

Behold the Man

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[0 : 00] Let us pray.

Father God, we don't take for granted the privilege of prayer, the gift and blessing that you have given us of communion with you, of coming to speak as a son to a father, knowing as we do through the grace that you have lavished on us in salvation and the working of the Holy Spirit, that your heart is inclined to us, that you delight in us, that you care, that we understand and are blessed and strengthened by the truth that you've given to us in your word.

And this morning I am thankful for the fact that I, as well as your people who are here saved by your grace, can rely upon the work of the Holy Spirit to take the sweetness of the Scriptures and open them for us, that we, seeing the Lord Jesus Christ, might grow in our love for Him.

if you do not work, my words are fruitless, our hearts are unchanged, and so we plead with you to so lift up Jesus through the enabling of the Holy Spirit that we are changed from glory into glory.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You who have known me know that I am an individual who, I'm hardwired with a certain level of emotional tenor.

[2 : 25] How's that? And it's just the way it is. It was a long journey for me to come to the place of recognizing that that's the way God made me. And to suppress it, or to overplay it, would be wrong.

And I have to tell you that I mention that because this morning's passage, John chapter 19, at least so far in my studies in the Gospels, is one that has gripped my heart in a way that I have a hard time expressing adequately.

I remember when Pastor Saul preached on John 3.16. And you may remember that he took his shoes off that day.

Do you remember that? Well, I would think that it's appropriate for me to take my shoes off in this case, but I won't. But I think it's appropriate to tell you ahead of time what I believe the Holy Spirit's intention is in our looking at this passage.

In Ephesians chapter 3, verse 14 through 19, Paul prays for the church, and he prays this, that we would have the Holy Spirit's enabling, the strength, to comprehend with all the saints.

[3 : 56] Can anybody finish it off for me? God is supremely interested, maybe supremely is overstatement, but he is very interested in you being overwhelmed with the beauty of the love of Christ.

I've got to tell you, apart from the enabling of the Holy Spirit, I cannot preach, and you cannot comprehend that truth. But the passage that we are going to be looking at here in this text in John chapter 19 is one that if your heart is tuned by the Spirit of God, cannot help but grow in your affection and your awe and your overwhelming thanksgiving, that the Lord of glory, the creator of this universe, loves you.

It's overwhelming. I think of 1 Peter chapter 1, and I want you to keep your finger in John chapter 19, but go to 1 Peter chapter 1 just for a moment.

As Peter deals with the subject of our affections for the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 8, I've got to stop and ask you the question, is that entirely true?

Does that characterize your thoughts and your affections? Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

[5 : 52] Peter reflects on Jesus and says, wow, my heart is so filled with love and thanksgiving and affection for Jesus that, as he says there at the last part, it is with a joy that is inexpressible inexpressible and full of glory.

You look there in verse 12 and talking about the sufferings of Christ that are referenced in verse 11, it says, it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven things into which angels long to look.

What you and I have in front of us this morning is spiritual reality that is of such a nature that angels still ponder with curiosity and awe and a lack of full comprehension of that which you and I have been the recipients of and God intends for us to appreciate and be affected by.

That being said, let me have you turn to the text in John chapter 19 and take up the passage. 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.

They came to him saying, Hail, King of the Jews and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out and said to them, See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

[7 : 57] So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the 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, We have a law and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself to be the son of God.

What John records for us here in this passage is the scene of the creator of this universe, the one who sustains all things by his word, our God and Savior and the one who someday will be the judge of all the living and the dead, being grossly abused and mistreated by religious leaders and by the Roman authorities at the moment.

And John pictures for us a Savior who is marching stalwartly and as it says in the scriptures, his face set as a flint towards the cross in order to be our Redeemer and our Savior.

And as we look at this passage, I would plead with you that you, dependent upon the Holy Spirit, might allow the reality of what he has chosen to reveal to us to so affect you that you do not live the way you did before after you ponder adequately the truth of what we have here.

[9 : 39] The purpose of God giving us his truth is that we, seeing it, beholding as it says in 2 Corinthians in a mirror, are changed. And I trust that you are changed by your growing affection for the Lord Jesus Christ and an understanding of what he did in dying for your sins and rising again and being your Savior and never stopping in his affection for you.

Let's take up number one, verse one, and look at the flogging. The account tells us that after the crowd had already rejected Jesus and had chosen Barabbas, who was a murderer, seditious, and Pilate had granted their request, he then, subsequent to that granting, had Jesus flogged.

Now, I want you to know that there is some disagreement as to whether or not Jesus was scourged once or twice. And I can't say that there is a passage that completely puts the weight on one or the other, but I think that my inclination is to believe that Jesus was actually flogged twice.

The reason for that is that the Romans, being who they were, very, very meticulous and conscientious about the execution of law, had actually three different kinds of flogging that were administered.

I don't know if any of you are here to remember when a young man from Dayton decided that he would, what did he do, throw gum on the sidewalk in Singapore.

[11 : 14] You remember that? And the poor guy was going to be caned. And there was just all this, this, you know, breast beating and whining over here in America.

The thought of a poor boy being spanked with a cane four strokes was just beyond the pale. I mean, people were just going off on it and finally I think he got a couple light strokes.

Caning in Singapore is not designed as a kind of demonstration of affection. It's designed to make people adequately afraid that they don't want to do whatever they were doing previously.

Roman flogging far exceeded what caning in Singapore ever comes close to. There were actually three forms or three steps.

One was kind of a damaging scourging that you would end up carrying the marks because the scourge designed as it was had little bits of metal, had bone, had pieces of lead in the straps and when you struck a man with that it actually break the flesh and leave lasting marks.

[12 : 26] The individual was stripped naked, his hands tied above his head on a post and the scourge was applied to all exposed parts adequately and liberally.

There was no number that was attached to the scourging. In the Jewish system of punishment you were not to exceed forty strokes.

Does anybody know why? There was a barrier put lest there be a disregard for the man and so generally what happened is in Jewish flogging you only had thirty-nine strokes.

The Romans had no such hindrance and they did whatever they wanted to. The first level of scourging was for a minor punishment. It was something that was inflicted publicly and people who watched it thought to themselves whoa I don't want to be that guy.

A more severe system of flogging was used specifically for extracting a confession of someone that was accused of a crime and here's how those floggings went.

[13 : 39] Generally the person was flogged enough to bring him to the point whether he committed the crime or not he was willing to say what? I did it I did it I just stopped the beating.

The third form of flogging or scourging was reserved for those who had already been condemned to crucifixion and the crucifixion was the final act the scourging was the kind of the opening act to that brutality and not atypical of that scourging the scourge that was used and bits of bone and lead and glass and whatever else would literally cut through the skin down to the very bones and cause such damage that in some cases the individuals did not make it to the cross.

The reason Jesus had to have his cross carried was not because it was exceptionally heavy. The reason he had to have his cross carried is because the scourging was of such a nature that it caused damage that he couldn't do it.

I assure you of this our Savior in his resolute march toward Calvary had no intention of avoiding the burden that he had. It was beyond the ability of human existence to do it and so someone stepped in to help.

It does seem that the first scourging along with the abuse that we read of in John 19 verse 1 was designed by Pilate to satisfy an angry crowd.

[15 : 17] All right you want judgment you want something done with this guy that you dislike and so I'll do something that will satisfy your anger and your irritation.

I had the privilege of being father to four children. I hate to confess this and I shouldn't tell the story on my children but there were moments in my children's lives where the other children were quite interested in the judgment being administered to their brother or sister because they were deeply offended by the crime that had taken place.

How many of you understand that? I remember on one occasion bringing in one of the highly indignant but very satisfied members of the children that I was raising and I gave them a similar dose.

I said you're really happy with the judgment and the punishment that your brother is my brother you know my boys yep okay you're happy with what they're receiving let me tell you something your heart ought to be broken for their suffering oh no I'm happy I said well then join me inside Pilate hoped that if he abused Jesus adequately and shamed him publicly it would satisfy the crowd and so what you see there in verse one Pilate took and he flogged him and the soldiers twisted together a crown remember the accusation that the Jews had brought first of all was this guy wants to be king oh yeah well I'm going to cram a crown of thorns down on his head and you want to be king I gave you a crown and we throw a robe around him and the soldiers were abusing and mocking him I want you to stop for a moment and in the middle of that gross mistreatment by those soldiers and an activity that was designed to satisfy the blood lust of godless wicked people

I want you to imagine our savior stooping down to allow sinful men to lie about him and mistreat him that's what he did for you that's what he did for me and if you ever find yourself in a situation where you are fully persuaded that you are being maligned and mistreated and you don't have it coming I want to remind you what Jesus did for you and he did it because you deserved it and he did it in your place after this gross mistreatment that I believe took place for no other reason than to satisfy the ugly and ill spirited crowd Pilate comes out to the crowd and what does he say verse 4 see I am bringing him out to you that you may know I find no guilt in him now remember three kinds of scourging one punishment for minor offense two scourgings that were designed to bring out a confession hey

[18:22] I've put him through the ringer and this guy's okay you can see that he has suffered and there's no indication of his guilt during the middle ages how many of you have seen those pictures of trial by fire or trial by drowning I mean do you ever see those pictures in history class where a person would be dunked and if they were innocent they would come out regardless well I gotta tell you if you hold anybody under long enough guess what's gonna happen they're gonna be guilty it just happens and here is Pilate bringing out Jesus and says hey it's okay there's nothing wrong with this guy and here is Pilate saying he's innocent and then I look at that little statement there behold the man in verse 5 I don't believe there is any deep theological implication to this it is just Pilate saying here's the guy and you have to understand that the

Jews had presented Jesus as this usurper this man who intended to be a rebel against Rome and was going to be the king of the Jews and now Pilate brings him out as this kind of pathetic beaten individual and says there he is look at him Pilate's efforts to deliver Jesus met with nothing other than increased anger and hatred you look there in verse 6 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 now if you were to go to the synoptic gospels you would find that in one of the gospels it refers to the fact that Pilate as he was listening to the growing agitation and anger of the crowd he was fully afraid that there was going to be some kind of rebellion or some kind of violence break out if you were a student of history you would know that

Pilate had already gotten himself in trouble for over reacting to Jewish attitudes and punishing them severely and killing a number of them in fact the Caesar had then demoted Pilate for a period of time and so here he is he's in a touchy situation he doesn't want to deal with the crowd and create any further difficulty with Caesar and so he hears them crying crucify and here he says take him and crucify him yourself take him crucify him yourself find no guilt in him by the way did the Jews have the right to crucify Jesus the answer is no verse 7 the Jews answered him we have a law according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself to be the son of God I do want you to know that if you listen long enough eventually what people really think comes to the surface isn't that right huh that's the way it is it's one of the reasons why it says in first

Timothy don't lay hands on any man suddenly some men's sins are evident very quickly and others take a little while to come to the surface or eventually come out and so over time what's inside comes outside and here we find the real heart of the Jewish accusers centered in on what Jesus had said about himself and their violent reaction against that truth and so now I want you to recognize a second part in this story and that is the frightened spirit of Pilate the text records in verse 8 that what he heard now frightened Pilate and Pilate was afraid of condemning Jesus and why is that Pilate heard this statement and he even was more afraid I want you to turn in your Bible just for a moment you're there in John keep your finger we're going to come back but go back to Matthew chapter 27 verse 19 Matthew chapter 27 verse 19 there it says besides while he was sitting in the judgment seat 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 you get the scene

Pilate in the process of judging Jesus in comes a messenger leans down close to his ear and says by the way your wife wants you to know that you really shouldn't bring judgment down on this guy because he is a righteous man and your wife wants you to know that she suffered a lot last night how many of you guys really have learned that it's a good idea to listen when your wife talks to you about serious things Pilate would have been well served to say ooh but going back to John chapter 19 we find here that he is afraid but I want you to understand that his fear and his concern about the issue of injustice and even the dream that his wife had had did not override the concern and fear that he had for the crowd and

[24 : 21] I want you to understand that Pilate was actually more afraid of the crowd and their accusation than he was of causing injustice in the case of Jesus look there at verse 12 from that time 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 guess what the career path was for any professional Roman diplomat or leader who opposed Caesar guess what it was there was a significant demotion and depending upon what the crime was it could be actually execution a Pilate as I said earlier history records he'd already gotten in trouble with Caesar once and so here we have the Jews ready to go on riot and Caesar or Pilate is facing this angry violent belligerent crowd and when he says I don't find anything wrong with this guy they just inflamed the more shouting crucify crucify and he comes out again and comes to grips with the reality that all these people wanted was

Christ death and they insist if you let him go you are not Caesar's friend and the implication is and we will let Caesar know that you turned him loose someone who is claiming to be the king of the Jews we can kind of sense Pilate's irritation at being manipulated look at verse 14 now it was the day of preparation of the Passover it was about the sixth hour and he said to the Jews what behold your king they cried take him away take him away crucify him Pilate said to them shall I crucify your king we have no king but Caesar so he delivered them over he delivered him over to them to be crucified how much you think through with me what this scene represents here is here is Pilate dealing with his sense of the impropriety the dishonesty the problem of condemning an innocent man and yet he is quite willing to do that because of his fear of the crowd and his fear of what would happen to him if he didn't do that he was afraid of

Caesar he was afraid of people he really wasn't afraid of the injustice and God the judge but we find that he does kind of look to strike in his anger against the Jews and he brings up this issue well hey do you want me to crucify your king well here he is here is your king and their answer is very interesting we have no king but Caesar later AD 74 you know what would happen to Jerusalem it was going to be torn down stone for stone right down to the ground and just countless thousands put to death because they had rebelled against the king that they said they had we have no king but Caesar incidentally in one of the synoptics these same people that said we have no king but Caesar said this remember when Pilate washed his hands I'm innocent of this incidentally you're turning him over to be crucified and you think pouring water over your hands makes any difference and when he said

I am innocent of this they said what his blood be on us and on our children this morning as we look at this passage I want you to understand that we are looking at a perfect illustration of how sin blinds a person to do and say vile things that will bring down unimaginable sorrow do you realize that we have in this instance a throng that was ready to crucify an innocent man who had done nothing but good all his public ministry and all of them knew about it how do I know that for one we have the record of the gospels regarding the ongoing ministry of Christ and there was no guile found in his mouth there was no sin no disobedience no rebellion furthermore in the preaching of Acts chapter 2 remember when

Peter launches into his sermon at Pentecost he says listen this Jesus known to you as a man who did nothing but good you took and crucified with wicked hands and so here they are faced with the opportunity of being honest and confessing the innocence of Christ they choose to have him crucified and so Pilate in this position of being the judge having the right and the ability to release Jesus remember what he said earlier when Jesus didn't answer him are you a king and Jesus had been quiet he said don't you know I have the authority I have the ability to release you or to crucify you here's Pilate giving in to the crowd and saying go ahead you execute this man even though he's innocent and Pilate chose how should

[29 : 59] I close how should I close with that most vile moment in all of history turn in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 53 Isaiah chapter 53 let me say that I am fully persuaded the most significant thing that a pastor can ever say is said when he reads the scriptures because the scriptures are God's chosen words to describe the history of the moment and as you look back to Isaiah chapter 53 we're going to look at a text that has to be one of the most poignant in all of the Old Testament I appreciated Pastor Shearer's reference I think what you said was in reference to Isaiah chapter 6 holy holy holy is the Lord God of hosts I want you to imagine just for a moment the absolute consternation of

Isaiah who had the vision of the Lord high and lifted up and then in Isaiah chapter 52 and in 53 sees that same Lord the creator of the universe as the one who suffers in our place and for our sins listen to what it says over there in Isaiah chapter 52 it says this in verse 14 as many were astonished at you his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of men you want to know what the second scourging was like it was such that Isaiah tells us you could not look at Jesus and fully appreciate who you were looking at but then in verse 1 of 53 who has believed what he has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed for he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him he was despised and rejected by men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hid their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not surely he has borne our sorrows our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by

God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that was led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before it shears is silent so he opened not his mouth by oppression and judgment he was taken away and as for his generation who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living stricken for the transgression of my people and they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death all the who had done no violence there was no deceit in his mouth yet it was the will of

God to crush him he has put him to! when his soul! makes an offering he shall see his offspring he shall prolong his days the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied by the knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be counted righteous righteous first Peter chapter one verse eight whom having not seen you love the purpose of preaching is to put you on the spot to say yes or no to God and he intends for you as you ponder what Christ endured for your salvation to let the reality of that love affect your life let's pray holy spirit this morning our request is this that the reality of

Christ's willing choice to suffer this indignity and this criminal behavior for our sinful souls has such an effect upon us that we live our lives from this moment on in the shadow of the cross Galatians appropriately says I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me and the life that I now live that life is to be lived in the power and the shadow of the cross thank you for being the lover of our souls let us not walk away from this place indifferent to what you have done for us and let every moment every response every challenge that we face be framed against the reality of what you did for us as our savior and our

[36 : 40] God and we ask this in your name and for your glory amen