

# Jesus And Pilate

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[ 0 : 00 ] With God's help, we are going to look at this passage we read this evening from John chapter 18. We are going to look at the sufferings of Christ tonight and again tomorrow morning.

Tonight we see his trial before Pilate who was the Roman governor. Then tomorrow we are going to look at Jesus on the cross, his crucifixion. Hopefully tomorrow evening we are going to go back in time in Jesus' life to his meeting with a woman that he met at the well in Samaria.

I am sure that you would possibly agree with me when we read the New Testament. I am sure that no one more important in the New Testament after Jesus than the Apostle Paul. The more I get to know and read about Paul, the more amazing he is. What is so incredible about Paul is this, that he did not put himself forward in any way but always put Christ first. That is so important for every single one of us. So if I were to ask you tonight, how are you getting on with your love for Jesus? How are you getting on in getting to know Him? Because this is something that Paul wanted. We know that in chapter 3 of Philippians, Paul speaks about his past life. He was a Pharisee and he was out and out to please God, but he was doing it with his own works. But remember Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and Jesus questioned him. And remember when he asked Jesus, who are you? Who are you, Lord? I am Jesus who you are persecuting. Now that must have gone through his heart like a dagger. Because what he was doing and on the way to Damascus was to put people who believed in Jesus into prison. He had just witnessed the death of Stephen.

And here he is, meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus. And he was captured by Jesus. Remember for three days he was blind. And then after that Ananias, one of the brothers, came to meet with him to release him. But the apostle Paul came to love Jesus very much. And this is what he said.

We read in Philippians chapter 3 where he speaks of his past life. And then in verses 7 and 8, it concludes like this, but whatever gain I had, that's in my past life, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Is that the way we view life tonight? Is Christ the most important thing, person in your life? Well, it was the most important person for Paul. What was important for him as we read in verse 10, you don't need to turn to this, but I can read it in Philippians chapter 3, verse 10. This is what he said, that I may know him as Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, that is the power that raised Jesus from the dead, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Now tonight we're going to be sharing in the sufferings of Christ at his trial. Tomorrow we're going to be sharing with the crucifixion of Jesus in his death. And Paul wanted to share in that, and by sharing in the death and the sufferings of Christ, that means that he got to know him, and to know him better. Is that our desire tonight is to get to know Jesus, and to get to know him better? Well, this I want you to remember that in regards to knowing Christ, it's also counted to us as our eternal life. The two are linked together and cannot be separated. So for us tonight, if it is that we're going to die and go to heaven, then we need to know Jesus. That is what Jesus, and we'll see later on, we'll pick up on that later on when Jesus said that. And remember too, he said, I want to know the power of resurrection. That is obviously what we remember every Lord's day, because the day Jesus rose from the dead was on the first day of the week. It is our Sabbath, and we remember that. And we also remember it at Easter time. It is something that we look forward to. But before then, there is the passion, and this is what Paul wants to look to. So there's no better way of doing this than reading about Jesus in the Bible. Are you good Bible readers? Do you read the Bible a lot?

[ 5 : 22 ] Well, if you're a Christian, you should read the Bible. It is something that we should be doing. I remember one Christian one time saying to me, Oh, I hardly ever read the Bible. And to be honest, it showed because she wasn't a bright Christian. And in many ways, she was a critical Christian. She saw faults in others. And it's because she wasn't being her heart was not being melted by God's word, so as to be taught what a Christian ought to be. So there's no better way of getting to know Jesus than to read his word. And then by reading the word, we apply the word of God to our lives.

And when we do that, then we become like Christ in his death. How are we going to do that? It is dying to our own sin and living to his righteousness. Well, the passion of Christ speaks of the sufferings.

And this evening, we want to look as we said at the trial, the trial of Jesus. Now, a Roman trial has four essential elements, four essential elements. And we understand that by what we see in scripture. The first is people came with the accusation. What have they got against Jesus?

Secondly, there's the examination. Thirdly, there's the defense. And then, fourthly, the verdict. It's quite similar to our courts, courts of law in our own days. So first of all, the accusation, the examination, the defense and the verdict. Now, the Jews came with three accusations. And without looking through, I'll just summarize. They said that we have found this man misleading our nation. Secondly, forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar. Or thirdly, saying that he himself is Christ a king. So their original charge against Jesus was blasphemy. That was saying that Jesus, they said that Jesus said that he is God. Now, that is not going to stand in a secular court, because the court in Rome is a secular court, they're not interested in religious matters. So that wouldn't stand. So they don't mention that to Pilate at all. And what is interesting is this, that what we have in regards to this is what it says in John 18, 33, it's like Pilate going straight and he asked the question, verse 33, so Pilate entered his headquarters and again, and called King, it called Jesus and said to him, Are you the king of the Jews? Now, all four gospels report that this is what he said. And he said, notice 33, verse 33 again, are you. And the word you is emphatic in the original language, because the focus here on Pilate's question is on Jesus. You are king. It's like a question like that. Now, then we come to the where we notice, and that is the examination, there's the accusation and the examination with this question. So with this, we see that Jesus, in regards, there's no reports of this man, Jesus, that he was going to start a revolution. Of course, he had people running after him, and people following him. But they weren't going about with swords, and they weren't on horses or anything like that. So there doesn't seem to be any danger or a threat to Rome in regards to this. If anything, what was reported about this man was that he was going about healing people. He was not perverting the nation. And as regards to not paying taxes, forbidding the second one forbidding us to give tax tribute to Caesar.

Well, to be honest, a carpenter from a carpenter from Nazareth wasn't going to bring down the Roman Empire by not paying his taxes. So Pilate doesn't even mention the first two charges. So what does he do? He asks the third one, are you the king of the Jews? Now, if there was to be any hint of a threat to Rome or to Caesar, this would be it. But to be honest, Jesus was no threat. He was no threat to Rome at all. So Jesus asks Pilate a question, notice in verse 34, do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me? Now, this is an interesting question that he's asking. And the reason he's asking this is that he's probing the heart of Pilate himself. He's putting Pilate on the stand. Are you inquisitive about me? Or is this you just asking for the sake of the people? And you know, sometimes we can be like that when we come to church. And we're thinking, well, you might hear the minister speaking, and you'll be thinking, oh, this is for that person or that person there. But we never think that this is for me, the message or the question that's been asked is for me. And God asking us the question, where am I standing? Where is my standing tonight before God? Now, Jesus could have been doing this. And the interest is obviously, is the identity of Pilate's identity of Jesus. What do you think? But Pilate's answer shuts the door for any spiritual interest. Look at verse 35. Pilate answered, am I a Jew? You're a nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? He wasn't interested. He's not interested in Jesus. So he just passed on. And he just simply asks the question, what have you done?

[ 11 : 53 ] And it's interesting that Jesus didn't reply Pilate's question. Instead, he speaks. What does he speak about? He speaks about his kingdom. Jesus answered in verse 36, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews, but my kingdom is not from the world. So what is he saying? And what is our understanding tonight of his kingdom? It is that it is a spiritual kingdom. He's talking about his kingdom as being spiritual. And this is something. And this is him talking in defense in regards to his kingdom. Now, if anyone has a kingdom, it means that he's a king. So he's speaking here as having a kingdom. So Jesus is claiming that he is king. But it is a king of a spiritual kingdom. And that is the way it is for us as well tonight. Our relationship with Jesus is that we belong to the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, which is spiritual. And that is what happens.

You are a citizen of that kingdom. So we notice that he doesn't rule. Notice what he said there, that he could have asked for those to defend him in war if he needed to do that. But that is not what he is about at all. So Pilate asks him again in verse 37, notice where he says, then Pilate said to him, So you are a king. See, he's trying to draw this out of Jesus. So you are a king. And Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this purpose, I was born. And for this purpose, I have come into the world. So Jesus is claiming his kingship here to us. So if you want to ask tonight of anyone, everyone in here, is Jesus king over your life? How would you answer that question? You see, we put so many barriers up in regards to thinking, Well, I will never, never be good enough to come and sit at the Lord's table. And you are correct. You will never be good enough. But the point is this, it is for sinners that Jesus came to die. Remember Rabbi

Duncan, and I'm sure I told you many years ago, Don McLeod always used to say about Duncan was preaching somewhere. And he saw in those days where the bread was going through the people and the cup being passed. And he noticed he noticed this woman. And she was in turmoil. And he knew it. And he knew that she was going to pass the bread and the wine. And he said to her, target woman, it's for sinners. It's for sinners. If you feel that you're worthy, then that's not the time to come. What to do then is to sort it out with God and said, Lord, show me my, my unworthiness and then allow me to come. If we think we are something when we are nobody, it is when we are nobody. It is then that we come and we come at the invitation of the King.

But you know what is amazing is the disillusionment of voices in our own hearts. And we are thinking, I want you to notice verse 37 again, that Pilate said to him, so you are King. Jesus answered, you say that I am a king for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I come into the world to do what to bear witness to the truth. What is truth? Pilate asked, that is the question that has been asked in our world tonight. What is truth? There is no absolute truth. People will say the truth is subjective. What is true for you? I am delighted that that is what you like and what you believe. But don't force that on me. But notice here I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. So what does that mean?

Well, I am sure that in your own lives those of you have come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have come to church and for years possibly you came to church and you walked out in your thinking, you know I didn't understand any of that. I didn't pick any of that up. Some of it I did, but not all of it. I don't understand it. I remember one dad coming with his son who was a Christian one day and his dad was very intelligent. So was the boy. But going home the boy was a Christian and he said to his dad, wasn't that amazing this morning? And he said I didn't understand any of it. I didn't get it. But notice here what Jesus says. Now this is to encourage you, those who are in Christ. Notice this. He said I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. You listen to the voice of Jesus and when you hear the voice of Jesus, what happens? He's drawing at the strings of your heart and that should be an encouragement. However you feel tonight as we come to the Lord's table tomorrow, we know that we have an enemy of the soul and we ourselves sometimes can be our own worst enemies and thinking how could I go when my heart is in such a state? How can I go? You can go because Jesus died for sinners and if you can claim you're a sinner, you can say Jesus saved me from my sins and in that way you can come and sit at his table. Those, everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. Now Pilate was hearing all of this and he's asking what is truth? What is truth? But we know and those who are in Christ know that Christ speaks the word of truth. He has come from the Father. He's revealed that to us and many a time when you sit under the preacher of God's word or when you're reading God's word, this is God speaking to us. Do we come to the word and say, what do you have to say to me tonight, Lord? I'm going to come to see what your word is saying. Is there anything there to help me? Have you noticed? Have you noticed that sometimes that God comes at a moment just at the right time? We had a bit of a nightmare this afternoon. I put petrol in a diesel car. Have you ever done that? And it's not my car. It's my brother-in-law's car. So while that was taking place and there was a whole panic of how we were going to get to Carlow and thankfully Alistair came to the rescue and just then, just then a text came.

[ 20 : 04 ] A young couple were coming to church and stopped coming. So I sent them a text saying how much we missed them coming to church. And just as we were speaking, trying to work out about the petrol stuff, a text came. We've changed our mind. We are going to come back to church. God's timing in a text. We've got our communion next weekend. I sent a text to two adults who come to our church. They're very shy. And one guy came and he said, can I get baptized? The word is amazing is that his family is baptized. And I said, I said to him, will we need a bath? And he said, no, no. He said, sprinkling will do. I said, that's great. So but he said, I don't want to fuss. Just that evening, another girl has been coming for four years as a student now working. She said, can I get paper something to tell me or teach me about baptism? So I sent one a text at the beginning of the week that we're having a communion next weekend. So it would be great if we could have a baptism to the two ordinances on the same day. The guy got back to me. But the girl didn't get back to me till tonight. Just straight after the first text I got. I would love to get baptized next week.

Sometimes we think and we question God, how did I put petrol into diesel? And the scale of things, it doesn't matter. What matters is, it's a family's coming back to church and we're two young adults being baptized and wanting to sit at the Lord's table.

It's amazing and what God does, it's just quite incredible. What is truth? The truth is the truth that Jesus speaks and we listen to it and they hear my voice. That's exactly what Jesus said.

Well, Pilate, as we saw, and I've lost my train of thought here, but we know that Pilate, he did his best to get out of sentencing Jesus to death. And after verse 38 in John, and though John doesn't tell us, notice verse 38, we read this, Pilate said to him, what is truth?

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, I find no guilt in this man. I find no guilt in this man. So what does he do? Well, we are told that gleaned from the gospel, that Barabbas, who was a robber, not only was a robber, he was a notorious man, he was a murderer and the choice was Jesus or Barabbas. Which one would you want? And the crowd cried for Barabbas.

[ 23 : 16 ] Which one will I release? Verse 40, they cried out again, not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. Immanuel tonight, the choice, you're given a choice, Jesus or Barabbas? Which one would you choose? We've been asked this question, will you not choose Jesus? But you know what is interesting that Pilate, that John doesn't refer to it, but Pilate tells us, Luke tells us, sorry, in verse 23, verses 6 and 7, that he sends him, Jesus, to Herod thinking, I can pass the buck here and get him to deal with Jesus and I'll get off scot-free. That was in the case, remember Jesus didn't need to speak to Herod, didn't say anything to him, or Herod wanted to see miracles. And this is the danger, you see, Herod, remember this is the Herod that John the Baptist spoke to about the Gospel, but he refused it. And the danger for us is if we keep on refusing the Gospel, can you imagine that God would say, I am going to move on to someone else. Or the thought, the thought of

God moving on, please don't allow that to happen because now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. And we see then eventually that in verse 19, then Pilate took Jesus out to be flogged. We are told elsewhere that they put a robe on him, they put a crown of thorns on his head and they scourged him, that is they whipped him. And possibly Pilate was thinking that when they see Jesus in this state, that will be enough for the crowd, they'll be satisfied and they will let it go.

But that is not the case, that is not the case because we read and we read on in verse chapter 19 and verses 12 down to 15, from then on Pilate saw to release him, but the Jews cried out, if you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes him a king opposes Caesar.

So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat at a place called the stone payment, Aramaic Abatha. Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover, it was about the sixth hour, he said to the Jews, behold your king, they cried out away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, shall I crucify your king? The chief priest answered, we have no king but Caesar. So he delivered him over to be crucified.

Why did Pilate do that? Because he feared men more than God. He feared men more than God. You know that the Jews had already gone to Rome to complain about Pilate and the Jews won.

[ 26 : 49 ] And I'm just wondering if he's thinking, what if they go to Caesar again? We read this in Matthew chapter 27 and in verse 24, Matthew 27 and verse 24. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather than 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. We've never washed our hands as much as we have over the past two years because of a pandemic. Remember, we were meant to wash our hands for 20 seconds. And I know a teacher tells us in schools that children's hands were in a mess because of all the substances we were that they were putting on their hands. And you know, I don't know about you, but we caught COVID and we washed our hands.

When the virus is out there, it is out there and we catch it. Pilate thought by washing his hands that that would be him innocent of the blood of Jesus. But that is not how it works.

And you know, for us who have heard the gospel, much more is required of us, much more than those who never heard it. I remember again, Don McLeod one time saying, he said, see when we go home, when we go to, when we go to the judgment seat, he says, and God will say to us, did you ever hear about my son, Jesus? What are you going to say? Are you going to say, no, yes, you did. Did you not go to church in caraway? And you heard about Jesus. Oh, yes, I did.

But the question is this, what did you do about him? What did you do about it? Ah, I did nothing. I just thought that I could get to heaven because of my own good works. But that is not the way it works. Is it? That is not why then would God send his son to the cross to die if we can get home on our own works. Why did he do it? Because we need Jesus to die for our sins.

We need Jesus. It's interesting that Pilate's wife said to Pilate, she got a message to him somehow to the courtroom. And she said, have nothing to do with this just man, because I have had a rough night through dreams because of him. You know that the Romans were very influenced by dreams and Pilate was influenced as well by what his wife said to him, have nothing to do with this just man. But yet you see, he thought by getting a bowl of water and to wash his hands and say, I am innocent of all of that. Well, you know, there's only one sanitizer that can clean us from our sins.

[ 30 : 43 ] And that is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is Jesus. And that is what he's done for us. And it is free. Paul said in Philippians chapter three verse 10, that I may know him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death. You know, the picture of what we have of the picture of baptism, we had a baptism last week, we were down in Dumfries looking after the congregation down there. And you know, what is incredible is that we've been praying in Dumfries for people to come to church. And not many folk in Dumfries, there's 22, 32, 33,000 people who live in Dumfries. There's a good Baptist church, but we've only got a handful of folk coming to the free church. And you know what God has done? He sent us last Sunday and for the last few weeks, he sent us three Iranians and a man from Eritrea, they are asylum seekers.

And they claim that they are Christians. And honestly, so Adam is touring the islands just now who comes from Iran. He was able to speak to one of them on the phone. And Adam said, you speak to them. I would have no qualms, he said, and baptizing them, but you speak to them and see how you get on. So one of them doesn't speak English much, but one does. And you know what's amazing, and I'll show you later if you want, you can get a nap and you can speak into the phone and it writes Persian. So I can speak Persian. It's quite amazing. So having a conversation with these people, but you know this, there was one guy who said, because they're saying they're trying to get, they're trying to get, obviously, to get into the country and possibly some of them are using the fact that we're Christians. But the questions were, so tell us about your life.

We were in an underground church in Iran. And we came to feed. There's a long story, but came to feed. So I said to one of them, the one with the English, what does Jesus mean to you? Oh, he said, he's my Lord and Savior. And I said to him, would you say that Jesus is your friend? And he said, well, no, I say he's more than that because of my respect to him. Our relationship is more like a father and son. Would you have any qualms in baptising someone like that? And one of our elders was saying that one wasn't well, but they turned up on Wednesday night, the one that doesn't speak English.

But you know, he said, there's something about him. There's something about him. What is it? Ah, the Christ in him is seen by our elder, and he can't even speak English.

Oh, you know, there's, isn't God amazing? Isn't God amazing? What is doing? These guys have absolutely nothing. And I said to him, you've come to a nation where there's only 2% of people believe in Jesus. And he says, that's all right. That's all right. And you know, the God who keeps us will look after them. But what is amazing now is the discipleship of these people. And this is what we need to ask ourselves too. Do you know Jesus tonight? And how much do you love this Jesus?

[ 34 : 49 ] How much do you love him? Jesus prayed to his father before entering the garden of Gethsemane. And he said this in John 17.3. And this is what he said. And this is eternal life. That is what the Christian has eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Do you know Jesus tonight? Do you know him? And do you love him? What is truth? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. And nobody comes to the Father except through me. Now, as we come to the end this evening, what is Jesus doing here with us tonight? We believe that Jesus is here in his spirit. Well, he's inviting you to come to his table tomorrow. He's arranged this. He's arranged it for us. He's arranged it for his own. And again, maybe you feel that you are the least worthy of coming. Well, that's the best way of coming to his table.

Remember the hymn, Nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling. Naked come to thee for dress. Helpless come to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly. Wash me, saviour or I die. And notice here, we've got nothing to cling to. Nothing to cling to.

We are naked and we are helpless and we are foul. Well, that is the ones that Jesus came to save.

We will see that tomorrow evening as we look at Jesus and the woman that came out to the well at midday. You can maybe read on tonight and see what you think of her.

[ 37 : 06 ] But Jesus, we need him to wash us, to cleanse us from our sins. We can't do that. And it is only in Jesus are we accepted to the Father. And he's arranged for us to suck together tomorrow morning.

And by God's grace, he will, and we will be able to come here by participating in what in his sufferings then we share in his death. May God bless to us these thoughts.