

The King & His Kingdom
John 18:28-40 / Ryan Patty / 3.08.2020

Good Morning Christ Community! Thankful to open God's word with you this morning. If you have your bible go ahead and open it up to the book of John. This morning we find ourselves in the second half of John 18. Last we looked at the Betrayal and Denial of Jesus, how we in our sin are prone to doing those two things but how Jesus in his perfect righteousness is always faithful to us. But this week we have Jesus before Pilate. These are well known events, prominent events, events that stir emotions within the life of the Christian. But events that confront us with truths. Truths about ourselves and truths about Jesus.

So as you put your finger on John 18, allow me to ask you a question. Have you ever thought about how life is filled with questions? And as we progress on in our lives, these questions take on more importance. In our younger years, they are simple. we have questions of what sounds good for lunch, do I have to wear clothes today, or dad are you stronger than the hulk. As we mature into high-school we have more questions about our identity, who we are, who we want to become, what are our plans after graduation. In the adult years, the importance of questions only increases. We have questions of, am I supposed to be married? If so, who do I marry? Should I move for this job? Should I move to take care of aging parents? Lord, how will we pay these bills? Lord, why are my kids rebelling? Why is my spouse being distant?

Now the importance of certain questions will depend on many factors, your stage of life, your maturity as a Christian, your family and work circumstances, but today we are going to look at a text that is filled with questions, 9 of them to be exact, found in only 13 verses. 9 questions in this farce of a trial for Jesus that reveal questions about the true nature of Jesus and his work on earth.

So this morning we have three questions that arise from this text, three questions that pertain to the King and His Kingdom. Three questions that each of us are confronted with as we read this text. Let's jump in, John 18:28..

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover. **29** So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?" **30** They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed him over to you." **31** Pilate told them, "You take him and judge him according to your law." "It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. **32** They said this so that Jesus's words might be fulfilled indicating what kind of death he was going to die.

1. Will we accept His sacrifice?

Now the background of this trial needs to be hit on for a moment. From the other Gospels we know that Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin and before Herod, but in John's Gospel he wants to get to the point. He has some theological pictures he wants to paint for us. So Jesus is sent to Pontius Pilate, to the governor. To this man who was absolutely despised by the Jews. He was known for his brutality and harsh rule. The historians Josephus and Philo tell us that sometimes he had reportedly executed Jews without a trial. A few years previous he had even stolen money from the temple treasury in order to finance the building of an aqueduct, stirring up a riot from the Jews and causing some of their deaths because of the Roman soldiers' response. So Pilate and the Jews had some history to say the least, but as the saying goes, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and to the Jewish leaders Jesus and his message are the clear enemy, so Pilate's help is needed.

The text tells us that it was *early morning*; Jesus has been shuffled from place to place during the night and now they come to the Governor, Pilate, the man who can make Jesus die. But notice the hypocrisy! They didn't enter the headquarters themselves because they would be defiled and unable to eat, so Pilate has to come out to them. Nevermind all the laws they broke in this arrest, of having a trial without witnesses, of coming in the middle of the night, of even mentioning that their law says they can't put anyone to death, **nevermind those things**, we have to keep this part of the Law! We can't go into a Gentile house near the Passover festival, we will become defiled!

It's funny how that same temptation of hypocrisy hits us today. We love to pick and choose the commands of God we follow, we love to pick and choose the parts of our lives that we submit to Christ, but beware the subtle temptation of hypocrisy! Beware of failing to love those who are different than you in the body, and instead loving only those who are like you. Beware of the self-righteousness that can creep in when someone confides in you with the sins they are struggling with. Beware of striving to present a certain view of yourself or your family while within these walls, beware of hypocrisy! It's an infection that spreads amongst the body and is only cured through repentance and the steady reminder that the Gospel, the news that Jesus died for us, that he is our sacrifice, means we no longer have to hide who we are, we are all on the same playing field. Rather, we drag our sins kicking and screaming to the foot of the cross. Those of us who are in Christ having nothing more to fear concerning our reputations or what others might know

of us. We have been forgiven, and God has promised that we are being sanctified, are growing into the likeness of Christ. So we have to be on guard against the hypocrisy that these Jewish leaders are showing. Hypocrisy that causes us to see the speck in the eyes of others but miss the plank protruding from our own eye.

But the question asked of us is this, will we accept his sacrifice? So where do we see this in this section? First it's the passover.

- **Jesus is our Passover Sacrifice.** John is purposeful in telling us this. It's the passover celebration in Jerusalem during this time, and we have pointed out the hypocrisy of these Jews in not wanting to go inside Pilate's quarters, we need to see theologically what is happening. They want to be able to eat the passover meal, but don't understand that by having Jesus killed they were slaying the new passover lamb! During the Exodus the Israelites had to put blood at the top of their doorposts so the angel of the Lord would passover and not kill their firstborn. The Jews had been celebrating their deliverance during passover for over 1500 years. And now, at God's appointed time, the greater passover is going to happen. Jesus is going willingly as the sacrifice, the slaughtered lamb who will take away the sins of the world. God will passover us now, because of Jesus' blood. He is our passover sacrifice, but in this text he is also our suffering servant.
- **Jesus is our Suffering Servant.** Notice this interaction. **31 Pilate told them, "You take him and judge him according to your law."** (There is nothing that is happening here against Roman Law) **"It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared.** (Upon the Roman occupation of Jerusalem, capital punishment was dictated to be the responsibility of the governor of the city) **32 They said this so that Jesus's words might be fulfilled indicating what kind of death he was going to die.** In God's providence, Jesus Christ was going to be crucified under Roman rule. If he was killed a hundred years before Jesus probably would have been stoned at the hands of the Jews. But John tells us that this means of death, the way in which he died, this Roman crucifixion was to fulfill the Scriptures. What scriptures?
 - **Deut. 21:23b - For anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse.** Theologically we have to see that as Jesus is crucified on that cross, on that tree, the wrath of God is poured out on Him.
 - **Isaiah 53:4-5 - 4 Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds.**
- God, in his love for you, sent his son Jesus Christ to be your sacrifice. To be the suffering servant who was crushed for our sins and punished so that peace between us and God could take place. God passed over you because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Will you accept that sacrifice? Don't count on anything you bring to the table,

or any of your works or deeds or your pursuit of living a good moral life, but count on the sacrifice of Christ. Would you accept it? He calls all who are weary and heavy-laden to come to him, would you?

2. Will we accept His rule?

33 Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” **34** Jesus answered, “Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about me?” **35** “I’m not a Jew, am I?” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?” **36** “My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here. **37** “You are a king then?” Pilate asked. “You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” **38** “What is truth?” said Pilate.

The question of, “what is truth?” assumes that truth is. It assumes that truth is an objectifiable reality. It understands that there is an answer to the question. Truth can be found, known, and realized. **But in our day and age, in our postmodern age, truth is under attack.** Truth, one writer remarks, “is not in asserting anything, but just the inquiry.” When you ask questions, you seek truth... but you can’t assert truth? So how can you ever realize or come to know the truth? Others will say that truth is in the experience of life. Whatever your experience, wherever your heart leads, that is your truth, even if it contradicts someone else’s truth! But the Bible would tell you that, “the heart is deceitful above all things,” so how can we trust it to guide us into truth? So Pilate’s ending question here brings about many questions for us. The truth of the Christian faith is that we believe in the God who is, the God who has spoken, that he has revealed himself, and what he has revealed is both true of himself and of us. Our God speaks truth. And here in this text, Jesus himself is going to give us truth about himself as King and the Kingdom he is establishing. Truths that confront each of us in different ways, but particularly it brings about the question of, “will we submit to his rule, what he says to be true?”

Pilate, though, is confronted with truth that he’s not prepared for. It’s the truth that Jesus is a king, but his kingship is so different than Pilate or the Jews could have ever imagined.

“Are you a king?” Pilate asks. “Who’s asking,” is what Jesus responds. Are you genuinely curious? Do you really want to know? Or are you just repeating what the leaders outside have said and don’t actually care. What’s the intention behind your question? Pilate wants to know if Jesus is a threat. Clearly he’s not the king of the Jews in his eyes because the Jews are demanding he be killed. So is he leading a rebellion, an insurrection?

My kingdom is not of this world, Jesus tells him. If it was, my servants would fight. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.

- **God’s Kingdom is a spiritual one**, a kingdom that advances through the power of the Gospel, of prayer, of discipling, of sacrificial love, and of obedience. It’s not a physical kingdom to be fought for. Tensions and

emotions are always so elevated for us during an election year, so allow me to say a few things about what God's kingdom entails for us today in our specific context.

- **As Christians we do not bully the Gospel upon people "in the name of Jesus."** As Christians, we don't ostracize and criticize those who view things differently than us, even on social media.. We hold truth and grace TOGETHER. Never divorcing the two. We call people to the truth, we teach them the truth, we show them how to live out truth, and we do it in the most gracious and Christ-filled way possible. Jesus is making it clear though that his kingdom is not to be fought for. We do not use weapons in the name of Christianity. We are not to confuse our Christianity with our patriotism, but must always keep them in their proper perspective. We are not lift up our patriotism over our Christianity. This is what it means for us to live as citizens of a greater kingdom..
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- **But what is the temptation for all of us?** How do you and I not live this out? Many of you would say, "yeah!" Jesus is king! I agree Pastor Ryan. But then this week as you watch the news or read an article, you might get completely spun out based on what's happening! Your whole demeanor changes based on political or cultural events. You're acknowledging Jesus to be king, but your actions and emotions are communicating something else entirely. *I say this as one who has been in those very shoes*, don't let your joy be tied to what's happening in our country or in the world. Don't let your joy be tied to the circumstances or flavor of the day. Let your joy be grounded in Jesus Christ! In the truth that you are in Him and that he has promised that one day all tears will be wiped away, all sickness and death will be gone, and all wrong in this world will be made right.
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- *So we can all thank God for the blessings that we enjoy by living here, of being able to gather and worship the one true God*, we show honor and give thanks to those who have sacrificed so much so that we can. We also make informed choices as citizens and vote in line with our fundamental beliefs, that's part of the blessing that we have of living in this country. *But our allegiance first and foremost is to God*, to Jesus, and His Kingdom. And submission to his rule. Not to any country above all, but to **him** above all.

When you study world history, you see the truth that countries will come and go, no matter how powerful or influential they are. The Babylonian empire lasted 300 years, the Ottoman lasted 600 years, even the mighty Roman empire lasted 1000 years. All were the greatest of their time and day. All are no more. In a few years the U.S. will officially be 250 years old. So if, in God's sovereignty, and as his Scriptures tell us, he orders the rise and fall of nations, If in His sovereignty in fifty years the US is no more (again, don't see it happening, but hang with me), if we are apart of a different nation, we don't lose hope! Our faith is not shaken. Our love and devotion to Jesus Christ does not wane.

Because we are a part of another kingdom! A Kingdom not of this world, a Kingdom that is advancing and a Kingdom that we, as his followers, will all one day rule and reign from!

But Jesus also makes it clear that he has come to testify to the truth. This is a Kingdom of truth.

- John 18: 37 “You are a king then?” Pilate asked. “You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”
- John 10:27-28 “27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.”

How are citizens of Jesus’ kingdom identified? How do we recognize one another? We are of the truth. We have believed the Gospel. We understand Jesus’ claims to be true and have submitted our lives to his rule. He is our king!

And we see this Kingdom, God’s rule, most noticeably in the local church. This is where the citizens of the kingdom come together to praise, proclaim, and practice all that Christ commanded and then go out into the world with a message of hope, a message of love, the message of Jesus Christ.

Will we submit our lives to his rule? Will we put our hope in his kingdom above all earthly kingdoms? He is our King. He has given us truth and he is the truth. Jesus tells us that we will show ourselves to be under his rule by listening to His voice, by walking and living out his truth, so may we at Christ Community do just that.

3. Will we accept His love?

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging him. **39** You have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” **40** They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

You may be asking yourself, where in the world is the love in this passage? Well, allow me to explain.

All of John’s Gospel has been moving to the cross, and now these couple of short verses set the scene for what is about to take place. Pilate comes out and tells the Jewish leaders that he finds no grounds for charging the man. He is innocent. At this point Jesus should be walking free. That’s what justice would demand. But Pilate is a politician. A man who can play the games of the people. So as the politician he doesn’t simply release Jesus, he will give them a festival-time pardon. He asks them, in light of the Passover it’s time for a pardon, would you like Jesus back?

Pilate probably thought they would say yes. There’s no way that they take the criminal, right? Pilate had just deemed Jesus as innocent. There’s no way they take the rebel, no way they take the revolutionary, right?

“Not this man, but Barabbas!” They yell. Barabbas. Barabbas.

What’s interesting is that Barabbas’ name actually means Son of Abba, son of the father. Think of this imagery. Here we have two men, two Sons of the father, so to speak. Two men accused of crimes. But that is where the similarities end. These two sons of the father are completely different.

- One seeks to rule through rebellion and taking the lives of others, the other rules by sacrificing his life.
- One wanted to overthrow the king, and the other is the rightful king.
- One is guilty and deserving of death, the other is innocent and going to die.
- The real son of the Father is going to die. They are going to free the wrong son!

The question we have asked is this, will we accept his love? Where is the love, you ask? The love is shown when we come to see ourselves as Barabbas.

Put yourselves in the sandals of this man for a moment. He was an insurrectionist. A Rebel against Roman rule. A robber who would most likely attack caravans as they traveled to and from Jerusalem. He’s a murderer as Luke’s Gospel tells us. He’s guilty. And he’s been arrested. He’s now on death row. Awaiting his impending death. We don’t know how long he was in the cell but we know that it’s far from nice. Most likely dark, cold, wet, he’s chained to the wall, barely and water let alone food. Prisoners have no rights in Rome. No hope. There’s no chance of parole. He’s

guilty. He deserved his death and I bet, deep down, he knew it. So each passing day he waits. Probably thinking of the flogging that's coming, of the mocking, of the pain he will feel as he is lifted up on a cross. It's any day now..

And then the day comes! He hears the crowd outside, hears their chants and their words, "crucify him, crucify him!" As the thunder of it echoes into his dungeon. He hears the footsteps of the guards. "This is it," he's thinking, "my time has come." They grab him and hoist him up, walk him outside, and then..... Applause, cheers, shouts of triumph! Barabbas! Barabbas! The chains are taken off his feet and wrists. He's being hugged and congratulated. "What is happening, he's thinking?" Then he looks over..

And sees a man. A man who is chained as he was, a man who is being dragged off to be flogged. A man he later sees carrying his cross to the hill. A man who dies in his place.

What would you feel if you were Barabbas? Confusion, joy, shock, relief. We have to recognize though that this is a picture of what happens to us in our salvation

This is a horrific and holy substitution. A horrific substitution because it's what the Jews demanded, that an innocent man would suffer and die, and the guilty would go free. Shockingly horrific.

But a holy substitution, because it was as the Lord planned it. That the perfect lamb of God would take away the sins of his people. That the love of the Father might truly be shown to the world.

- **Isaiah 53: 6-7 - We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.**

This is the holy substitution. The Holy plan of the Father to redeem his wayward and lost people. This is how he shows his love, by giving us his Son Jesus. The Jewish leaders put forth the wrong man, but God put forth the right one. That's the Gospel (Furman).

- **2 Cor. 5:21 - For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

Apart from being in Christ, we are sinners. Similarly to Barabbas, We sit in prison, a spiritual one, chained and helpless, the death row of all death rows, we have been tried and found guilty, and we sit there waiting until we are dragged out and given the righteous judgment of God that we deserve. But the beauty of the Gospel, the greatest of all news that you can hear, is that when we repent and place our faith in Christ, we come out from that dungeon and the chains fall off, we are greeted with shouts of praise from Heaven, and Jesus Christ goes off to the cross in our place.

We are Barabbas. Jesus gives his life for us, so that we can have eternal life with him. He gets what we deserve, we get what he deserves. We who were once lost and had no hope, now have the greatest hope! We have been saved and redeemed by the love of God.

Can you accept that love? Can we accept that love? That love that goes against all our best judgment, that love that meets us in our sin, that love that is willing to lay down his life for you? That love that calls you to acknowledge his sacrifice and to come be a part of his kingdom. Can you accept that love? I pray you can.

Pray with me.