

The Great Exchange

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[0 : 00] Father, we acknowledge before you that this Bible text that we have just read has been used by sinful men and women to unleash dark forces from within to hurt many people.

And we acknowledge before you, Father, that we are reading a story of spiritual leaders who read and studied your word, yet got it completely and utterly wrong.

Lord, we ask that you would have mercy upon us, that the Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction, that we might search your scriptures and that we might humbly and hungrily understand them in the way that you intended. And so live gripped by the gospel and living for your glory. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your son and our savior. Amen. Please be seated.

It sounded like my... I'm broadcasting all right? Okay, perfect. So, you know, as we all know, the behavior of Christians can make the gospel look ugly. And the behavior of Christians can make Christianity look unbelievably unattractive. And the text that we are going to be looking at today is on one hand a very powerful text about... that touches a common human problem. And the common human problem is that no human being lives without tragedy and brokenness in their lives. And it's a common human desire that in the midst of tragedy, in the midst of evil, in the midst of terrible things that happen, that there could be some type of amending of that which has been broken. And this Bible text, on one hand, is a very, very powerful text that speaks into this. Yet at the same time, this very powerful and wonderful text that speaks into the problem of how we human beings address tragedy and brokenness and how the gospel speaks to it, is also a text that has been one of the main texts used to justify violence against Jewish people and the murder of Jewish people for centuries upon centuries.

It is a text which has been used to justify horrendous evil and has also been used to justify horrendous abuse of power by politicians, by kings, and by those in positions of authority. It's very, very interesting that the same text which has been used to perpetrate horrors is also actually a text which describes a profound horror which is absolutely essential for the mending of the world and the mending of creation and the mending of relationships. And so let's look at it together. John chapter 19, beginning at the first verse. John chapter 19, beginning at the first verse. And just before we start to read it, as you turn to it in your Bible, what we're reading is we're reading one of the four ancient biographies, eyewitness biographies of Jesus. There's only four ancient eyewitness biographies of Jesus. This is one of them. And the way that John, the author of this biography, has chosen to write it, he spent some time sort of introducing who Jesus was, described his miracles, and then out of all the writers, he spends the longest amount of time on what Jesus said to his disciples privately in an upper room after Judas had left the disciples and left Jesus to get the soldiers and capture Jesus. And that's already happened. John then describes in sort of a summary a very key meeting between the spiritual leaders of the land and Jesus. And then last week, we looked at the beginning of how Rome, the imperial power, the emperor, that great pagan empire, how that empire begins to deal with Jesus. And actually, it's not going to be up on the screen. You'll just have to have it in your Bibles. If you just look at 18, chapter 18, verse 38, there's a phrase there which is very, very, very important to set to help us to understand what's going to be happening in this chapter, which is the ongoing attempt by Pilate to deal with Jesus and with the spiritual leaders. And Jesus has said that he's come to bear witness to the truth. And Pilate famously in chapter 18, verse 38 said, Pilate said to him, what is truth? What is truth? And it's very, very interesting.

[4 : 56] This is the power of story, is that when we are gripped by the story, it helps us at a sort of a very emotional and imaginative level to enter into truths that we might have a hard time articulating in words. But Pilate says to Jesus, what is truth? Sounds just like a university professor, sounds like most people you would meet in a Starbucks or a Tim Hortons for that matter, most newspaper

writers, what is truth? And then Pilate doesn't wait for an answer. If you look what happens next, and after he had said this, he went back outside to the spiritual leaders and told them, I find no guilt in him. So Pilate knows that Jesus is completely and utterly innocent of any Roman law. He hasn't violated any Roman law. But then, and here's the terrible, heartless cynicism of Pilate, verse 39, but you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews? And they cried out again and again, not this man, but Barabbas.

Now, Barabbas was a robber. And we know in other places that he was an insurrectionist and a murderer. And we didn't look at this very much last week, but what happens here, it's a very, very powerful thing to understand is that if truth does not exist, then justice does not exist.

Right? Because that's what happens here. I used the example last week to try to bring it home. It's as if the soldiers came in and said, let's just grab Anne, you know, innocent.

I'm sure she has a tongue on her, but basically harmless. And what the heck? We'll just compare Anne to a murder and see who the crowd wants me to kill. Like, that's what Pilate just does.

That's what he's doing right here. A person that he knows is completely innocent, but he then says, oh, I'll just throw it out, see a bit of a lottery as to who the crowd's going to pick. It's unbelievably cynical. And so what the story is helping us to imaginatively understand is that if truth does not exist, then justice does not exist. And all that is left is a desire for power, whether it's by the individual, the party, the tribe, or the nation. Long before Nietzsche, the Bible nails it. Long before Nietzsche, long before postmodernism, and both of those get all sorts of other things wrong in a very profound way, the Bible nails it. As we lose the belief that truth exists, we will lose the belief that justice exists. And when truth is gone and justice is gone, all that is left is the clenched fist. Whether it's my clenched fist, the party's clenched fist, the tribe's clenched fist, or the nation's clenched fist, that's all that's left.

[7 : 56] It's all that's left. And what also happens is that when we lose the belief in truth and lose the belief in justice, we start to live a very, very unbalanced and incomprehensible life.

We start to not be able to understand ourselves, our own actions. And that's what's going to explain what's going to happen right now with Pilate. Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent. He's given up on truth. He's created this opportunity where the crowd can pick Barabbas, or they can pick Jesus.

What's going to happen? Verse 1 of chapter 19, then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

He flogged him. He whipped him. He whipped him. He whipped him. They would have taken the clothes off his back and whipped him and whipped him and whipped him. And Jesus would have stood there bloodied and battered inside the praetorium. And verse 2, and the soldiers twisted together, that's the Roman soldiers, twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe, a purple robe. It would have just been some old piece of rag that they had kicking around the guardhouse. And purple is the color of royalty. And the crown of thorns would look like the type of crown that a Roman emperor would wear. And they came up to him saying, Hail, King of the Jews! Which is actually mocking, because the normal cry of the Roman soldier would be, Hail, Caesar! And hail means live long and prosper, basically. Is that the Vulcan war cry?

Whatever. It's one of those Star Trek things. Live long and prosper. King of the Jews that we've just whipped and put a filthy robe on and a crown of thorns on your head. Head wounds bleed.

And not only that, they continue on, and they struck him with their hands. In the original language, they struck him again and again and again. Pilate went out again and said to them, oh, sorry, just pause here. Oh, yeah, keep going. So Pilate has done this. So he has an innocent man. He has him whipped. He doesn't necessarily know that the soldiers are going to mock him, but it wouldn't surprise him either. He would know his troops. And he would know how they deal with the conquered people, and they would deal with somebody that, from the eyes of the troops, if the spiritual leaders have picked Jesus over a guy who's a terrorist and a robber, then obviously Jesus is a bad guy, and they treat him appropriately. In verse 4, Pilate went out again and said to them, and that is the spiritual leaders, see, I am bringing out to you, bringing him, that's Jesus, out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in him. What probably is happening here is that Pilate is probably hoping that the severe flogging of Jesus and this complete and utter humiliation would quench their lust for death.

[11 : 09] Verse 5, so Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said to them, behold the man, the man. And when the chief, the chief priests and the officers saw

him, that is the spiritual leaders, they cried out, crucify him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. And just sort of pause there for a second. If you go back and you'll see that within a very few number of verses, because chapter 18 only has 40 verses, and it's in verse 38 that Pilate declares that Jesus is innocent. In verse 4, he declares that Jesus is innocent. And in verse 6, three times, Pilate declares that Jesus is innocent. Three times.

Pilate declares that Jesus is innocent. And yet the response of the spiritual leaders is to demand the crucifixion of Jesus. The Romans, during that first part of the first century, crucified literally, according to non-Christian historians, according to Jewish historians, crucified literally thousands upon thousands of Jewish people. Crucifying another Jew is no big thing for Pilate.

Because he's crucified lots. And he will crucify lots after this. And he has the power to let Jesus go. The spiritual leaders demand that Jesus will be crucified. Literally, when Pilate says, behold, the man, it's actually sort of a famous phrase. And he probably just means, look at this pitiable guy that I've just beaten up. Like, he's no threat to me, he's no threat to you. I've just beat him up terribly. I've just flogged him. Like, he's like a gnat that I can just flick off. Like, what threat is he? But in John's language, Jesus is more than just a miserable man. He is the man. As we will see in a moment, he is the one who can die for all human beings and represent all human beings. Pilate speaks in a sense in a prophetic way that he's not aware of when he makes that statement. And the other thing which is so interesting about this is that Pilate and the spiritual leaders are working hand in hand, one's weakness and the other's desire for his death. They're working hand in hand inadvertently to fulfill a prophecy of

Jesus. It's a great irony. These human beings with all their power, if Pilate had said, listen, I'm just going to give you permission this one time not to crucify him, but just to deal with him your own way. I'll turn a blind eye. You go and deal with him yourself according to your law, and I'll make sure the troops are all somewhere else. Then Jesus would have died by stoning, because that's the way that the Jewish people carried out capital punishment. But Jesus had prophesied that he would die by crucifixion. And it's very, very interesting. It's the enemies. If Jesus doesn't do anything to fulfill his own prophecy, it is his enemies that act unwittingly to fulfill the prophecy that Jesus has made.

[14:35] Amen. And then there's this very, very puzzling thing. The Jewish people, the spiritual leaders actually here make a tactical error that almost means that Jesus is going to be let go. And look at what happens in verse 7. The spiritual leaders answered Pilate, we have a law. And according to that law, Jesus ought to die because he has made himself son of God. When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his praetorium again and said to Jesus, where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. This is a very interesting clash of worldviews. Remember, what you have to remember when you're reading this is that all the smart people in the world agreed with Pilate. The Jewish people in that ancient world, they weren't smart people. They were the dumb people. They didn't believe that there were lots of gods, which every smart person, the old, the first century equivalent of the Globe and Mail, the National Post, the CBC, the University of Ottawa, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge.

They would have all agreed with Pilate because that's what all the smart people just knew was true. To disagree with it, they'd go like, duh. So Pilate's operating from his point of view. And from his point of view, the spiritual leaders have just said, this guy claims to be son of God. And from Pilate's point of view, he understands his mythology. And in his mythology, the gods sometimes have sex with human women. And a demigod, the son of a god, walks the earth. Or a god, or goddess himself or herself would walk the earth. And the spiritual leaders have just said that this guy claims to be God.

God. And Pilate's already trying to puzzle over why they're so incensed upon killing him. And Pilate now, all of a sudden, is a good pagan, knowing what all the smart people know. By the way, you know, I'm saying that on purpose because we can be, I can be so overawed by what all the smart people know.

And it's so easy to forget that in 20 years, people will mock what all the smart people know today. Not even 20 years. All the smart people will think something different.

So that's one of the reasons why, as an aside, the Bible is not a conservative book. The Bible is perpetually radical and revolutionary. It keeps pointing us to a truth that comes outside of the flow of history that's always true. Anyway, so Pilate now is terrified. Have I beaten the son of a god?

[17:45] Now, it's in this question and answer period that we come to the very part of the story that has justified anti-Semitism and the murder of, to be honest, by those claiming to be Christian

literally throughout history, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of Jewish people.

Look what happens here in verse 10. So we'll go back to verse 9 again. Pilate entered his praetorium again and said to Jesus, where are you from?

That's a smart question to ask if you think, like, are you, he's trying to figure out where, like, which god, like, how, like, where are you from?

It's a pagan question. But Jesus gave him no answer. Jesus is silent. So verse 10, so Pilate said to him, just remember here, Pilate has crucified many people.

He has had many people beaten, many people whipped. Pilate, he would be very, very used to a person crying and soiling themselves and making all sorts of promises if Pilate would just relent and let him go.

[18:56] He has had many beaten men and women before him. And Jesus is silent. So Pilate, in verse 10, is exasperated. He says, 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 to you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

And just to be clear, you would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above. When in John chapter 3, if you go back and you look, you must be born again.

You have to be born from above. Jesus is referring to the fact that the authority that Pilate has has come from God. Hence, this becomes an important text for those who believe that the Bible and that Jesus and Christianity justifies the power of tyrants.

And then the next bit. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

[20:10] And at a linguistic level, he's referring to the Jewish people. He's referring to the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people. Jesus has just said the ones guilty of the greatest sin.

The first thing that he who did is to be born again. The first thing that he who did is to be born again. The first thing that he who did is to be born again. And you can see how this is fueled. Murderous hatred of the Jewish people at different times throughout Christian history.

So we just have to pause to think about this text a little bit before we get to the real heart of it in terms of our hearts. But once we're aware of this, we can't just ignore it.

The first thing about this text actually is that it has a very deep irony about it. Pilate is claiming that he has all this power.

Yet the fact of the matter is in this story, he doesn't have power, does he? Jesus, just by saying nothing, has completely and utterly flummoxed all of Pilate's power. And Pilate's being pushed around by the crowd.

[21:15] Being pushed around by the crowd. Pilate can go like this and the Roman soldiers could scatter those people. And Pilate can do whatever he darn well feels like and yet he doesn't. In fact, everything about this story.

Remember I said that when you lose the sense of truth, you lose the sense of justice. And all that's left is this. But this is profoundly unstable. And what ends up happening is that you have no principle, no way of knowing true north.

No way of knowing where to go and your life becomes chaotic and driven hither and yon. And that's actually exactly what you see happening to Pilate.

Let's deal with the power first. One of the things which people misunderstand about the text is that what Jesus is not saying, what Jesus is saying is this, God never relinquishes sovereignty over human beings.

Okay, this is not, once again, a political comment. It might very well be. I don't know who's going to be in power. I'd say the exact same thing now as I would if I was in PEI and it was a green government, or if I was in BC and it was an NDP government, or if I was in the future when eventually the conservatives win, and then the liberals will win after that.

[22:30] But the fact of the matter is, is what Jesus is not saying, Justin, I give you a blank page. I give you a blank page. Write whatever you want on it.

Do whatever you want. And by the way, I'm going to give you a blank check. You just fill out the amount. I'll give you all the resources. You can just do whatever you want. That's not what's happening. If you understand that the Lord has never relinquished sovereignty over the earth, when Jesus says that people have authority because it's been given to them, the military understand

instantly what this means.

They've been given a commission. Authority has been given a commission by God. And therefore, God can judge them for whether or not they fulfill their commission.

And it's very clear from the commission, as you look throughout the whole of scripture, that at the heart of the commission is the preserving of life. At the heart of the commission is seeking the flourishing of the people.

At the heart of the commission is a developing and deepening of the basic institutions of the society, like the family, that the concern for truth and justice is the very heart of that commission.

[23 : 45] And so what Jesus is actually saying is he is calling Pilate to repentance. You have been given not a blank sheet and a blank check, carte blanche and a blank check.

You have been given a commission. You have been given a commission. You will stand accountable. The sermon series that we're going to do after this is we're going to do Jonah and then we're going to do Nahum. And the importance of both of those books is it shows God's concern for pagan nations and that God holds all human beings accountable and responsible, even empires that would not acknowledge the Lord is Lord at all.

What about the anti-Semitism? Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

You know, it's very tempting for me to want to be able to... There's two temptations, right, if we're honest. And one of them is a very, very modern Canadian thing.

I could apologize right now for all the bad things previous people have done. You know what? That is so cynical and arrogant and self-congratulatory for me to go ahead and say, Oh, yeah, I feel bad about what Irish people did like 150 years ago.

[25 : 09] And it's actually to me, and I think to the gospel, it's sickening. Very easy for me to confess my dad's sins. Very hard for me to confess my own.

And so I could just say, yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, Christians have done all these things. I apologize to my Jewish friends. But that's not the way to go. The other thing that I could do is just say that they're so-called Christians.

But that would be wrong, too. I'm sure some of the people who've permitted, perpetrated those horrors will be in heaven with you and me. What we just have to acknowledge is that one of the easiest, one of the hardest things for Christians is to not have the gospel and not have the Bible become just a religion, that we use the Bible to justify our fears, our insecurities, our paranoia, and our hatred, that we study the Bible not to understand the Bible and to be converted and humbled by it, but we use the Bible in a means to justify ourselves.

And this is yet another example, not of how bad the Jews are, but it is yet another aspect of God's profound critique of all religion. Because who are the Jews?

One of the things which is so interesting is the Bible doesn't say, if you go back and read the Old Testament, the Bible doesn't say, I've chosen the worst people in the world to be my people. No, the Bible says that God chose the least people, a small, insignificant group of people.

[26 : 40] Why? Because in all things, it's always to display the glory of God, not human glory. It would be very easy if you chose the Roman Empire with its might and everything, but God chooses the weak of the world to shame the wise, the despised to shame those who are powerful, and God chooses the least of the people.

And the importance of this text is that what the Jewish people had was the best religion in the world. All the smart people thought that the pagans had the best religion in the world.

But we read the Bible and know that God himself spoke to the Jewish people, and the Jewish people end up turning God's declaration of freedom from slavery as command to be a blessing to the nations, that what they did is they turned God's word into a religion in the same way that it is possible, and we have seen it too often, and it sometimes speaks too deeply into our own heart to take the New Testament and turn it not from a proclamation of news of what God has done for us to make us right with him in the person of his son, but become a book by which we can feel better than others and superior than others and look down our nose on others and justify ourselves.

And what is happening is that the best of religion falls short. The best of religion falls short.

And the New Testament goes beyond that because it's very clear in the New Testament. This is why all anti-Semitism is wrong. The New Testament is very clear. There are covenant promises made to Israel that have not yet been kept by God, but they will be kept by God.

[28 : 25] God is not finished with the Jewish people. Jesus is Jewish. John, the writer of the biography, is Jewish. And if you read the book of Acts, one of the things you see several times

within there is how many priests become Christians after the resurrection.

Because the New Testament message is not, look at the Jews, aren't they terrible? But the message is, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The greatest empire, the greatest religion, they fall short of the glory of God.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It's the memory verse for the week. Let's bring this particular part of the story to a close.

Let's see what happens next. After Jesus pronounces these things to Pilate, verse 12, from then on, Pilate sought to release Jesus, but the spiritual leaders cried out, if you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend.

[29 : 38] Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. 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, which is the common language of the time, Gabbatha.

Just remember, Jesus spoke at least three languages and maybe four. He would have spoken Aramaic, which was the language of the day. We know that he spoke Hebrew because he could read it.

He almost definitely spoke Greek and he might have spoken Latin. He was at least trilingual, maybe spoke four languages. And here we have this little insight that in the, what the locals called the spot.

And now this is a very significant part of the story because now the judgment is about to come.

Pilate has been doing all sorts of things, you know, because that's just the way the rule worked.

At the end of the day, you know, there's laws, but there's power and often power trumps law. It's been that way then, can be that way today. It's a common human problem, but now there's the time for the judicial, so to speak, decision made by the one who has authority in that area.

[30 : 43] Verse 14, that was the day of the preparation of the Passover. And what that literally means, the Passover is the time that celebrates God's deliverance of the Jewish people from bondage of slavery in Egypt.

That's what the Passover is about. It's celebrated for seven days. And in that seventh day, of course, the very first day, especially holy, but another exceptionally holy day is the Sabbath day in the Passover week.

And what the text is saying is that at the same time that the spiritual leaders have begun to take the spotless lamb and kill the spotless lamb as part of the special celebration of God's deliverance of the people from bondage and slavery.

And they're remembering as well how God created the world in six days. And on the seventh day, he rested. And they're remembering that the Sabbath day is a holy day to the Lord, a holy day to the Lord in a holy week.

And the beginning of the sacrifice of that lamb happens at the middle of the day. And it is that time that Pilate is about to make his judgment on Jesus.

[31 : 58] And after the judgment is made on Jesus, Jesus will be immediately taken out to be crucified. Verse 14, it was the day of preparation of the Passover.

It was about the sixth hour, the middle of the day. He said to the spiritual leaders, Behold, your king. They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.

Pilate said, Shall I crucify your king? And now the spiritual leaders are guilty of great blasphemy.

Because if there's one message of the Old Testament it's that the Lord is king.

He is their sovereign king. And the spiritual leaders answered, We have no king but Caesar. And so Pilate delivered Jesus over to them to be crucified.

One of the things which it's a very, very powerful text and one of the things about this text that touches a very human problem, a separate one from the problem of law and truth and justice is the fact that in this life we have disasters and we have calamities.

[33 : 12] We have terrible things that are done to human beings. And the fact of the matter is that in a country like Canada we don't really know what to do when terrible things happen to human beings.

Book written on why do bad things happen to good people. Sort of a wrong, it's a good cry of the heart but a wrong way to understand. I was just sharing with a fellow the other day how that the Christians don't divide the world between good people and bad people because we understand that the difference between goodness and badness goes right down the middle of every human being.

It's not a Christian idea to divide the world into good and bad but we are familiar with the fact that terrible, terrible things happen. And the fact of the matter is that sometimes bad things happen and they don't happen just, it's not just a terrible day but a terrible week, a terrible month, a terrible year, a terrible decade and then comes death.

And for parts of our culture we get fixated in that and for most of the rest of our culture what we do is we amuse ourselves so that we don't think about such things. But at the same time that we know that there's terrible things that happen we have a sense, every human being has a sense that there must be some way to mend that which is broken to make sense out of that which is broken to have meaning out of that which is broken to have hope in the face of that which is broken.

And I would suggest to you that only the gospel answers that human longing. Only the gospel. See, the reason we read this story is that we know well I'm going to tell you another important part of it in a second but we know that on Sunday Jesus rises from the dead.

[35 : 09] We know there will be resurrection. And the Bible is not making a case that the different broken things that have happened in our lives will be mended on this side of the grave and it's not making the case that all we have to do is just endure terrible terrible things on this side and it doesn't matter because eventually we'll die and go to heaven and it will make all things right.

Although it does say that. It says something more. It says that, you know, part of the problem for modern Canadians is we might have a vague hope that we go somewhere better when we die but fundamentally we know that we have no real basis to believe that other than hope.

But Jesus shows that death doesn't have the final word and by showing that death doesn't have a final word he holds out before us the fact that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus there isn't just a self-declared meaning that I make in the face of tragedy which is completely and utterly dependent upon my strength but we see that the very creator of the universe because Jesus is introduced as in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was with God before all through him all things were made and without him nothing was made that was made and we see here the very creator of the universe dying the death that we deserve and rising on the third day the very same God who creates all things is the God who in the form of Jesus fully God and fully man has died for us and rises from the dead and there is this sense not just by my self-declaration but by God himself that there can be meaning to our life and purpose to our life and a goal to our life and a presence and power of the creator himself in the midst of our tragedy and our turmoil to bear up under the tragedy and to have a sense that it will be well with my soul not because of the strength of my willpower which is very weak but because of what Jesus has done for me on the cross could you put up the first point

Andrew some of you will see right away that I'm referring to Genesis chapter 50 they devised evil against Jesus but God intended it for a good purpose it's a very if you go back and read Genesis 50 it's a story of how the Jewish people originally come into the land of Egypt and we see that Jesus Joseph's 11 brothers do terrible horrible things to Joseph and and but Joseph through God's providence if you read the book of Genesis you see that Joseph ends up becoming the second most powerful person in the empire he ends up being the means by which his family his extended family is able to survive a famine and when Joseph's father dies the 11 brothers are worried that Joseph's now going to take vengeance on them and kill them so they go up to Joseph and they lie and say just before our father died he privately met with us and he wanted to make sure you don't do anything against us and Joseph has this very very powerful phrase

Genesis chapter 50 verse 20 he says you meant it for evil but God meant it for good and that's the commentary and everything that we've seen here Pilate meant it for evil the soldiers meant it for evil the spiritual leaders meant it for evil there's no illusions about that but God used it for a very good purpose to bring life if you could put up the last point only two Jesus was declared worthy of death that you might be made worthy of life it's this great exchange that we are to receive by faith Pilate was declared Jesus was declared worthy of death by the spiritual leaders he was declared worthy of death by the custodian of what all the smart people knew by the empire and he was declared worthy of death but he was declared worthy of death that by his death when we receive what he has accomplished for us by his death and his resurrection that you and I might be made worthy of life you see

[39 : 40] Adam and Eve sought to wear a crown of deity so Jesus wore a crown of thorns to deliver the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve from death Adam and Eve chose death when they rebelled against God so Jesus would die so the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve would live

Adam and Eve were ashamed to stand naked before God after they had rebelled against him so Jesus first wore a robe of shame before he himself was naked that by faith in him we would one day be able to stand completely and utterly transparent before the Lord Jesus was declared worthy of death that you might be made worthy of life Jesus wore a crown of thorns that you the guilty might wear a crown of glory Jesus wore a robe of shame that you might be clothed with his spotless robe of righteousness

Jesus stood condemned that you might stand innocent Jesus bore contempt that you might receive praise and glory at the last day Jesus was delivered to death that you might be delivered from death Jesus was declared guilty that you might be declared acquitted Jesus was ridiculed that you might taste the love of God Jesus was beaten that by his wounds you might be healed Jesus was disfigured that by him you might be remade Jesus was despised that you might know the Lord's great affection for you Jesus was rejected that you might be accepted as God's child by adoption and grace Jesus was led to the slaughter that we might be led back to God Jesus was deemed insignificant that you might become God's precious possession

Jesus was punished for what you had done that you might live before God in his presence on the basis of what Jesus has done for you Jesus was declared worthy of death that you might be worthy of life I invite you to stand Jesus offers a great exchange if you have never received that there is no better time than now to say to Jesus I did not know what you have accomplished for me on the cross it did not come home until my heart till now Jesus take me and be my savior and my lord and never let me go there is no time better than now to say that prayer to Jesus and he will hear you and receive you and for each of us it is a holy time to be remembered to remind it once again of what

Jesus has done for us and to cry out to him that these truths would grip our memory our imagination our longings and our yearnings our mental categories our affections bow our heads in prayer father thank you for Jesus thank you for what he accomplished for us on the cross thank you father that the only weapon in his kingdom is the truth thank you that all that he did fulfilled true justice with nothing left over and yet in his death upon the cross your mercy and grace triumph over judgment so that all that put their faith and trust in this our crucified messiah might know your mercy and grace in this life and day by day with greater depth until we see you face to face bearing an eternal weight of glory that is not our own but comes from seeing

Jesus face to face and becoming like him all by your grace all for your glory father grip us with the gospel that we might live for your glory and all God's people said amen