

Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

The Gospel of John

Chapter 19:4-7

"Pilate then went out again, and said to them, 'Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.' Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, 'Behold the Man!' Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'"

Pilate is still attempting to release Jesus. And so he has Jesus brought out before the crowd in the thorn crown and mock robe. Pilate's judgment of Christ as a king is that He is weak, pitiable and no threat to the power of Rome. Perhaps Pilate is even attempting to win sympathy for Jesus from the crowd.

"Behold the Man...!" John the Baptist had said "Behold, the Lamb of God!" and now Pilate says "Behold the Man!" They are both calling attention to Jesus with the word "Behold" but their thoughts of what Man they were looking at are very different. John saw the fulfillment of the promises of God. John saw the Saviour of the world. Pilate sees a weak, insignificant man who has been beaten and made helpless.

Why is it good for us to take a look at Christ, as He suffers? It should remind us of the ugliness of sin. It should remind us of the love of God. We should mourn when we see His sufferings. We should love Him greater. The sad thing is that many people do not look at Christ. They pay no attention to His sufferings on the behalf of sinners. They have rejected the advice of John the Baptist and have not looked at the Saviour who dies. They ignore the declaration of Pilate to look and see an innocent man who suffers.

The chief priests and officers did see Jesus however and their "seeing" prompts the reply to crucify Him. What do you make of such a reaction? In a court of law, it is unreasonable. Jesus has been acquitted - you only pass a sentence

upon the guilty, not upon the innocent (twice declared already). It is cruel, violent and resolute with no apparent reason for it. Matthew Henry writes "They will have it their own way, and hazard the governor's favour, the peace of the city and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost of their demands."¹

But though there appears to be no reason for such animated hatred, there is a very good explanation of it: the leaders had to be rid of Christ. Jesus presents a threat to sinners who want their own way. Jesus claims Lordship of our lives and we know His claims are valid but we just can't stomach them. And even though it is impossible to fully and finally remove His authority in our lives sinners desperately desire to throw Him off for as long as they can.

Pilate says "You take Him and crucify Him..." You can sense the frustration Pilate has with these leaders and therefore, with this command he has basically dismissed the case finally - "I find no fault with Him. You crucify Him." The problem for the leaders is that they cannot crucify Him. It is only the Romans who can kill a person in such manner. They hold no authority in carrying out capital punishment. And so finally, at this point, Pilate hears the real charge that the Jews are bring against Christ – "He made Himself the Son of God..."

TableTalk

Read John 3:19 and 15:22. What is it about Christ that brings such strong rage from sinners?

¹Matthew Henry's Commentaries, vol. 5, Matthew Henry, pg. 961.