

You Have Said So.

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, thanks to Neil for reading the passage before us.! If you have your Bibles, please turn back to Luke chapter 23.
- ! Just by way of explanation, this morning is the first in a series of five sermons that Thomas and I will all be well preach over the next six Sundays.
- How do you work a five-series sermon into six weeks? Well, for those that would have been reading the intimations, you'll be aware that next Sunday we have a visiting preacher.
- So in two weeks' time, I will again take the service and we will then thereafter continue our series. The series that we're going to focus on is all taken from Luke chapter 23.
- So if you're struggling to read the Bible and you don't know what to read, I would suggest over the next few weeks that you focus on reading Luke 23.
- [1 : 0 9] And what we're going to look at is recorded within Luke 23, there are five times that Jesus spoke. And it's important for us to listen to what Jesus says to us and how do we apply that to our own lives.
- And it also ties in with, in six weeks' time, all being well, God willing, we will come and sit at the table and we will remember the Lord's death.
- And everybody will be aware that as you read through Luke 23, it takes us to the cross and the sacrifice that Jesus made for each one of us.
- So that's just to give you an idea of the sermons that we'll look at. It'll take us through, as I said, the trial before Pilate that we have this morning.
- We'll then go on the journey to the cross. And then, well, Jesus was on the cross. Now, I recognize that traditionally this might be a passage that we would look at at Easter time.
- [2 : 2 0] But as I've said, it fits in with us coming towards the communions. And I think it's important that we do focus on the cross.
- So, to this morning and Luke chapter 23. Now, at the outset, it's best to tell you that as we're starting a new series, the initial part of my sermon this morning will be a fairly long introduction.
- So that we set the scene for the next few weeks. We'll then come to the points. And I will reassure you that the points aren't as long as the introduction.
- So, please bear with me. Now, while we've read in Luke 23, each of you will be aware that all four gospel writers mention the trial of Jesus before Pilate.
- And each one of them, as we read through them, gives different details about the trial and the other events that took place on the way to the cross and on the cross.
- [3 : 3 5] And again, if you're looking for some homework to take away from this morning, I would suggest that you read the other four accounts of the gospel writers, just so that you get an understanding of what Luke is saying and what the other gospel writers say, so that we're able to get a picture.

But as I said, our focus is on what Jesus said. And we will look in verse 3 at the response to the question that Pilate asked Jesus.

Are you the king of the Jews? And then the answer that was given. But just in that question, are you the king of the Jews?

Commentator Leon Morris, who was an Australian minister and scholar who died in 2006, was considered one of the greatest evangelistic scholars of his generation, said the following in respect of that very question that Pilate asks Jesus.

What he says is, when the question is asked, are you the king of the Jews? He says, his you is emphatic. What the Jews had said prepared him to meet a resistance fighter.

[5 : 01] But one glance at Jesus was enough to show the utter absurdity of such an idea. And it wrenched this incredulous question from his lips.

Before we come to Jesus' response to this question, it might be helpful to try and set the scene as to why Morris is saying that this incredulous question was asked.

by Pilate. And in setting the scene, we're going to use a bit of imagination to fill in the gaps of the story. But I'm going to try and use what we find out in the other Gospels.

But what I'm not going to do is focus on differences in the Gospels. It's just to try and look at how we can read the four accounts as one. So imagine if you would Mr. and Mrs. Pilot are sitting at home reclining late one evening.

They've had their dinner and they're sitting whether it be reading or talking to one another but it's late in the evening. And then there's a knock at the outside door.

[6 : 27] One of the servants goes to the door. There's a discussion. And after some discussion, the servant comes to the quarters of Mr. and Mrs. Pilot and knocks on the door.

Mr. Pilot shouts come in and the pilot and pilot's servant puts his head around the door and asks Pilot do you mind if I speak with you?

So Pilot excuses himself from his wife and he goes out into the corridor. There's then a further discussion. Now if you can imagine in today's society your mobile phone would ring and you would take the call but obviously in those days there was no mobile phones and everything was done by servants coming back and forth.

So Pilot comes back into the room and he sighs as he closes the door. Mrs. Pilot looks up what's wrong dear?

Who's been calling at the house at this late hour? Pilot shakes his head oh Caiaphas and the chief priests have arrested a man who came into Jerusalem last week in a donkey.

[7 : 59] Remember we heard about the man that was being hailed king of the Jews? people were shouting Hosanna apparently he's broken some blasphemy laws and they want to hear a trial in the morning and they want this dealt with before the Passover begins and they want me to deal with it.

Seeing the frustration on her husband's face Mrs. Pilot inquires can they not deal with it themselves? You're too busy to listen to a trial about blasphemy that's not even within your jurisdiction.

I know responds Pilot but they're coming here first thing in the morning just after sun up I'm sorry dear I'm going to bed so I'm ready to deal with this in the morning.

Meanwhile in another part of the city following a mock trial by Caiaphas and the chief priests and the elders a night shift guard has been assembled and put in place to look after the prisoner Jesus in order to occupy themselves for the night and ensure that they didn't fall asleep the night shift decided to enter to obtain themselves by mocking beating slapping and blaspheming Jesus.

Then a sun rises Pilot gets up from the comfort of his bed to wash of his breakfast and prepare for the day before him.

[9 : 48] Jesus on the other hand deprived of sleep and any proper food or water is again taken before the chief priests and then marched to Pilate's house.

So here we have the scenario before us. Pilate's standing there in his number one best governor's uniform having been pre-briefed about this man Jesus who's been causing so much upset for the chief priests we now get an insight into why Morris says that Pilate was expecting a resistance fighter.

but instead here standing before him is Jesus who's bound his head bowed having been mocked and spat upon and slapped in the face all night which prompts Pilate to ask are you the king of the Jews?

We're aware from the other gospels that due to the chief priests not wanting to devile themselves they wouldn't enter the governor's courtyard and stayed outside.

There were laws that they wanted to uphold but the biggest law that they didn't want to uphold was to honour God. Pilate presumably somewhat bemused after all he had heard about Jesus goes out to the people and asks the chief priests what is it that you accused this man of?

[11 : 39] And we found this man as we read in the passage we found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to pay tribute to Caesar and saying he himself is Christ a king. that's the charges that were brought against Jesus by the chief priests and by the elders.

Just as we pause on the accusations that were made J.C. Ryle another biblical commentator of the 19th century writes we know that there was no word of truth in all of this.

It was nothing but an ingenious attempt to enlist the feeling of a Roman governor against our Lord. It was an accusation of insurrection.

Pilate wouldn't have wanted trouble in the town. Jesus accused of insurrection. What does the Bible tell us about Jesus?

[12 : 48] John 14 27 Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Nor as the world gives do I give to you.

Let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid. John 16 33 I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation but take heart I have overcome the world. Did Jesus come to cause trouble in the city?

An accusation of disrespecting Caesar. What do we see in Matthew 22 21 and Jesus said to them whose likeness and inscription is this they said Caesar's then he said to them therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar and to God the things that are God.

Was Jesus in any way telling the people not to give to Caesar what was Caesar's? accusation accusations of claiming that he was the king there's no recorded verses where Jesus makes the statement about himself as being the king there are others that say it of him that at no time does he actually say the statement himself so what do we find?

[14 : 26] We find that all these accusations are false Ryle the commentator goes on false witness and slander are two favorite weapons of the devil he was a liar from the beginning and is still the father of lies John 8 44 he goes on when he finds he cannot stop God's work his next device is to attack the character of God's servants and to destroy the value of their testimony here in the verses before us we find implying his old weapon to the very last Jesus is indicted before Pilate upon charges which are utterly untrue chief priests knew that Pilate wasn't going to be interested in dealing with a charge of blasphemy so they had to choose charges that were going to push the right buttons to get a response from

Pilate so that he would engage in a trial of Jesus and it worked Pilate went in to question Jesus having heard the accusations Pilate still slightly bewildered as this man stands before him charged in respect of the charges that are brought before him and asks are you the king of the Jews and despite the accusations that are made and all the questions that have been asked Luke records this one question some of the gospel writers say that there's more of a discourse but Luke records this one interaction and the response that is given you have said so there's one other occasion when Jesus gives a similar answer in

Matthew 26 when Jesus and the disciples are at the table in the upper room and there's a question about who's going to betray him and it's recorded Judas who would betray him answered is it I and he said to him you have said so depending on the version of the Bible that you may have before you it may even be translated it is as you say provided in the affirmative it is as you say or you have said so no big crowd no pomp and ceremony here but before a single witness who seeks to judge him he's given the answer and this takes us to our first point you have the scene set before you and the answer that's been given to the question and we see three different responses there's a response from

Pilate there's a response from Herod and there's the crowd let's just look very briefly in relation to the time the different reactions sadly Pilate will go down in history as the man that three times declared Jesus not guilty but still in the end handed him over to be crucified he had met Jesus he could find no guilt in him and we can read the account in Matthew that even having been warned by his wife not to have anything to do with this righteous man Pilate declared him not guilty what was Pilate's problem his problem was that

Pilate was a people pleaser he wanted to please the crowd he wore his uniform of a governor but we see here a man that was concerned about having a quiet life not upsetting the people so they would not in turn upset Caesar he tried desperately to find Jesus not guilty he even tried to bring Herod in to help him even though we read Herod was actually up until this point his enemy Pilate declares him not guilty but still he doesn't deal effectively with Jesus Herod comes on the scene Herod was in Jerusalem as we read for the Passover he wasn't partaking in the Passover but he was there to try and be respectful and gain the support of the chief priests can you imagine

[19 : 42] Herod's delight he'd heard about this man Jesus now he was getting the chance to meet him he was absolutely desperate to meet Jesus he'd probably heard if you think back he'd probably heard from his father about stories about the birth of a king but how the wise men had come to see him and how he had dealt with what he saw as a problem and we can read in the gospels of Herod the great's actions after the wise men had gone back by another route when he killed all the newborn babes all the newborn male babes but this Herod doesn't stand or have Jesus stand before him and he doesn't fear this Jesus what does Herod want Herod wants to be satisfied in seeing a miracle he wants to see a miracle performed yes he asks

Jesus some questions but his heart's desire is to see a miracle and what do we see he doesn't get what he wants he's left empty he had Jesus there before him but he wasn't looking for the right thing from Jesus he was looking to see himself satisfied we ask the question why does Luke only focus on this one question and this one answer one of the commentators states it's fitting and right that those who examined him should formally announce him as guiltless and blameless it was fitting and right that the lamb of God should be found by those who killed him as a lamb without blemish and without spot as recorded in 1 Peter 1 and 19 these men thought that they were in charge these men thought the over putting

Jesus on trial but the commentator goes on the overruling hand of God so ordered the events of this trial that even when his enemies were judges they could find no fault and prove nothing against him Jesus was the spotless lamb of God then there's the crowd we'll come back to the crowd over the next few weeks as we see them in different situations but this was a mixed crowd people with different views there were the chief priests there was the elders and there would have been people amongst the crowd there that would have been amongst Jesus followers those that the week before had been shouting Hosanna as Jesus rode into Jerusalem what we learn about this crowd as we continue in the story is that not every one of them was there to see

Jesus crucified but as is the case so often even in today's society that the loudest and the most powerful voices are the ones that prevail we see how the protagonists within the crowd here prevailed and Pilate gave in to them despite washing his hands he was the one who gave Christ over to be crucified now while it's recorded that he Pilate delivered Jesus over to their will we know as we gather here this morning and we'll read it in Isaiah 53 that what we really see here is the unfolding of God's will verse 7 Isaiah 53 he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and a sheep that is before it shearers is silent so he opened not his mouth by oppression and judgment he was taken away and as for this generation who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living stricken for the transgression of many and there and they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth yet it was the will of the

Lord to crush him he has put him to grief when his soul makes an offering for guilt he shall see his offering his offspring he shall prolong his days the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities so we see in verse 10 it was the will of the Lord to crush him while Pilate and Herod and the crowd thought that they were in control of what was unfolding here what we know is that they were all being used to fulfill God's plan a plan and the purpose of that plan is as we read there in verse 11 that out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities so you may be sitting here this morning thinking what's the application for me this morning

[26 : 11] God was working his purpose and his plan out Pilate Herod and the crowd were all bit players victims of circumstance and there's a real danger if that's what we're thinking this morning and that danger is complacency we can read in 2nd Timothy 3:16 all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness so what's this passage teaching us this morning we looked at the three reactions from Pilate and Herod the question that we need to ask ourselves is what's my reaction to this passage we'll take them in reverse order this time the crowd each one of us here this morning is part of a crowd

I don't mean that you were the crowd that was gathered in Jerusalem 2000 years ago I mean that as we gather this morning we all come from different homes different backgrounds we may have different opinions we'll carry different burdens but we come collectively and we currently live in a society within Scotland where many would class us as a post-Christian nation we see laws being changed that undermine the moral rule of the Bible which for so long were upheld and fought for do we allow this to happen do we allow the loud voices to prevail and do we think there's no point in us raising our voice you'll know from my previous history I'm not for one minute advocating that we start protesting in the streets and standing outside the council offices or in front of parliament buildings what I am suggesting is that there are opportunities for us to use the voice that's been given to us first of all we must pray secondly use the opportunity to write to your

MP your MSP there are things that are happening in our society that while we may sit here and think well it won't affect me how will it affect our children our grandchildren and the generations to come as the laws that we once stood by are now eroded as we so often quote and as we even prayed already this morning what once was right is now wrong what once was wrong is now right do we use the opportunity or do we shrink back and let the crowd win or are we like Herod he wanted to be entertained by Jesus he wanted a miracle he wanted his own self satisfaction and I'm not saying that you've come here this morning for entertainment but what I am asking is when you come to

Jesus when Jesus is presented to you when you're against the wall what is your cry to Jesus is it for your own self that your own needs will be met or is it coming to Jesus and recognising that you need him each and every day not just for the moment when things are difficult not just praying and crying out well if you fix this for me I'll then follow you James 4 verse 3 warns us you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your own passions Herod sought to be entertained by Jesus he sought for his own will to be satisfied do we come and ask God for his will to be done and then there's Pilate and very finally

Pilate had Jesus before him he had the opportunity to ask him any question and we see here that almost in disbelief he asks him are you the king of the Jews and he gets the answer you have said so but he doesn't know what to do with that answer he was there for one purpose and that was to try Jesus as we reflected already three times he declared Jesus not guilty but in the end he rejected Jesus because of the crowd Jesus is before each and every one of us this morning and you may ask him any question did you come to take away my sin are you really the savior of the world did you rise again do you sit at the right hand of God and hear my prayers and bring them to God do I just have to believe in you and what you have done for me on the cross that that is enough and the answer you will receive it is as you say the challenge is how you will react will you believe and trust will you leave here like pilot and go out to the crowd and be dissuaded from doing what you know is right to trust in

[32 : 30] Jesus let us pray