

John 19:1-16

Teaching Points

In our passage of study tonight, we pick up where we left off with Jesus on trial before Pilate. The Jews have conducted their “trial” and taken Jesus to the Roman governor of Judea. As people who love Jesus, it is difficult to read about the brutality He endured. It is maddening to see Pilate “waffle” in his cowardice. And the murderous hatred of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus is shocking.

The Genuine Humanity of Jesus

Pilate held the Jews in contempt. He’s taking this opportunity to ridicule them by ridiculing Jesus. “Is this your king,” he mocks? Then He has Jesus scourged and “crowned” and donned with a royal robe.

Look at the physical punishment of Jesus described by John. Despite finding no fault in Jesus at all (18:38), Pilate caved to the pressure of the Jews and furthered the interrogation by having Him scourged. To be “scourged” meant to be flogged or whipped, the thongs of the whip were weighted with lead, and studded with sharp-pointed pieces of bone. Frightful laceration followed each stroke. It reduced the back to raw flesh, and it was not unusual for a criminal to die from a scourging, even before crucifixion.

How else did Jesus suffer in His body? Thorns were fashioned into a “crown” and jammed into His head. He was smacked/punched by the Roman soldiers. Other Gospel writers tell us that those soldiers took a staff and struck Him on the head. They spit on Him. They put a robe on Him, over His badly beaten body.

Discussion Questions: Without being overly descriptive, John and the other Gospel writers tell us about the things Jesus suffered in His body. Why is that? Why is it important for us to understand the genuineness of the humanity of Jesus?

Thoughts: *Biblical Christianity teaches the genuine deity and the genuine humanity of Jesus. As our Substitute, the Lord can guarantee our salvation from God’s wrath because He is fully God. And He can represent us on the cross and bear our sin burden because He is fully Man. With the details given in Scripture, we learn Jesus was truly human in that He could suffering a beating, bleed, and eventually, die. We also find in Him a sympathetic Savior in that He knows the sufferings of humanity. Pilate brings Him out to the crowd after they tortured Him announcing, “Behold, the Man!”*

God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Responsibility

It is unfathomable to Pilate that Jesus refuses “to break” under such pressure. One of the purposes of scourging was to elicit a confession. But Jesus had nothing to confess. It is also beyond Pilate that Jesus seemed so unmoved by the might and power of Rome that he represented as governor. As an official of the Roman Empire, Pilate had the “power” (authority)

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to crucify Jesus and the “power” to release Him. In other words, Pilate is saying, “You don’t seem to understand; I have your life in my hands!”

Discussion: What does the response of Jesus in verse 11 teach us about the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man?

Thoughts: *Jesus is unimpressed with the power of Roman because He knows Who has ultimate authority. Jesus appears before Pilate not as a result of the strength and authority of the Jewish leaders nor even of the majestic might of the Roman Empire. They could “have no power at all” against Jesus “unless it had been given [them] from above.” All authority exists because of the Sovereign God. Jesus is doing His Father’s will. At the same time, the “one who delivered” Jesus to Pilate “has the greater sin.” It is not that Pilate is without sin, but that the greater sin lies elsewhere. That “one” could be Judas, the betrayer, or Caiaphas, the High Priest.*

God’s sovereignty does not mean that man is unaccountable for his choices, nor does man’s responsibility thwart God’s sovereign plan.

Take some time to reflect on Jesus’ willingness to subject Himself to such humiliation and torture. He chose to save us from our sins and this is the route to such redemption. He chose to honor His Father by demonstrating to the world the heinousness of sin and the glorious love of God. Yet the crowd was unmoved by the pitiful sight of Jesus. The Son of God was made a spectacle by the Roman soldiers. His own people didn’t choose pity, but yelled all the more, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” What hatred... juxtaposed with such sacrificial love!