

November 26th, 2017

THE UNDOING OF THE CURSE

John 19:1-16

Dear congregation, as we approach the sacred ground of the final hours of the earthly life of Jesus Christ, it's vital that we see the context for these events. Jesus Christ stands before this evil pagan judge, handed over by his own nation because of you.

Your entire life has been shaped by sin. Your mother agonized in giving birth to you because of sin. "Because you have done this," God told Eve, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children" (**Genesis 3:16**) You were not born innocent, you were born guilty. King David prophetically wrote in **Psalms 51:5** "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And you will ultimately die one day because of sin. **Ezekiel 18:4** "the soul who sins shall die." Death was not part of the original design of creation. It came only because of sin. Therefore your life is bookended by sin. And everything in between is shaped by sin. Why is your job one of the most frustrating things of your life? Sin. **Genesis 3:17** "Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;" Why is your marriage or your relationships if you are single so difficult to maintain? Because every human relationship has been cursed because of sin (**Genesis 3:16; Titus 3:3**). Sin shapes every moment of your life.

And sin has become such a common thing—because in it we live and move and have our being—that we are forgetful of it. Not too long ago, Monica and I were walking on the greenbelt and we came upon a city trashcan that was chained to the tree next to it. What explains that? Nothing else can, but sin. Why do you have keys in your pocket? Why do we even need locks? Why do you wear clothes? Do you realize that entire industries have been produced in order to manage sin? The health care industry. The state and federal prison system. The Center for Disease Control. Homeland Security. The Supreme Court. Countless inventions exist because of sin. Aspirin. Wrinkle cream. Diet

pills. Internet filtering software. Bifocals. Kleenex. We eat, breath, and are suffocating in sin. And we are blind to much of it. Sin is why Thanksgiving and Christmas are the most painful times of the year for many of you, because they remind you of how your families have been devastated by this curse.

Sin is the curse of all curses. One Puritan Ralph Venning has said that sin is worse than death, the devil and hell itself.¹ Sin is worse than **death** because as Jesus said in **Matthew 10:28** “do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Second, sin worse than the **devil** because the devil cannot damn you, but sin can. The devil needs sin to do his work, but sin does not need the devil. And sin is worse than **hell** because the crime is a greater evil than the punishment. Hell is everlasting because it can never catch up to the evil that sin is.

That is the backdrop to John 19. Jesus is in this courtroom because of the curse of your sin. Sin has so ruined your heart, your life, your relationships, your future, your hope and your eternity, that if God doesn't do something to fix what is fundamentally wrong with you, it would have been better for you to have never been born.²

Jesus must undo the curse that hangs like a millstone around your neck. There are three fundamental things that Jesus is accomplishing as He stands and bleeds and suffers before Pilate.

- ☆ The Undoing of Your Pain (v.1)
- ☆ The Undoing of Your Shame (v.2-5)
- ☆ The Undoing of Your Blame (v.6-16)

¹ Ralph Venning, *The Sinfulness of Sin*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2008), pg. 184-188

² The context of Matthew 26:24 “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born” applies specifically to Judas, but the general principle is true for all. Non-existence is better than an eternity in hell.

Jesus is subjected to the pain of sin, to the shame of sin, and to the blame of sin. These three things comprise of the curse that God pronounced against Adam and his entire race. In our passage, Jesus undoes all of them. Not by brushing them aside, but by taking them on Himself. The indictment against Adam, the indictment against all of God's elect is now decisively given against Jesus Christ.

The Big Idea...

Jesus Christ has undone the curse by taking on your pain, your shame, and your blame if you hope in Him

I. The Undoing of Your Pain (v.1)

Pilate's fresh strategy

Last time we were together, we saw Pilate desperately trying to release Jesus. Pilate chose the worst criminal in prison — Barabbas, a murdering robber — and set him before the crowd as per custom and asked “Which one shall I release Barabbas or Jesus?”³ The blood thirsty crowd chose Barabbas. So chapter nineteen begins, v.1 “Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.”⁴ This flogging was a “fresh strategy”⁵ in trying to release Jesus. Pilate reasoned that if

³ The irony of this cosmic choice is laid out succinctly by R.C. Sproul: “According to tradition, Barabbas’ full name was Jesus Barabbas, and the name *Barabbas* can mean and probably did mean “son of the father.” Thus, the people cried for the freedom of this Jesus, “son of the father,” rather than the Jesus who was ultimately the Son of the Father.” R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 356

⁴ There is a textual difficulty between John's account and Mark's account. For a full description, see D.A. Carson's *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 596-598. We know that Jesus was scourged in the worst way that Carson describes. I've chosen to interpret v.1 in terms of the worst flogging because we know He did in fact receive this beating. If he in addition to this received another beating, then Jesus was punished worse than has been described.

⁵ *ibid*, pg. 596

he could simply punish Jesus, then that would be enough for the Jews. He tells them this in **Luke 23:16** “I will therefore punish and release him.”

The scourging of Christ

This flogging or scourging is the worst kind of punishment. Only surpassed by crucifixion itself. So imagine the scene. A wooden post driven like a spike in the rocky courtyard. Stained black with the dried blood of malefactors and murderers. Chains and an iron collar dangle down in order to prevent the victim from escaping the lashes. The instrument of torture “consisted of a short wooden handle to which several leather thongs, each with jagged pieces of bone or metal attached to the end, were fastened.”⁶ The Jews were only allowed to whip their criminals forty times. **Deuteronomy 25:3** says “Forty stripes may be given him, but not more, lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight.” The reason why we read in the NT that they gave only 39 lashes was because they feared this passage and didn’t want to be guilty of miscounting. But the Romans had no such law. In fact, Pilate wanted to degrade Jesus in order to gain some pity for him from the Jews. This scourging was often so severe the the criminal would die before crucifixion. The soldiers would whip and whip until they were exhausted, trading with each other to refresh themselves. This ended when the commanding officer ordered it. This was nothing short of mutilation, often leaving the victim’s veins, muscles, bones, and even entrails exposed. And this mutilation is what the prophet Isaiah predicted of Jesus, **Isaiah 52:14** “As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,” Or as one translation say, Jesus “seemed hardly human.”⁷ Jesus could have taken a worse beating without dying.⁸

⁶ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 338

⁷ NLT

⁸ Who knows how long this lasted? I can’t imagine Jesus surviving more than fifteen minutes. This would have been longest 15 minutes in the history of the world.

By His stripes we are healed

Dear congregation, this beating that Jesus endured is an undoing of the curse of pain⁹ for all hope in Him. Beloved there comes a point that all of face in life when the comfort of another human being can no longer reach our heart. The pain is too great. The sickness is too severe. Some of you are gravely ill right now. But all of you will be gravely ill before the end. How do you cope? How will you cope? By looking to this scourging of Jesus. Gregory the Great, a pastor in the 6th century reminds us never to waste our sufferings. He says to those who are sick or suffering

“consider the great evils that our Redeemer suffered from those who he created: **that** while he was daily rescuing souls from the captivity of the ancient enemy, **he** was beaten by the men who insulted him, **that** while he freed us from eternal punishments by his counsels, **he** tolerated great punishment;

Why, then, is it so difficult to believe that humans should endure suffering from God...if God endured¹⁰ [such great suffering on account of their sin]?”¹¹

Jesus is not *merely* an example of how to suffer. Jesus undid the very curse of suffering. **Isaiah 53:5** “upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” That doesn’t mean that all of our sicknesses are healed in this life. It means that they cannot follow us to the next. This scourging that Jesus endured, He endured for our corrupt nature. Every blow was a blow that we deserved for our sin. As one pastor said “Our hell is extinguished with Jesus wounds; our curse is consumed in Jesus soul; our guilt

⁹ Genesis 3:16-17

¹⁰ Original “Why, then, is it so difficult to believe that humans should endure suffering from God for the evil that they do if God endured so great an evil in response for his goodness?”

¹¹ Adapted from Gregory the Great’s *The Book of Pastoral Rule*, Trans. George E. Demacopoulos, (Crestwood, NY,,: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007), pg. 117-118

is purged away in Jesus' blood."¹² Take heart suffering soul! Your suffering will not have the last word. Jesus has already undone your pain.

II. The Undoing of Your Shame (v.2-5)

Jesus wore the curse as a crown

Look with me at **v.2-3** “And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands.”

After Jesus was scourged, He was then mocked beaten again by the soldiers. First they fashioned this crown of thorns. Probably from the date palm bush,¹³ these plants have spikes as long as 12 inches. They shoved this crown on His head. Certainly the spikes penetrated into the soft skin of His skull and temples. They dressed him in this purple robe—purple was the color of royalty—in order to mock this king of the despised Jews. Matthew records that they also gave him a reed as His scepter and they took it from Him and beat the thorns against His head (**Matthew 27:30**). These soldiers helped up every type of shame that they could on Jesus. **Matthew 27:29** says “And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Oh the Divine symbolism behind this shame! The soldiers made this crown of thorns in order to not only mock Jesus, but also to bring Him pain. But God had a deeper meaning. Recall the garden scene in Genesis 3. What was it that God told Adam? “Cursed is the ground because of you...thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you” (**Genesis 3:18**). Jesus is crowned with the curse! Jesus literally wore the shame of the curse upon His brow.¹⁴

¹² F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 285

¹³ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 598

¹⁴ See the parable from that ancient writer that Krummacher quotes— F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 285-286

Pilate's design

But Pilate had a different design in this. Look at **v.4-5** “Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”

The perverted crown of thorns, and the purple robe was meant to make Jesus look as ridiculous as possible—not like a king, but like a court jester.¹⁵ Pilate, still trying to free Jesus, presented this mutilated Jesus, this Jesus dressed like a clown, and mocked like one, to the people to show them that He posed no threat to their hierarchy or to Rome itself.¹⁶ Pilate declares “Behold the man!” *Ecce homo!*—the famous Latin phrase. Pilate’s saying ‘Look at this humiliated man. He’s a clown, not a king. So let’s been done with this nonsense. He’s not guilty of anything deserving death.’

The greater shame coming

Can you imagine the magnitude of this moment? Jesus’ robe dripping blood. He’s a mangled mess. The soldiers are laughing. The crowd is shouting. Here Christ is dressed up as the greatest of fools but in reality He is the “portrait of perfect humanity.”¹⁷ Dear congregation, How can we possibly reconcile such things with the idea of a holy God? How could a holy God let His Son be so shamed and mocked by wicked men? Why would Jesus let Himself be so shamefully treated? Recall that he told Peter “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (**Matthew 26:53**) One angel put to death 70,000 men in 2 Samuel 24. Imagine what 12 legions of angels could do.

¹⁵ R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 357

¹⁶ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 338-339

¹⁷ R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 358

So why wouldn't Jesus make use of this power to take away His shame? Because there is a greater shame coming. Shame is perhaps the most powerful emotion there is. Shame is even deeper than guilt. As one author has said "guilt...is the feeling of doing something wrong, [but] **shame** is the feeling of *being* something wrong."¹⁸ How will you erase the reality of *being* something wrong? That's what the gospel tells us. It's not just that you do wrong things, it's that you are a wrong *thing*. You are desperately wrong at the very core of who you are.

Adam and Eve knew this in the beginning. God's first people. When they sinned, they realized they were naked—which is a sign, not just of a lack of clothing—but a deep realization that they were shameful to the core. And so they sewed fig leaves together to try to hide this shame. And this is the history of the human race. It has been one enormous attempt to remove the shame of sin. But no one can remove this shame. You can't hide from it. And you know this. That new job that you thought would bolster your identity. That new relationship that you thought would bring new meaning. That entertainment that you pursued to distract your heart from the discomfort. All of these things are mere fig leaves. They don't provide enough covering. Because you are wrong in your core. You can't hide from that.

But when Jesus takes on this crown of thorns, and this purple robe, and this mockery "Hail, King of the Jews!"—He has taken your shame. John Huss, the great martyr of the fifteenth century, as he was being brought to the stake to be burned, his executors put a note on his head that had three devils upon with the saying "Chief Heretic." When Huss saw this he said "My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns, why should not I, therefore, for his sake, wear this light crown, be it never so shameful?"¹⁹

¹⁸ Source: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/shame-the-quintessential-emotion/> accessed November 25, 2017

¹⁹ Quoted by Robert Rollock (Eight Lecture John 19:1-6) Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed November 25, 2017

To not be ashamed is the promise of the gospel. **1 Peter 2:6** “For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” In Christ your shame has been undone.

III. The Undoing of Your Blame (v.6-16)

“We have a law!”

After Pilate had brought Jesus out and declared “Behold the man!”, we see how the Jews respond. Look at **v. 6** “When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.”

This is now the third time that we read in John where Pilate declared Jesus’ innocence. Throughout the gospels, we read that Jesus was declared innocent no less than six times in this kangaroo court. And the Jews were sensing that they were losing their argument. So they intensify their argument. Look at **v.7** The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” Now the law that the Jews were referring to comes from **Leviticus 24:16** “Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.” However the Jews didn’t have the power to put anyone to death. But Roman law required Pilate to uphold local law so far as it didn’t contradict Roman rule. So the Jews here were saying—“Do your job Pilate, this is our law²⁰ and you are supposed to uphold it as governor.”²¹

²⁰ The tragedy here is that ironically the Jews were blind to the very Word of God they said they believed. The general principle that they were quoting was right, yet they applied it wrongly to the very Word of God Himself. They had head knowledge but heart disease. As Robert Rollock the Scottish Puritan said “True Christianity stands in the reformation of the heart; and without this, all the knowledge in the Scripture shall poison thee to the death; for, except thou be reformed, it had been better for thee that thou hadst been ignorant, and never seen the Scripture.” *ibid*, Ninth Lecture, John 19:7-9

²¹ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 590

Even more afraid

But all Pilate seemed to hear from them was that last part of v.7 “he has made himself the Son of God.” And what a parallel here between the first Adam and the last Adam. The first Adam was tempted by Satan ‘Eat the fruit—and you will be like God” (**Genesis 3:5**) Now the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the one who is God Himself is being punished for claiming such a thing.

Pilate was scared when he heard this claim. v.8 “When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.” The Greek word for *afraid* here is where we get the word phobia. Pilate was struck with terror. He wasn’t scared because the Jews were calling him to task. He was scared because, Pilate like most of the other Romans believed in all sorts of gods.²² They held to a pantheon of gods.²³

Rome was not atheistic, they were polytheistic. Pilate had just scourged this man, who claimed to be the Son of God. And it was all hitting him. His wife had already warned him. **Matthew 27:19** says “While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” And Jesus certainly didn’t look behave like any other man before his judgment seat. Every man would plead for his life, and argue with his accusers. But Jesus did neither. All of this had to be hitting Pilate like a runaway train. He was scared.

“Where are you from?”

So we read in v.9 “He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” When Pilate asked Him “Where are you from?”, he didn’t mean “what country did you come from?” F.W. Krummacher says here “Pilate begins...with an inquiry which includes within it nothing less than the

²² He wasn’t an atheist, he was a polytheist.

²³ In the book of Acts, when Paul was spreading the gospel throughout the Roman empire, he came to Lystra and there through the power of the Holy Spirit healed a crippled man. **Acts 14:11-12** says “And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.”

vital question of the whole of the Christian religion.”²⁴ Pilate meant “What world have you come from?” Or as Calvin put it “Art thou a man born on the earth, or art thou some god?”²⁵

But the end of v.9 says “But Jesus gave him no answer.” Why should Jesus answer him? Pilate was not looking for truth. So Jesus was silent. This is dreadful silence. It’s the judgment of silence. Paul hints at this in **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** “...because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” It seems to me that Pilate approached that time in his life. He had scorned truth his entire life, and now Truth with a capital T is right in front of him, and he can’t hear it.

Do you not know that I have authority?

And then Pilate’s dark unstable heart lashes out. One minute he is terrified and the next he is enraged. He says in v.10 “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” Jesus has been silent up to this point, but now He must correct Pilate, because He has trespassed all reason. So Jesus responds in v.11 “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.” This answer that Jesus gives is the climax of this entire court room scene. I want us to see three things here.

First, the pride of Pilate. Pilate represents the typical unbeliever. “I’m in charge of my life—I am the determiner of my fate.” To that Jesus responds ‘Pilate you have no authority, no power other than what God has placed in your sphere.’ Some of you right now, in this room are just like Pilate. Unbelieving. Proud. Rebelling against Christ and His Word “I have the power to do this or

²⁴ F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 299

²⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries of Calvin, Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 218

do that.” But you have no ultimate power. You don’t have the power over your next breath. It would not be shocking at all to learn that some of you die before the year’s end. Before this week ends even. You can’t even control the fear of your own mind.

Secondly, consider how Jesus responds to Pilate directly. Again **v.11** Jesus says “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.” In other words, “Pilate you are *mere* clay. You do not have the final say of whether I live or I die. My Father has carefully planned this event from before the mountains were even formed.”²⁶ This answer Jesus gives answers the ultimate question *Who is responsible for the death of Christ?* One of the popular heresies that exists today is open theism. It’s likened to God playing chess with mankind. God doesn’t know the moves that man is going to make by his own free will, but since God is the master chess player, He simply outmaneuvers man. That is not the God of the Bible. God did not merely outwit his enemies.²⁷ Jesus Christ was the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. (**Rev. 13:8**) Meaning God created the world so that He could put His Son on the ultimate stage of the cross. It is God—not evil men—who was ultimately responsible for putting Jesus in this position. **Isaiah 53:10** “Yet it was *the will of the Lord* to crush him; *he* has put him to grief.”

Thirdly, we see that even in the face of God’s absolute sovereignty we see man’s responsibility. Jesus sees no contradiction in God’s sovereignty and man’s

²⁶ Psalm 90:2

²⁷ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 601

responsibility. This is known as compatibilism.²⁸ Compatibilism says that every event under heaven (even the most evil events) cannot escape God's sovereign control—yet God's sovereign control never takes away the guilt and responsibility of man, and neither does man's voluntary choices ever make God dependent (or contingent).²⁹ And we see this compatibilism in how Jesus ends v.11 “**Therefore** he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.” So if we put the two parts of v.11 together, Jesus is saying ‘Pilate My Father is in control, that is the *only* reason you have the authority to kill me right now but the one who gave me over has the greater sin.’ Jesus is most likely speaking of Caiaphas here. It was Caiaphas who, along with the chief priests, delivered Jesus over to Pilate. This was the greater sin. Pilate was guilty. But he didn't have the light that Caiaphas and the Jews had. They had the Scripture. They should have known better. That's what Jesus is saying here.

²⁸ WCF 3.1-2 1. God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. 2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

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Perhaps the passage in the NT that makes compatibilism the clearest is Acts 4:27-28 “for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.” (cf Acts 2:22-23)

²⁹ This adapted from Carson's commentary on the gospel of John. He goes on further to say “Especially in writing of events that lead up to the cross, New Testament writers are bound to see the hand of God bringing all things to their dramatic purpose no matter how vile the secondary causalities may be; for the alternatives are unthinkable. If God merely outwits his enemies, whose evil sets both the agenda and the pace, then the mission of the Son to die for fallen sinners is reduced to a mere afterthought; if God's sovereignty capsizes all human responsibility, then it is hard to see why the mission of the Son should be undertaken at all, since in that case there are no sins for the Lamb of God to take away.” D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 600-601

The final blow

Pilate heard enough. **v.12** says “From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” The Jews again countered Pilate’s strategies to release Jesus with this final accusation. ‘You are not Caesar’s friend.’ Tiberius was Caesar over Rome at this time. History records that Tiberius “was known to be quick to entertain suspicions against his subordinates, and swift to exact ruthless punishment.”³⁰ And Pilate had already been warned by Tiberius in his earlier dealings with the Jews.³¹ No doubt Pilate asked himself ‘what defense could I offer Tiberius if I don’t crucify this Christ whose own nation is charging with treason against Caesar?’

Pilate was pressed to the point of where he had to choose: “Will I be a friend to the king of Heaven or to the king of Rome?”

Let’s see how it ends. **v.13** “So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. [v.14] Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” This is Pilate’s last pathetic attempt. He’s scornfully mocking them. as if he saying ‘Look at this man! He’s poor and pitiful just like you.’

But they cry out in **v.15** “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.” This final statement by the Jews was the height of their blasphemy. This word fulfilled what John said at the beginning of this gospel **John 1:11** “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.” The Jews rejected the very King whom the entire OT prophesied. And then **v. 16** reads “So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.” That is, Pilate gave in to their desire, and gave Jesus up to be crucified.

³⁰ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 602

³¹ R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.,: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 348-349

Two Appeals

I want to make two appeals before we move into our application. The first is to unbelievers. Every human being is faced with the dilemma that Pilate was faced with: what shall I do with Jesus Christ? There is nothing more important than this question. Pilate chose dreadfully wrong because Caesar's favor was *everything* to him.³² Caesar was his God and his own honor was his heaven. And he allowed these to silence his conscience. The Scottish Puritan Robert Rollock reported that in the OT, when the wicked Israelites burnt their sons in order to sacrifice them to demon gods, the children would weep. And the Israelites simply played their timbrels or their tambourines louder so they wouldn't hear their pitiful cries.³³ Dear unbeliever, do not drown out the voice of your conscience. You know that this account is true. You know that you are a sinner, that at your very core you are wrong. Christ came so save such sinners as you. He doesn't require you to work your way to heaven. That is impossible. He requires you to repent and believe. Turn away from your rebellion, and turn towards Jesus Christ in faith. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

And finally to believers. We have seen how Jesus has undone the curse. In this trial, we saw the undoing of your pain, the undoing of your shame, and now finally the undoing of your blame. There were two main accusations in this trial against Jesus. 1). Blasphemy and 2) Treason. Beloved, these are the accusations that were leveled against you. The main accusations. You in sinfully serving yourself and your own interests have committed blasphemy because you have placed yourself in the position of God. And in doing so you have committed treason because you have rebelled against the true and Living God. Don't you see, Jesus takes your blame. Those were the accusations He bore for you. This is what substitution means. It's not that you were not guilty.

³²F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 302

³³ Robert Rollock (Eleventh Lecture John 19:12-15) Source: [http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20\(vol.2\).pdf](http://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Rollock,%20Robert/Selected%20Works%20of%20Robert%20Rollock%20(vol.2).pdf) accessed November 25, 2017

You were. But Jesus took the blame for your guilt. Jesus was simultaneously the most innocent and the most guilty man. Innocent in himself, and guilty because He took on your sin. As Paul says “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21) Your blame has been undone, because Jesus took it.

Application

Our Doctrine, Duty, and Delight: The Christian life is a life filled with sorrow and rejoicing, therefore be sorrowful but always rejoicing

This is how Paul described the Christian life in **2 Corinthians 6:8-10** “We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.” Now Paul here is describing what his apostolic ministry looked like. But there is an important application for you. And I just want to pick up on that one phrase: “we are..sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.”

So here’s the question what should be the true source of your sorrow? And what should be the true source of your rejoicing? Because I would argue that because you are a Christian in the affluent West, your sorrow and your joy can be dislocated. Beloved, what brings you sorrow? Do you ever just stop and meditate on how your sin brought such sorrow to Christ? We often stop at the feeling of guilt, and fail to press on to how much our sin cost Christ. Christ *had to die* for you. You are the cause of His suffering. **Zechariah 12:10** says “when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” Your day to day sins—your treating your spouse poorly, your impatience, your lust, your pride, your arrogance, your unforgiveness and bitterness, your dishonesty at work, your addiction to entertainment, your desire

for the things of this world more than the things of God, your presumptuous disobedience to His Word all things that made Christ weep, and bleed, and suffer greatly. He was tied to that post and scourged until bones and muscles and veins were exposed because of your sin. He was put to shame because you were wrong in your inner most being. And He was blamed for every deed you ever did wrong. That should be the true source of your sorrow. Oh how you made the Savior bleed. Christ *had to die* for you.

And yet, strangely, you should be “always rejoicing.” Beloved Christ died for *you*. One of my favorite songs growing up was called Ten Thousand Angels. Verse two reads:

Upon His precious head they placed a crown of thorns;
 They laughed and said, “Behold the King.”
 They struck Him and they cursed Him and mocked His holy name
 All alone He suffered everything
 He could have called ten thousand angels
 To destroy the world and set Him free
 He could have called ten thousand angels
 But He died alone, for you and me.

Beloved Christ died for you because He loves you. Everything in the court scene that we just saw, Jesus willingly endured because He would rather take hell on Himself than subject you to it. He didn’t want you to perish. And if Jesus took on hell for you, than you never need to worry about anything. Nothing can touch you. Not the devil, not cancer, not death. “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (**Romans 8:37-39**)

Therefore be sorrowful yet always rejoicing. The heart of a Christian should be a spectacle to the world. It is a heart mixed with sorrow and joy. Sorrow because you know you have wounded your Savior so. But joy unspeakable because Jesus has undone your curse and you will never be separated from Him.