man.

[Gen 3:17-18 NKJV] 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed [is] the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat [of] it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.

Thorns then, are a kind of picture of the result of mankind's sin.

And here is Jesus, coming to save us from our sins by taking all our sins upon Himself, so very appropriately crowned with thorns.

A crown of thorns being pressed into the head of He who is sinless

This is an incredible picture of Jesus taking our sins upon Himself.

Jesus was suffering for us – for you and for me.

And one of the consequences of sin in life is our own personal suffering – that sin brings great pain and difficulty into our lives.

Not only did the soldiers smash this crown of thorns upon His head –

They mocked Jesus

They dressed Jesus in a robe whose color spoke of royalty

Then they feigned their adulation of Him by slapping and striking Him - repeatedly.

The other Gospels tell us they spat in His face & plucked out His beard.

It is right at this place that personally, I see the restraint of Christ most fully revealed.

He knew He was going to the Cross & that it was there He would atone for our sins.

That was the climax of His mission.

But all of this was just the lead up – and to have to endure this merciless, undeserved, mocking & torture was just so very wrong!

It is right here, with the scourging & the mocking by the soldiers that we see the full depravity of the human race.

Here is what man is really like!

He takes the perfect holy God who has done nothing throughout His time on Earth but blessed people and shown incredibly love & compassion.

When man get our hands on Him, we rip off His robe, tie Him to a post and flay His backside till it's left in strips of bleeding flesh.

They we dress Him up so we can mock and further abuse Him.

4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." 5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And [Pilate] said to them, "Behold the Man!"

Often, the process of scourging was used to squeeze a confession out of a prisoner.

The man with the whip would make each lashing harder, until the prisoner confessed to a crime.

Yet through this all, Jesus has kept silent.

He has nothing to confess.

He is without sin.

This is the third time that Pilate has declared that he has found no fault in Jesus –

However, he fails to do the right thing – which was to let Him go

He still doesn't want to make the decision – he is afraid of the cost

So once again – he lets the people decide

Turn to Isaiah 52

Here is another prophesy regarding Jesus

[Isa 52:13-14 NKJV] 13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. 14 Just as many were astonished at you, **So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;**

Now, we don't use the term visage in our day

So I am going to read to you verse 14 from the NLT

[Isa 52:14 NLT] 14 But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.

Again, speaking of Jesus

Pilate thought for sure the pitiful spectacle of the beaten Jesus would appease the crowd & for pity's sake they would agree to His release.

So he brings Jesus out

“Behold the Man”

I have beaten Him

He has learned His lesson – look at Him

Isn't this enough???

Pilate miscalculated.

6 Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify [Him], crucify [Him]!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify [Him], for I find no fault in Him."

The priests knew what Pilate was trying to do and saw the crowd's horror when presented with Jesus, so they quickly picked up the call for Jesus' crucifixion.

And the other gospels tell us that the crowd joined in with the call for Jesus death.

Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

[Luk 23:23 NKJV] 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

Church –

The voices of the crowd almost always prevail to someone who is ready to compromise and cave into the pressure

Turn with me to Proverbs 29

Please underline this scripture – very important

[Pro 29:25 NKJV] 25 The fear of man brings a **snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.**

The word snare there – is the word for trap

The fear of man is a trap

The fear of man will cause great men and women to do dumb things

So often, when we are faced with pressure and we are worrying about what other people think – the voices of the people will prevail

So then,

We pull back

We compromise

But we must remember that –

To stand up for truth – we must fear God and not man

We can't live our lives as people pleasers –

We will never be able to please everyone

Jesus never did anything bad to anyone and yet the multitudes were chanting crucify Him crucify Him.

Pilate could have done the right thing – Jesus you are free to go

But he feared man

Let's continue -

Pilate knows he doesn't have any real grounds for condemning Jesus so in frustration he throws it back at the priests.

But of course, they can't crucify anyone – only the Romans could do that.

7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." 8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,

The religious leader here – they spill the beans.

They revealed their motives for bringing Jesus to Pilate

“He made Himself the Son of God – in our eyes, Jesus has committed blasphemy – therefore He deserves death”

Keep in mind at what Pilate has been told so far about Jesus:

The Jews gave Pilate the idea that Jesus was some sort of a threat to Rome – that He was going to lead an insurrection

And now for the first time Pilate hears this thing about being "the Son of God".

Also keep in mind that Matthew tells us that Pilate's wife came up to him the same morning and told him - **"Have nothing to do with that just [righteous/innocent] Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."** (Matt 27:19)

Pilate is more afraid –

Pilate is dealing with the fear of man in the highest level here

He is afraid for what he will lose – in order to stand for what is right.

So often the root of our compromise in life is because we are afraid of losing what we think we already have because we are taking a stance for the truth

And when we don't take a stance for the truth – we really lose everything

9 and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?"
But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" 11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

Pilate, in his fear, he becomes arrogant with his questioning of Jesus

The crowd outside is chanting crucify Him! crucify Him!

And as he hears the chants – his fear of man is growing and growing

Where are you from? Jesus doesn't answer Pilate

Jesus knows that it wouldn't make a difference

But then Pilate tells Jesus – Are You not speaking to me?

Which I the Greek – it is, "To me, you do not speak,"

"Jesus, do you know who you're talking to here?"

Pilate pulls rank.

He rests on his dignity.

"I'm the Roman governor. Don't you think you should speak?"

"Don't you know who I am?"

"Don't you realize that I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus reminded Pilate of something every ruler knows – he was only in his position because a higher authority had placed him there.

And authority given must be accounted for.

Pilate only had the authority to crucify Jesus because he had been given that authority by God.

How Pilate uses his authority will determine not Jesus' fate, but Pilate's fate

No one judges Christ.

It's the other way around – what we decide about Jesus judges us!

As Pilate felt himself being backed into a corner, Jesus told him that while he would have to answer for what he did with Jesus, the greater reckoning would be that of the high priest Caiaphus.

12 From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

The religious rulers play their ace card -

If Pilate doesn't bend to their wishes and crucify Jesus, they will send a delegation to Rome with the charge that he let a dangerous insurrectionist go.

"You're no friend of Caesar."

Oh, how he must have been annoyed, enraged at their hypocrisy.

The religious rulers didn't give care for loyalty.

They couldn't have cared less about Caesar.

They simply were using this: "We'll tell Caesar that you condoned a rebellion. We'll tell Caesar that you're the one, Pilate, that released the 'King of Israel.'"

What a torturous situation for Pilate, to know the right thing to do and to be so fearful of what other people say and think that you cannot find it in yourself to do the right thing.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called [The] Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" 15 But they cried out, "Away with [Him], away with [Him]! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!**"**

16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led [Him] away.

Pilate tries one last time to spark the compassion of the crowd toward the now pitiful appearance of Jesus, but the priests rule the day & sway them to demand His death.

"We have no king but Caesar!"

The only king they had as a possibility was standing right in front of them.

To reject Christ as king left them with only one other possibility in that political framework, and that was their submission to Caesar.

They refused to give homage to God, and so to whom else would they pay homage? And so they reject the one who was born to be king.

Turn to Matt 27

[Mat 27:24-26 NKJV] 24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather [that] a tumult was rising, he took water and washed [his] hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see [to it]." 25 And all the people answered and said, "His blood [be] on us and on our children." 26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered [Him] to be crucified.

This statement in verse 25 by the people seems almost prophetic

"His blood [be] on us and on our children."

Because it would be less than 40 years, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans—killing many of the Jewish population and scattering the remaining Jews throughout the world.

Jesus said, "By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."—Why?

Because “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

(Matt 12)

The multitude had made their choice –

They had rejected their King

All the only thing that was left was to crucify Him.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

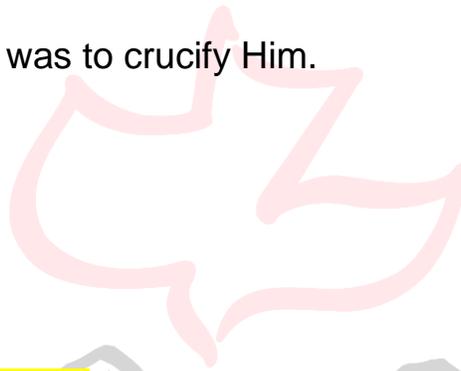
Admit, “I am a sinner.”

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Our words and our choices reveal our heart.

The good thing is that it works both ways –

Paul tells us

[Rom 10:9 NKJV] 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Amen!!!

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'