



The Sermon

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John 19:1-15

"Behold the Man"

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TRANSCRIPT

So, my passage for today is John chapter 19. I want you to be taking your Bible and turn to John chapter 19; and today we're going to be looking at verses 1 through 15. The title of this message is "Behold the Man," John chapter 19. I want to begin by reading the passage, and then I'll pray, and then we will look carefully at these verses.

So, beginning in verse 1, "Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him; and they began to come up to Him and say, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and to give Him slaps in the face. Pilate came out again and said to them, 'Behold, I'm bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.' Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Behold, the Man!' So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, 'Crucify, crucify!' Pilate said to them, 'Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.'

"Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, 'Where are You from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, 'You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?' Jesus answered, 'You would have no

authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.' As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, 'If you release this Man, you are no longer friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.'

"Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, 'Behold, your King!' So 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.'" It would be hard to find a more dramatic passage of scripture in all the Bible. Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are unusually aware that as we look at this passage we are indeed stepping onto holy ground. This is our Savior, this is our Lord, being subjected to the cruelest treatment that man can throw at Him; and we want to stand with our Lord, yet we're separated by two thousand years. Nevertheless, our heart is with Him at this moment, as He is undergoing this on our behalf. I do pray that You would extract from this passage the truth that You would have us to look at today. Channel it through me into the minds and the hearts of all who would listen today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The title of this message again is "Behold the Man." In verses we see the trial of Jesus before Pilate continue to unfold, and it goes from bad to worse to unspeakably evil. In this passage we see mankind at its very worst. Here we see human government at its worst. Here we see dead religion at its worst. We see spiritual leaders at their worst. We see human justice at its worst. We see the legal system at its very worst. We see here mankind sunk down to its all-time low; and at the same time, we see Jesus at His very best.

Here we see Jesus testifying to Pilate of the sovereignty of God over Pilate. And more than that, we see Jesus trusting in the sovereignty of God over Pilate, and over His very own life. Here we see Jesus fearless in the face of His own death. Here we see Jesus suffering unjustly, yet exercising self-control. This is Jesus at His very best, and mankind at its very worst. What a study in contrast this is. Let us now continue our study of Jesus before Pilate.

I have five headings I want to set before you as we walk through this passage, and the first thing I want you to note is the punishment. As Jesus stood trial before Pilate, He suffered much mistreatment. Verse 1 begins, "Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him." More literally out of the original language, it is that Peter had Jesus scourged.

It was violent. It was cruel treatment that Jesus was subjected to. And during a procedure like this, the victim's back would be strapped, and he would be tied to a post. He would be beaten by soldiers with long wooden handle with leather thongs; and at the end of the thongs would be pieces of cut glass or bone or metal. And the body would literally be ripped to shreds. it would be lacerated. The internal muscle structure would be exposed, and the victims would often die; and it shows really, as Jesus went through this, what a sturdy and heroic figure He was to withstand such treatment.

In verse 2, "The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns." This was a mock coronation to do all that they could to belittle the Lord Jesus Christ. This mock crown was made of long spikes made from a date palm, and the spikes would be as long as twelve inches. And it says, "They put it on His head," which would indicate that they pressed it down into His skull, and the blood would begin to flow down His face and onto His bare chest.

And then it says, "and they put a purple robe on Him," just to further humiliate the Lord Jesus Christ, because He had claimed to be a king. And so they bring to Him a purple robe, purple being the imperial color, and taunted Him, and mocked Him even further.

And then, in verse 3, "They began to come up to Him and say, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'" a mock salutation, and mimicking, "Hail, Caesar!" They now change the words to, "Hail, King of the Jews!" a total degradation of the of the Son of God, "and gave Him slaps in the face," to continue to further beat Him and plummet Him. This was the punishment before He ever even arrived at Calvary, before He even came to the cross.

We ask ourselves, "Why would God have His Son go through this painful ordeal? Why not just bypass this trial and just go straight to the cross? Why all this?" And it is to prepare us in our times of suffering, that we might be able to identify all the more with a suffering Savior. It is Jesus went through this to encourage us, as we would see more vividly the ordeal that He went through as He would die in our place.

What an encouragement this is to battered wives, who are beaten by their husbands. What an encouragement this is to children who have been abused. You have a Savior who has stood exactly where you are, and He knows exactly what you're going through. This is a word of encouragement to every missionary who has been beaten and severely persecuted. You have a Savior at the right hand of God the Father who is a sympathetic High Priest, who knows what it is to be subjected to this kind of a beating.

In Hebrews 4:15, the writer of Hebrews says, "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses," and the word "sympathize" means to feel with. He continues, "but One who has been tempted," or tested, "also in all things as we are, yet without sin." You see, Jesus understands more than just cognitively when His people go through unjust suffering, and even physical torment. Jesus knows more than just intellectually; He's been here, He's gotten into our skin, and He has been subjected to the worst treatment that anyone could be subjected to. He knows experientially because He's been here, and He's felt it in a human body that the Father had prepared for Him. What encouragement this should be to us. And even for those who are taken to the hospital and undergo great physical trauma and suffering, and as you cry out to God in the name of your Savior, you have one seated at the right hand of the Father who knows what it is to walk the valley of the shadow of death and to feel in a physical

body what it is to suffer much pain. Here it is vividly on display. This is the punishment.

Second, I want you to note the presentation. Beginning in verse 4, Pilate now presents Jesus to the Jews hoping that this will appease them. So in verse 4, we read, "Pilate came out again and said to them," so he leaves the Praetorium on the inside, he comes to the outside to the courtyard where the Jewish leaders are, "and said to them, 'Behold,' - in other words - 'take note of this, I am bringing Him out to you,' - and as Pilate does this, it is in an attempt to rid himself of this case; he just wants this to go away, he says - 'so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him. This man is not a criminal. This man has not done any wrong, I find no guilt in Him.'" And yet Pilate is beginning to cower and to wilt already at this moment, because if Jesus is innocent and not guilty, then Pilate should release Him this very moment and not keep this dialog going with the vultures who are the leaders of Israel.

So, verse 5, "Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe." This is a horrific sight beyond even seeing your own wife and children beaten up. This is our Savior. This is the Son of God now being brought out and paraded, a man beaten and bruised and bloody, covered with gashing wounds and blood flowing down His face and His neck. "And Pilate said to them, 'Behold, the Man!'"

"Look, here He is. Look, He has suffered enough. What possible threat could this man be to you? What more could you want? I've had Him scourged, I've had Him beaten; He stands here bloodied. What more could you possibly want from Him?" And as Pilate presents Jesus here to the Jewish leaders, all they see is a blasphemer and an insurrectionist. They see only with fleshly eyes; they are spiritually blind, that they cannot see Jesus for who He truly is, the Son of God, because the unsaved, unregenerate eyes can see only according to the flesh. They cannot see according to the sight that only the Holy Spirit can give.

And I think it's good for us to be reminded that the world is no different today. It continues to see Jesus as a mere man and nothing more; and it is only once the Spirit of God is at work, does the Spirit of God allow a

human to see Jesus for who He is. And if you have come to know Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Son of Man, the one who is fully God and fully man, it is only because the Holy Spirit has opened your eyes to see what others fail to see. This was the presentation.

I want you to see, third, the pressure, because beginning in verse 6, the Jewish leaders are not going to let this just lay there. They're like sharks, and there's blood in the water, and they want more blood, and so they begin to pressure Pilate to put Jesus to death. It's not enough that Jesus has been flogged and scourged and beaten; they want Him dead.

And so we read in verse 6, "So when the chief priests," – and stop right there for a moment. We're talking about Caiaphas, we're talking about Annas, representing the Sanhedrin, the body of seventy leaders made up of Pharisees and scribes. This is the highest echelon of organized religion in the nation of Israel. This isn't coming from the back pew, this is coming from the platform.

"So when the chief priests and officers saw Him," you would think they would pull back with any kind of human decency and say, "He has suffered enough. It's the total opposite. It says, "They cried out," meaning with even greater intensity, greater volume. "They cried out saying, 'Crucify, crucify!'" Rather than this pathetic sight softening their hearts, it only hardened their hearts further.

And how strange this is even as we as believers read this account, it is melting our heart down, is it not? But for these unbelievers, it is hardening their heart even more. And we're reminded of the adage that the same sun that melts the snow, hardens the clay. And the same Christ who softens so many millions of hearts, nevertheless, hardens billions of hearts.

What evil lurked within their hearts. What depravity, what hatred, as they call now for the death sentence. They call now for the death penalty. They actually cry out, "Crucify, crucify!" And the fact that it's repeated reflects

the double dogmatism and the double emphasis that they are placing on the call for Jesus to be crucified. They call for it not just once, but twice. Jesus was too much of a threat to them, and the only solution is death.

So in the middle of verse 6, "Pilate said to them," no doubt with utter exasperation, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." This was spoken with biting sarcasm because Pilate knows that they have no authority to put the Lord Jesus to death. If they were to put the Lord Jesus to death, then Pilate must put them to death. And so he knows they have no authority to do this. Pilate is just further provoking them, but he is provoking their flesh like poking a dog through a fence, only arousing their anger even more. He says, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." That's the third time Pilate has said this, "I find to guilt in Him."

And so, in verse 7, "The Jews answered him," - their hatred knows no bounds - "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself to be the Son of God." The point of law to which they refer is in the book of Leviticus: the law of Moses, the law of God, and Leviticus 24:16. And how amazing this is that they can know the word of God this well and still be calling for the crucifixion of the Son of God. Leviticus 24:16 says, "The one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death." And so the crime they want to hang on Him is blasphemy - claiming to be God, claiming to be the Son of God. They now demand His death.

And rightly did the Jews remember the claim that Jesus has made, to be the Son of God. Jesus called Himself numerous times the Son of God and claimed to be equal with God the Father. Let me give you just one cross-reference for this. In John 5:18, we read, "The Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him." Why would the Jews be seeking to kill the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, look at the rest of the verse: "Because He was calling God His own Father," - listen to this - "making Himself equal with God."

You see, the Jews completely understood. There was no misunderstanding of what Jesus was claiming for Himself; they heard it loud and clear. And because Jesus was the Messiah who was God in human flesh, they now want to rise up and crucify Him. It was all over the deity of Christ. It was a matter of lordship.

And this remains the issue today, people pushing back against the deity and the lordship of Jesus Christ. "You don't want to be standing with that crowd." To them, He was merely a carpenter, a teacher, a good man. But Jesus claimed to be more than a carpenter, and more than a rabbi, and more than a prophet, and more than a teacher, and more than a good man: He claimed to be God in human flesh. He claimed to be the Word made flesh that dwelt among us. He claimed to be God: truly God, truly man; fully God, fully man.

I trust that you have come to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He has come from heaven on a mission of salvation and redemption, to do what only God could do, to die in the place of criminals and rebels and sinners, and to have such a capacity to die in the place of many, and to bear their sins, and to carry them far, far away. Only one who is truly God in human flesh could have died the death that He died upon that cross and be sufficient and able to save everyone who calls upon His name. If He was merely an angel, if He was merely a man and nothing more than a man, then His death would have no meaning to you or to me. But because He was God in human flesh, what He accomplished in His sinless life and His substitutionary death upon the cross means everything to you and to me who have put our faith and trust in Him. Back to the narrative.

I want you to note, fourth, as we come to verse 8, the panic, because Pilate now is in the vice grip of this situation in which there seems no escape for him. He finds no guilt in Jesus, and yet the religious leaders of Israel are now chanting and calling out for His crucifixion, and Pilate now is between a rock and a hard place. Pilate now is terror-struck, and we read in verse 8, "Therefore when Pilate heard this statement," – the statement that they are chanting at the top of their voices and crying out – 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' When he heard this statement, he was even more afraid." That is to

say he was already afraid because he's about to lose control of maintaining peace in Israel. But now he is even more afraid because he realizes now the situation is getting out of hand.

The word "afraid" is a Greek word *phobeō* – you can hear "phobia" in it. I mean, he is struck now with a phobia. He is terrified. And the word "more" there where it says "more afraid" really should be translated "very much afraid." He is, no doubt, turning pale white, his knees beginning to buckle, his speech beginning to stutter.

In verse 9, "He entered into the Praetorium," having been outside in the courtyard with the Jewish leaders, who will not give up an inch but are digging in their heels all the more, Pilate now turns and reenters back into the Praetorium where Jesus is being held in custody, "and said to Jesus, 'Where are You from?' – in other words – 'Who in the world are You? No normal person could cause this kind of trouble. From what realm have You come?' – and Pilate was a somewhat superstitious man, we know that from the other gospel in the dream that his wife had, and he is thinking of Jesus perhaps as some kind of god, one of the gods, one of the mythological gods, but far more real – 'Where are You from?' But Jesus gave him no answer." And as Jesus gave him no answer, this is a sign of divine judgment, when God no longer speaks to an individual.

I remember when I was a young man in my early thirties, first preaching through the gospel of John those many years ago, almost forty years ago, I remember preaching this very verse and saying, "The greatest judgment that God can bring upon you while you're alive upon this planet is that God would no longer speak to you." And I remember after the service was over there was a man visiting from Florida, I'll never forget it; and he was enraged and out of his mind almost, and had to have a private visit with me because he was so fearful that he had committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, to reach that point of no return, to cross the line with God's deadline when God will no longer speak to a heart and just turn you over, like Romans 1, turn you over to your own sin, and even give you a push and a shove in the direction you want to go to pursue your sin. And I don't think

that man ever came to Christ; but he knew that God was no longer speaking to him.

"Jesus gave him no answer. 'You've had enough of the truth; there's no more truth for you concerning who I am.'" Jesus will have some more to say to him, but it will not be regarding who He is. And it tells us when you hear the truth, you'd better act on the truth. When you hear the truth, you'd better respond to the truth. You just can't put truth in your back pocket and save it for a rainy day: "One day I'll get serious with God. One day I'll commit my life to Christ." Hell is full of people who were procrastinators who said, "One day," until God unplugs the mind and it becomes a reprobate mind that can no longer think to even process the information of the gospel that's being given to them.

So, in verse 10, "Pilate said to Him, 'You do not speak to me?' – in other words – 'How dare You not answer me! You're in my court. Do you not realize who You are talking to? Did You not know I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You? Do You not know who I am and what authority I have over Your little life?'" He was appalled at Jesus' lack of respect for him.

And what Jesus will have to say to him now in verse 11 should register in every one of us – and give very careful attention to this: "Jesus answered, 'You would have no authority,' – zero – 'you would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above.'" Jesus' point is, "Pilate, you're not in control of anything, you're a mere puppet on a string; and God in heaven is the one who has ultimate authority, and the path that I am on has been marked out from before the foundation of the world, and what authority you have is merely a delegated authority; for it is God who places into office, and it is God who removes from office," a truth that Daniel 2 and Daniel 4 underscore emphatically.

"You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given to you from above," – and "above" meaning from God itself. Here is Jesus' unwavering confidence in the absolute sovereignty of God the Father over

Pilate's life, over Jesus' own life, over Judas, over all of the circumstances. In the face of His imminent death, Jesus remains absolutely calm, because He is trusting in the overruling providence of God the Father. There's no fear here, only faith. There's no trauma here, only trust.

And here's an example for you and me. Let us be like our Savior. In our hours of darkest trials, let us remember that the Father has all authority over what threatens us. Rather than being afraid like Pilate, let us be like Jesus and be assured and reassured that God has a plan and God has a purpose, that He is working out, causing all things to work together for His glory and for our good.

Now look at the end of verse 11: "For this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." What does this mean? "For this reason he who delivered Me to you," that would be Caiaphas. And Jesus is saying to Pilate, who will be the one who will ultimately bring the death sentence and turn Him over to death on a cross; nevertheless, Caiaphas has committed the greater sin. And we need to pause here just for a moment and learn some theology.

Jesus is making a very important doctrinal point here, certainly that not all sins are the same. Some sins are greater than other sins. If I hear one more preacher say that all sins are the same, I want to buy him a Bible and mail it to him. Jesus clearly says that some sins are greater sins than others. Surely you can read that in your own Bible.

The explanation is very simply this, that the one who has the greater knowledge of the truth and rejects it has committed a greater sin than the one who has a lesser knowledge of the truth and rejects it. Did you hear that? Rejecting greater light, rejecting greater truth is to commit a greater sin, which will lead to a greater judgment. Caiaphas has the greater knowledge of the truth of God's word. Of course he did, he was the high priest of Israel. Of course he did, he's pulling Leviticus 24:16 out of the back of the Bible and quoting it, chapter and verse, before there is chapter and verse. Caiaphas had a greater knowledge of the truth of God's word than

did Pilate, who was a pagan Roman; thus, Caiaphas' part in this crime is against greater truth, therefore it is a greater sin.

I have to give you this cross-reference; it comes from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it just seals this interpretation. Luke 12:47-48, let me read it for you. Luke 12:47, Jesus at the end of the parable – I don't have time to go into the whole parable. The punchline for us is here at the end, in which Jesus said, "That slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes," – verse 48 – "but the one who did not know it, committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive few."

Did you hear that? They both commit the same sin. One has the knowledge of his master's will, the other does not have the knowledge of his master's will; they both commit the same sin. The one who knew his master's will, will be beaten to a pulp with more lashes, the one who did not know his master's will, will still be beaten – ignorance is not innocence under God's law – however, it will be with fewer lashes, because it was a lesser sin, because there was lesser knowledge of the truth.

Jesus then concludes, verse 48 in Luke 12, by saying this: "From everyone who has been given much," referring to much knowledge, much truth, much light, "much will be required"; God will expect far more from the one who knows the truth in fuller measure, "and to whom they entrusted much," again referring to the entrustment, a stewardship of greater knowledge, greater truth, greater light, "of him they will ask all the more," meaning they will expect so much more from the slave who knew his master's will.

I think the point should be very obvious, should it not? Yes, Jesus talks about a greater sin. I mean, we know that just even from studying the Old Testament law, that "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" simply means the punishment must match up with the crime. And some sins require the death penalty in the Old Testament, other sins simply required a restitution. It would depend upon what the crime is to determine what the

punishment would be. And some sins are so much greater, it required the death penalty.

No, all sins are not the same. There is a greater sin, but that greater sin is not what we might think it is. The greater sin is not adultery, the greater sin is not immorality, the greater sin is not stealing; that's not the greater sin. The greater sin is to hear the truth, to read the truth, to be taught the truth, and then to spit in the face of the truth. That is far greater sin. And if you're going to reject Christ, don't do it from Dallas, Texas. Go someplace where the gospel is not being preached. It would be better for you to go to hell from an island in the south seas than for you to go to hell from a city where there's a church on every other corner and gospel truth is being preached, because there are places in hell in which greater punishment is being inflicted than in other places in hell. I wonder what kind of exposure you have had to the truth.

If you're watching a livestream like this, or watching it on a website, you're probably someone's who's had exposure to the truth. I mean, there's zero entertainment value here at Trinity; it's just raw, sheer, unvarnished, unadulterated truth. We sing it; we preach it; we pray it. And so for you to be watching a program like this says in all probability you've had a lot of truth over the years, or recently, deposited into you. I want you to understand there is that much greater of an accountability that you have before Almighty God, and you will stand before Him on the last day; and if you do not commit your life to Christ, you will be beaten with many lashes, far more than someone in "nowheresville," who basically Christ is a cussword to him, and has never heard a gospel message. It will be so much severer for you if you do not commit your life to Christ.

Let me put this in the positive. I beg you, I plead with you, you are hearing the truth right now. Commit your life to Christ if you've never done this. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to Christ now, because unto whom much is given, the same shall be required.

There's a last heading that I want us to see, beginning in verse 12, and it's the politics. Politics seem to always get in the way. And the Jews now apply political pressure, and Pilate will buckle and wilt. So, verse 12, "As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him." Pilate is like a man who has flypaper on his fingers and he just can't shake it loose. He cannot rid himself of Christ and this situation no matter which way he turns or what he does, and so he wants to release Jesus and just get out of this Rubik's cube of a dilemma. But the Jews will not have it. They have Jesus exactly where they've been trying to place Him before a Roman official who can put the death sentence upon Him.

"The Jews cried out," they're becoming even more intense. The dust is not settling in their hearts, it is being revved up even more. "The Jews cried out saying, 'If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar.'" They're pulling every string that they can possibly pull to manipulate Pilate to put Jesus to death. What they are saying is, "If you release Jesus, you will not be in good standing with Rome, because your number one responsibility as the Roman governor is to keep peace in Israel, so that there is no insurrection, so that there no uprising and no upheaval. You will be disloyal to Rome, and it will cost you your job; it may even cost you your life. And there's only one way to settle this, Pilate, and it is to put Him to death." And they are applying as much pressure as they can. They are emotionally waterboarding him right now.

They go on to say in verse 12, "Everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." If someone makes themselves out to be a king, then Caesar can't be king. Is that not treason? Is that not an uprising? Is that not an insurrection? Is that not a political coup? Is that not a takeover?" "If anyone makes himself out to be a king, he opposes Caesar." "There can be no rival sovereign to Caesar," is what the Jews are saying.

Verse 13, "Therefore when Pilate heard these words," this was more pressure than he could handle. This angry mob has so intimidated Pilate now. "When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out," out of the Praetorium, out into the courtyard before the angry mob, "and sat down on the judgment seat," which was a raised platform with a chair or throne-like

seat on top, where he would sit and issue official, imperial verdicts and judgments and pronouncements. It was where the death sentence would be spoken publicly for all to hear. John records, "at a place called The Pavement," because this area's paved with stones, "but in Hebrew, Gabbatha," which means a raised place. So it's a raised place with stone covering, with a chair on it.

Verse 14, "Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover"; that would be Friday, the day before the Sabbath, "it was about the sixth hour." He's going by Roman time here; that would be 6:00 a.m. in the morning. After all, he's been telling us about this Roman trial; and Pilate is a Roman governor. So he's using Roman time to mark this out.

"And he said to the Jews, 'Behold, your King!'" And this is just a stinging ridicule of the Jews: "This is your King! You bunch of losers, this is the one who's over you. Here is your mighty, noble sovereign," as Jesus has the crown of thorns crushed into His skull, as the blood continues to pour out of His head and down His body. His back is just ripped to shreds. He is beyond recognition almost as even a human being.

So you would think this would be enough to calm the Jewish leaders down. You would think they would say, "Okay, enough is enough." If this was a fight, they would have broken this up long ago. If this was a Little League game, the thing would have been over in the first inning. But no, they will stop at nothing.

"So they cried out," and again, the intensity of their voice, 'Away with Him, away with Him,' - meaning - 'take Him now to the execution site.'" They know they have Jesus on the ropes. They know now is the time to deliver the knockout punch. They know now is the time: "Do not delay or stall. Away with Him now to Calvary! Away with Him now to Golgotha! Make Him carry His cross down the Via Dolorosa!" "Away with Him, away with Him," and then they add, "crucify Him! And once He arrives there, put Him to death, nail Him to a cross."

"Pilate said to them," jabbing them one more time, goading them one more time, 'Shall I crucify your King?'" He's trying to hang that around their neck still that He is their king. "The chief priests answered," and please note, this is coming from the top, this is coming from the very upper-level echelon of the nation Israel, as it is an apostate nation held in cords of sin, 'We have no king but Caesar.'"

They hate Caesar. They hate Rome. What hypocrites. What duplicity. What deception. What liars! They are lying through their teeth. "We have no king but Caesar"? Listen, they hate Caesar, they hate Rome; it's just that they hate Jesus even more. And the greater hatred is overruling the lesser hatred.

"We have no king." And even at that is a renunciation of the kingship of God over the nation. It's a renunciation of the hope of the Messiah to come. They should have risen up and said and quoted the Psalms, "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? They should have quoted Psalm 93:1, "The Lord reigns." They should have declared the kingship of God just like Jesus just did: "You would have no authority, except it has come from you from above." But the fact of the matter is they're not believers, they are liars; they are ruled by their own flesh. And so they call for the crucifixion of Jesus.

This is no fairytale, this is more real than today. And nothing has changed over the centuries. People will still go to any length to avoid committing their life to Jesus Christ. They will concoct excuses. They will concoct reasons. They will invent philosophies and ideologies. They will conceive false religions. They will come up with cults. They will espouse to be agnostics. They will claim to be atheists. They will even go to church and be nice and listen, and pay their tithes. But all the above will refuse to commit their life to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. They reject His claim to be God in human flesh, and in so doing, they commit the greater sin, the greater sin than all of the iniquity that takes place on planet earth. They reject the greater knowledge of Christ, especially in churches where the truth is preached, but a person just continues to want to have a casual Christianity, a cultural Christianity, and just be able to blend in with the world. They want to have one foot in church and one foot in the world, and

play all end into the middle, and in so doing, they show they have never believed in Jesus Christ. They have just enough religion to keep them from getting the real thing.

And so as you've heard this message. Are you with Pilate, are you with the Jews, or do you stand with Jesus? As you have walked with me through this passage, where do you stand? Where does your commitment lie? Where's your loyalty? Where is your allegiance? Do you stand with the crowd and cry out, "Away with Him, crucify Him"? Do you stand with Pilate and just try to absolve yourself of any dealing with Jesus and just try to get rid of Jesus, or do you stand with Jesus, who came into this world to seek and to save that which is lost? If you've never committed your life to Christ, you're lost, you're perishing. But the Savior, through His word, even through this message, is calling out to you to no longer commit the greater sin, to no longer trample underfoot the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Enter through the narrow gate. Believe upon Christ and live. And if you will commit your life to Christ, if you'll come to Christ by faith, He says, "The one who comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out." He's the friend of sinners. He will receive you. I know Him; He will receive you. He received me. He'll receive anyone who comes in humble repentance and lowly faith to embrace this One who endured such suffering at the hands of men. May God work in your heart this day to believe in Christ. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, this is unimaginable. We think of the cross and how gruesome it was. But even the steps that led to the cross is unimaginable to our modern sensibilities. Lord, awaken within us a new and deeper love for Christ, who walked this road all by Himself in order to rescue us and to redeem us unto Himself. So, Lord, we ask now that You would take this very simple message and bring it home to every heart who has listened today. May it find a glad reception with everyone, in Jesus' name. Amen.