**Livin’ the Life**

**Jesus Handed Over to be Crucified.**

**John 19:1-16**

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We are in our series in the Gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises. We are currently in chapter 19:1-16, continuing to look at Jesus’ trial before Pilate. Last week we saw Pilate found Jesus innocent but the Jews rejected his verdict. This week we continue looking at Jesus’ trial before Pilate and see tension escalates between Pilate and the Jews.

**Pilate Mocks the True King (1-3)**

When the Jews refused to let Pilate release Jesus (18:39-40), he flogged Jesus as a criminal (1). Then Pilate’s soldiers put a crown of thorns on him that cut into his scalp and a purple robe around him. They proceed to humiliate him, expressing allegiance by hailing him as the king of the Jews, and strike him with their hands (2-3). The true king is humiliated and on trial before the world.

**Pilate Presents the Humiliated King (4-8)**

Then Pilate goes back outside and declares Jesus not guilty a second time (4). Jesus comes out beaten and bloodied, dressed as the king of the Jews, with the crown of thorns and a purple robe. Pilate cries out, behold, the man (5)! From a human perspective he is pathetic and weak and helpless against his accusers, from all appearances has failed his mission. Instead of shouts of acclamation, they cry out, crucify him, crucify him (6)! Pilate is not getting anywhere with the Jews concerning Jesus’ innocence so he tells them to take Jesus themselves and crucify him (6) knowing full well that they are not authorized by Rome to do so. So, then the Jews come clean with the real reason they want Jesus dead, a theological motive behind the political one, he claims to have made himself the Son of God (7). But Jesus did not make himself the Son of God, he is the Eternal Son of God who became man, whose glory is veiled in human flesh (1:1-4; 14). This is no mere man who is on trial, God is on trial (5:22; 10:33-35)! Now we see what neither Pilate nor the Jews could see. This is a cosmic trial in which the world is on trial and the King being judged is really the King who is the judge over all. When Pilate heard that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, he was even more afraid (8). The representative of Roman power now fears the one who is accused. He wonders, what has he gotten involved in?

**Pilate Questions the True King Again (9-11)**

Fearful, Pilate goes back inside and probes Jesus more, where are you from? But Jesus remains silent (9). Pilate is baffled that Jesus does not answer him because he wields the power of the most powerful empire in the world. Does Jesus know that Pilate can set him free or crucify him (10)? Pilate is using his power and position against Jesus like a bully. But Pilate is not the final authority nor is Jesus intimidated by his threat. Jesus is from above, from God. Pilate’s authority comes from Rome in one sense but Jesus says that his authority over Jesus is from the same place Jesus is from, God (11). Pilate has authority over Jesus in this trial because God has granted it. The one being judged is now judging Pilate (5:22-30). Jesus unmasks Pilate for what he really is, a fearful coward who will give into the Jews when they pull their own power play. Behind Pilates use of power and position is a fearful coward. But Jesus is not just judging Pilate, he is also judging Israel. Pilate is guilty of sin but the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate is guilty of a greater sin (11). The Jews handed Jesus over to Pilate for execution but Pilate has been reluctant to give into their demands. And now he is even more reluctant; he is fearful and seeks to release Jesus (12). But the Jews are going to get what they want one way or another.

**The Jews Reject their God and King (12–16)**

The Jews pull out the trump card, if Pilate releases Jesus then he is no friend of nor loyal to Caesar (12)! Caesar was ruthless toward those who committed treason. Pilate must not only just choose between Jesus and the Jews, he must now choose between Jesus and Caesar! They are saying, do you really want to be seen as committing treason? Not only do the Jews reject their true king, they commit apostacy. Pilate brings Jesus out to the judgment seat to render his final verdict (13) and mock both Jesus and the Jews, behold your king (14)! The Jews response reaches a feverish pitch, away with him, away with him, crucify him! Sarcastically Pilate asks, shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answer, we have no king but Caesar (15). Not only are they rejecting Jesus as their King but they are pledging allegiance to a foreign oppressor. The text tells us that Pilate caved in and handed Jesus over to be crucified (16). He sends an innocent man to his death to save his own life. The world put Jesus on trial but really the world is on trial. Jesus judges the Jews by exposing their religious facade as phony. Beneath their religious devotion are leaders who want nothing to do with God, neither love him nor serve him. And Jesus judges Pilate by exposing him as a bully who is really a fearful coward.

In the midst of this apostacy, John tells us that it was the day of preparation (14).[[1]](#footnote-1) The day when thousands of sacrificial lambs were being slaughtered in preparation for the Passover and their blood could be seen flowing from temple. Jesus, the true sacrificial lamb, is being handed over to be slaughtered for the sins of the world (1:29). The true king takes on the judgment of human sin.

Who do you see on trial? A weak and pitiful pretender or the true king who judges humanity and takes the judgment we deserve?

How do you see yourself? Do you use your power and position to take advantage of others? Are you using religion to hide your own hypocrisy and apostasy? Are you facing God’s judgment or one whose judgment Jesus took upon himself so that you are loved as children, welcomed into his presence with no fear, whose eternal destiny has been forever secured by his sacrifice for you.

One final thought. There is a sense that Jesus is still on trial before the world. And we are called to witness to the fact that he is the lamb of God who takes the sins of the world (1:29) as John the Baptist testified. This is the testimony we must believe and bring to the world.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What truth(s) in this passage or teaching struck you?
2. Why do you think the Jewish leaders had such animosity toward Jesus?
3. What was the sin of Pilate and the Jews that Jesus exposed and judged?
4. How are the Jews hypocritical? How is this a warning for you?
5. How would you summarize the main point of the teaching in one sentence?
6. How does this teaching affect my relationship with God?
7. How is God speaking to you from this passage/sermon?
8. How is God asking you to respond and obey him?
9. How does this teaching affect Jesus’ command to make disciples?
1. Now if you know the gospel accounts, you know that there are some discrepancies over the timing of the events leading to the cross. John is writing to emphasize the theological significance of the events. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)