

April 1/2, 2025

Women's Bible Study – John 18:28-19:16

I. Introduction

Good morning!

How many of you enjoy doing puzzles? I have friends who are great puzzlers and my hat goes off to them. Well, the sight of all of those pieces laying on the table gives me anxiety. Nothing seems to make sense to me. What should I be seeing? Well, in the passage we are studying this week, the Jews have been given many of the pieces of the 'puzzle' as Jesus spent the last three years testifying that he was their Messiah, but they are not able to see beyond their own filters or perspective; they only see him as having a negative impact on their lives and so saw him as someone who needed to be 'eliminated'.

Today, we are going to discuss this passage in John, where Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, will be abandoned, abused physically and emotionally and will be executed under false pretenses. Sometimes, when we are going through a difficult season, suffering or hardship, it can feel like looking at a bunch of puzzle pieces. Things don't seem to make sense., we don't understand how this is part of God's plan and how it can work for good. We may feel despair, fear, anxiety or abandoned.

The injustice of this passage takes your breath away. But also, look closely and you will see the perfect love and provision of our Father in heaven as His plan for the redemption of mankind is in progress.

We can be very thankful that John was able to see the unfolding of all of the prophecies of the Old Testament and

understand the days' events in light of that. His narrative provides us so much detail as to Jesus final hours and points to the Sovereignty of God in all of these events. We will see God's hand and plan even in the harshest of moments. Though misunderstood by the people He came to save, Jesus could rest in His Father's plan.

II. The Trial

As we dig into this passage, we will look at the Trial, Christ's confession and The Choice. Let's start by reviewing the historical context of this passage.

John's objective in writing this gospel is to show the deity of Christ, fully God and fully man. We will see the gritty details of this truth in his trial and subsequent execution, which will be discussed next week.

It is thought that these events in this passage took place between 26-36 AD. Jesus was born during Pax Romana, or Roman Peace. Basically, it was a period when the Romans placed a value on peace vs war, feeling it was economically better for the Empire. The Romans would quash any disturbance, so the Jewish leaders raising concerns about an instigator claiming to be King would get some attention.

The key players in this trial of Jesus are, Caiphas the Jewish Head Priest (his father-in-law is Annas, also a High Priest), Pontius Pilate the Roman Governor of Judea and Herod the tetrarch of Galilee. An interesting side note, in 1961, there was evidence found in Caesarea that confirmed Pilate's reign as a prefect in Judea.

Pontius Pilate and the Jewish leaders are noted in historical writings to have a deep animosity towards each other, with

Pontius Pilate often provoking the Jewish community that lived in his territory. An unlikely alliance for sure in this investigation of Jesus but again, all part of God's plan.

The first scene in these verses is the trial of Jesus. These events takes place during Passover week. Theologians believe this passage occurs the morning after the Passover meal or The Last Supper as we know it. Just a few days prior, Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd saying 'Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord'. If this were me, I would be tempted, no, I would believe, that I am loved and accepted by man. But Jesus knows men's hearts. He knows what lies ahead and is fully committed to his Father.

After being arrested in the Garden, after the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus is led into Pilate's headquarters.

Prior to coming to Pilate, Jesus had been questioned and physically mistreated by Herod, Annas and Caiaphas. This is detailed in Mark 14: 53-65. Even though the Old Testament provided a picture of the Suffering Saviour that would come one day, they spit into the face of the Lamb of God, their Suffering Savior (John 1:29). Ironically, it is thought that as the Lamb of God is being questioned, the Passover lambs would be heard being slaughtered. Jane Evans shared in her lesson on John 5 that 'even though the Jews could memorize scripture, they hadn't learned to hear God's voice within these writings. The Jewish scribes were responsible for copying the Jewish scriptures. They knew the word but it did not mean anything to them. EVEN THOUGH THE SCRIPTURES TESTIFIED THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD AND THE MESSIAH'.

So let's take a look at [chapter 18:28-32](#).

Commented [ED1]: This will help the women know exactly what you are quoting.

'Then they led Jesus from the House of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. So Pilate went outside to them and said 'what accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered him 'If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you'. Pilate said to them, 'take him yourselves and judge him by your own law'. The Jews said to him 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death'. This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Lets just consider what just happened. The Jewish leaders do not want to come into Pilate's palace so they will not be

defiled and kept from enjoying their Passover festivities.

Meanwhile, they are bringing the Lamb of God to Pilate to get his approval for execution. Sometimes we can be so consumed by our feelings towards someone or some issue that we can't see the sin in our own heart. As for Pilate, he doesn't seem eager to engage in this investigation. He would prefer they manage this on their own.

Why are they bringing Jesus to Pilate? Well, related to Pax Romana, Jews were not allowed to execute anyone without the permission from the Roman government. An interesting note, is that Jews used stoning as their method of execution. The Romans had begun to use crucifixion as their means of execution as it inflicted more pain and shame. It was reserved for the worst offenders. The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus killed, and needed the Romans to accomplish this, which meant that Jesus would be crucified. God's

sovereignty is displayed even in how Jesus died, as prophesied in the Old Testament in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

Why did the Jewish leaders want Jesus put to death? He was officially accused of blasphemy which was punishable by death. However, Jesus threatened their power, influence, and their erroneous beliefs. Also, Jesus's teaching challenged the relationship between the Jewish leaders and Rome. The Jewish sacrificial system in the Temple was quite a revenue stream, for the priests. As they always say, Follow the Money. Jesus came to be our sacrifice and this would be no small matter that he would threaten their livelihood. In John 8:47, Jesus says to them 'Whoever is of God, hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not from God.' What an indictment. Surely Jesus made them uncomfortable at the very least. Even today,

Jesus makes people uncomfortable, as we cling to idols, false beliefs, pride, control.

In my own life, control has been a challenge for me in my walk with Jesus. I am willing to listen to directions but not hand over control of the wheel. Jesus helped me see control for what it is, lack of faith, through my grandson. My grandson was in the middle of a custody hearing, all of 5 years old, when we were told some difficult information about someone's interaction with him. We had one of the best lawyers in the area for these issues, an amazing care team at church and a massive amount of people praying for this situation. We were praying the judge would have discernment in placing him in certain living arrangements. I had to testify in court and on that day, felt the incredible power of Jesus in my peace and in feeling his presence during the hearing. However, the judge did not rule to

change his living situation but did put some restrictions on the family.

WOW, not what I prayed for or hoped for in my grandson's life. I know Jesus heard all of the prayers, I know God is good and all has passed through His righteous right hand. I went home full of despair and fear. That night I truly wrestled with God and had little sleep, sharing my anger towards Him, my feeling of abandonment, my fears for my grandson. I thought about going rogue and taking my grandson to Mexico – yes I did. And then, as the night wore on, I said to Jesus what Peter said in John 6:68, 'To whom shall I go, you have the words of eternal life'. It felt like I was abandoning my grandson in choosing Jesus. But Jesus helped me see that I was abandoning him into the arms of Jesus who loved him more than any of us. In that, I found my peace and let go. This night was a turning point in my faith

and in the depth of my relationship with Jesus. To be honest, I had to die to self regularly in this situation and often wanted to take control back from Jesus. Truly, without the gift and help of the Holy Spirit, I would not have been able to persevere!

Many scriptures comforted me during that time but Romans 8:32 became very real to me in letting go of my will. 'He who did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things'.

John Stott in his commentary on this passage says 'The authorities want Jesus to be crucified 'under the curse of God' and they will have their way. In the wonder of God's grace, however, their wish coincides precisely with our need.

We are all under a curse of the law as Paul called it in Galatians 3:10'.

In Galatians 3:13, Paul says that Jesus became a curse for us.

III. The Confession – I AM

In verses 33-40, we get to hear from Jesus, the prisoner.

Pilate's heart doesn't seem to be into this trial of Jesus. He has already tried to send Jesus back to Herod and now he is pushing back on Caiaphas and the Jewish Leaders. Pilate believes Jesus is on trial but truly, it is Pilate who is on trial.

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you say this of your own accord or did others say it to you about me? Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and their chief priests have delivered you over

to me. What have you done?' 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 – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice'. Pilate said to him 'What is truth'? After he said this he went back outside to the Jews and told them 'I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? They cried out again, Not this man, but Barrabas! Now Barrabas was a robber.

Jesus becomes the interrogator of Pilate before clearly sharing the truth of his Kingship. Jesus, the prisoner, offers Pilate, his judge, the opportunity to know God, to experience true freedom. Pilate is clearly conflicted, he doesn't believe Jesus is guilty but has to appease the Jewish leaders; like us Pilate fears the opinions of people rather

than God...who is standing right in front of him!. As Jesus is questioned and mistreated, He is immovable in his understanding and love of His Father and in His mission as He testifies before Pilate. He knows the outcome and is not timid or cowed at his interrogators. Pay attention to Jesus statement 'I AM a King'.

Throughout the book of John, we read Christ's clear testimony of who He is and why He came. Tracy Eide in her lesson on John 8 reminded us that Christ told the people, 'I AM the Living Water, I AM the Bread of Life and I AM the Light of the World'. There are 7 statements in John with the testimony of I AM:

- a). I AM the Bread of Life
- b) I AM the Light of the World
- c) I AM the Door

- d) I AM the Good shepherd
- e) I AM the Resurrection and the Life
- f) I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life
- g) I AM the True Vine

In Exodus 3:14, God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'.

If you recall, in John 18:6, when they came to arrest Jesus, he answered 'I AM', 'at that they drew back and fell to the ground'. Jesus had power over his captors. But he willingly allowed himself to be arrested.

The pharisees heard him preach, heard of his miracles and yet missed the message because they were 'not of God'.

They were not seeking a Savior. Even Pilate seems cynical in his question to Jesus, 'what is truth'. He doesn't even wait

for a response. *RC Ryle* says in his commentary on John that 'God never left any honest, diligent inquirer without light and guidance. Pride is one reason why many cannot discover truth.'

Let's look at chapter 19: 1-8:

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him, and the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. Pilate said to them 'Behold the Man!' When the chief priests and 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.' The Jews answered him and said 'We have a law and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God'. When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.

Pilate gives way to the pressure of the Jews, ignoring the warning his wife gave him to have nothing to do with “this innocent man”, as Matthew 27:19 explains. He orders that Jesus be flogged, which was gruesome. In my reading, there were three levels of flogging, from light, to brutal for serious crimes, to the worst form called scourging, which was preliminary to crucifixion and often caused death.

So this flogging was no slap on the wrist, it was horrific torture, often deadly and yet, did not appease the Jewish leaders.

Jesus, who came to earth in human form, experiences physical and emotional abuse from those He came to save.

In this picture of Jesus, we see the representative man and the real man. As a real man, Jesus endured physical, emotional and relational suffering during this interrogation.

Jesus also represents us, taking our place and the penalty for our sin, as a willing sacrifice. As we each struggle with different suffering in our lives, all of it is known to Jesus and has been experienced by Jesus. He is not a God of stone or wood that cannot identify with our pain. This is one of the distinctions of the Christian faith, that our God walks with us in our suffering.

In all of these events, threads that are coming together according to God's plan. In Acts 2:23, Peter states, '*This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^[a] put him to death by nailing him to the cross*'. Jesus is not a victim in this scene but a victor. Jesus said in John 10:18 'No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my

Father. I lay down my life'. In laying down his life and rising from the dead, Jesus breaks the curse of sin and brings believers into a relationship with the Trinity.

Man was responsible for Jesus' death but God was sovereignly working out his purposes. Alistair Beggs noted in one of his sermons that he is often asked 'who killed Jesus'? In this narrative, he said, 'we can see that it was all of mankind that collaborated in putting Jesus on the cross. The Jews and Gentiles worked together to see that Jesus was executed. Even in that, God is displaying our need and His purpose. We are all guilty and under the curse'.

IV. The Choice

In this most intimate, violent scene of Christ's trial, each person needs to make a choice. Let's finish out our study with verses 19:9-16.

He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, 'You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above (key verse).

Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin. 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'.

So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the Judgement Seat at a place called the Stone

Pavement and in Aramaic, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover. It was 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 priests answered, 'We have no King but Caesar'. So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

A quote from M.G. Gutzke: "So in all of this welter of confusion, with people doing certain things for a good or bad reason, for a short or long reason, for their own benefit or just in the doing of their duty; in all of this God's will was carried out!! There is no indication that God's will varies because of circumstances or the selfish ideas of men. God always carries out His Purpose and the believer may share in that with Him, if he will but trust Him."

Isn't this a source of comfort to us as we endure suffering?

God is in control, He has a plan and will not leave us to suffer alone.

Let's consider the choices made by the various people mentioned in our passage:

A. The Jewish Leaders

They reject the True King of Israel and pay homage to a human king in order to control their world and retain power. The same people who cried out to God in I Samuel 8 to give them a King, now give allegiance to Caesar, as their true King stands bloody and bruised.

In Annie's lesson on John 12, it is noted in Isaiah 6:9-10

'And he said, "Go, and say this to the people:

Keep on hearing but do not understand; keep on seeing but do not perceive.

Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy and blind their eyes...”

In a historical note, the Sadducees disappeared from history within the lifetime of Jesus execution. Their power was tied to the Temple and when it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, they couldn't survive. The Romans would destroy Jerusalem, the Temple and kill 500,000 Jews.

B. Pilate

In verse 19:6, Pilate states that he finds no guilt in Jesus. Pilate tried to maintain his neutrality in this engagement with Jesus, not wanting to hurt his position in the Roman government by upsetting the Jews. So, he tried to use lesser punishments to avoid making the choice requested by the Jews. In the end, Pilate chose to please man and not to follow what his heart knew to be true. Pilate's name is

forever a part of human history for putting to death the One that could save man from their sin. Pilate was led by popular opinion not leading popular opinion.

DA Carson states that 'Pilate portrays the human predicament in which one must choose between Jesus and the world.

Pilate tried to not commit, to remain detached, neutral. That is not possible when we meet the Son of God!

C. John

John had chosen to follow Jesus at the start of Jesus ministry. John has born witness to Jesus's teachings and testimony during his ministry on earth and now is watching the unfolding of Old Testament prophecy in Jesus' trial. John is able to detect the Hand of God in the realities of this sham trial and becomes a witness to God's amazing plan.

D. JESUS

Was faithful to the end of his life and he will be faithful to us through all our earthly days!

E. And finally, US

As we read and meditate on this passage, we too have a choice.

Jesus' Kingdom is about spiritual transformation of our hearts. It is not about a geographic kingdom or earthly power or getting 'likes' on social media. Are we seeking God's Truth or one that fits the 'cultural narrative'. Those who hear Jesus voice, understand that He is Truth. Those who can 'hear' Jesus voice need to Follow, Obey and Worship.

In reading through this passage of the brutal treatment and death of Jesus Christ, I was struck by two things:

a) The undeniable truth of God's sovereignty in all of our lives. In the brutality of Jesus beatings and death, God could have provided other ways, intervened, etc but God had a master plan for the redemption of His people, and the cost to Him and His son was significant. Each small detail recorded by John has passed through the Hand of the Father. So does each detail of our life. We can trust Him to redeem those sufferings and hard things in our life as we see how he used this terrible moment in history to redeem those who hear His voice.

b) Second, Christ suffered and died for me, for you. John Stott in his commentary on this passage, says that 'Jesus stands within the darkness of this kangaroo court and it does not engulf him. Jesus still stands before us, offering His Way of Truth, a Knowledge of

the Father, which beginning in the Valley of Confession and Repentance, leads forward along the pathway of daily surrender to Him as Lord'. Every day we must make choices for or against Christ. There is no neutrality in the spiritual realm. As we reflect on our Suffering Savior, let's pray for God's strength to chose Christ.