

John 19:1-15 | Ted Tash

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the Gospel According to John.

By show of hands, how many people had Villanova in their final four? Keep them up if you had them in your championship game.

Alright, good. And there's a verse in Psalms, something about the Lord is near to the brokenhearted. So, I don't know if that applies to NCAA March Madness. But, well, we're going to continue our study in the book of John today.

We've got three chapters left. We've got chapters 19, 20, and 21. And I don't even know when we began this study in John, but we've been moving through it. And John is one of those books, there's just so much in there that I think we could start it back over at chapter one, and go through it again, and probably get something out of it, and then do it again, and get something else out of it.

And there's just so much in there. And it's interesting, at the end of John, he says, you know, there's a whole bunch more I could have written about. In fact, if I did, the world wouldn't be able to contain the volumes of the books.

[1 : 19] But these things I've written to you that you may believe. And so, there's just a lot in there. You know, I was going back over the other messages that I've had in John. I had John 15, which was the vine and the branches.

I think I had the first seven or eleven verses in there. And there's so much in each and every one of those verses. You could have done a whole sermon series on verse by verse in that chapter.

And so, there's just lots and lots in there. And it's kind of hard to boil it all down into one clear and concise message. But we're going to try and do that today.

The title of the message, if I had to have one, would be, The Irony in Pilate's Trial of Jesus. The great irony of Jesus before Pilate in a court setting.

There's a great irony there. And I think we'll see it today. Hopefully, we will. And in doing so, we'll learn a few things about Pontius Pilate. And we'll also learn quite a few things about the Lord Jesus.

[2 : 22] And hopefully, that will transition us into our time of worship here today. I want to start out just by asking you guys with a little bit of context.

Have you guys ever been in a situation where it's kind of a lose-lose situation? Like, no matter what you do, you're kind of trapped. You're caught. And you choose choice A, and it's a bad choice. You choose choice B, it's a bad choice.

And you have to think, okay, which one of these is going to hurt me the least? And you have to minimize the loss there. It doesn't have to be anything big. It can be sometimes just a little frustrating situation.

We had this a couple weeks ago. Lydia and I bought a house, and we're redoing the kitchen. And we pulled the old stove out, right? And it's a 36-inch stove.

It's a big beast of a mammoth stove. And with the help from a few in-laws and Brad, whose spiritual gift is moving things, by the way. If you guys ever need help with something, I think that may be his spiritual gift.

[3 : 20] But we got it out in the garage, and I threw it on Craigslist. I just want to get rid of it. It's just one of those things that's in my way. I'm not trying to get rich off of getting rid of this old stove. I just want it out. And I figure somebody could pay me to move it out for me.

That would be a good situation. So I put it up on Craigslist, \$100. Nothing. Crickets chirping, right? Nothing, nothing. So I put it on later in the week for \$50. \$50, come move it out of my garage for me.

That would be great. So I'm over there working on a house, and a guy calls me. And, hey, you know, I'd love to come look at the stove. I want to buy it. I got a flat tire on my trailer. But as soon as I get that fixed, I'll be right over. I said, all right, man, I got to be at work at 12. So, you know, you got the rest of the morning. And if you're not here by then, we got to do it tonight. He's like, yeah, no big deal. Let me see what I can do. I'll give you a call. I said, sure, sounds great. First hit has been on there four or five days. First hit on it, I'm willing to wait, whatever. As soon as I hang up the phone, the phone rings again.

[4 : 19] The guy says, look, man, I'm five minutes away. I got a trailer. It works. \$50 cash in hand. Can I buy the trailer? I'm thinking, rats. And I hate this stuff. In the world of Craigslist, you have to fend for yourself.

It is very much sink or swim. If somebody's got cash, forget the other guy. You got to go with this. So I was like, yeah, man, sounds good. I'll be here five minutes. So I called the first guy back up. Hey, somebody else, man, they're in the neighborhood.

This is kind of first come, first serve. And he's like, oh, man, I just got the tire on the trailer. And I got two kids. I'm on disability. And I can't. I'm thinking, rats. You know what? What do I do?

So I called the first guy or the second guy back up and said, hey, look, you know, this guy's going to come probably by tonight. If he's not there, I'll shoot you a call. And he was fine with it. And the first guy ended up coming. And I sold it to him.

And this is one of those situations where it just didn't matter what you did. You felt trapped. You felt helpless. And if anything, I should have been the one in control. You know, it was my stove to begin with. But now it's the other guy's stove.

[5 : 17] So the reason I share that story is I think we'll see that Pilate, who's supposedly the one in control here, was actually very helpless before the angry mob, before the Roman government, and before Christ himself.

He's the one presumably in power. But I think we'll find that he was very, very helpless. He was powerless. And so I want to start with John chapter 18, the second half of verse 38.

And we'll start there and just kind of go verse by verse until the end of our passage in John 19. So the second half of verse 38 says, When he had said this, that's Pilate, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, I find no fault in him at all.

He says, look, I've examined Jesus. I've talked with him. I find no fault in him at all. He is innocent. He says this to the Jews. It's important to note that these Roman governors, these Roman judges, they ruled with an iron fist.

Dave mentioned last week Pax Romana, peace to Rome. The reason they kept peace in Rome was they had a very strong justice system. They had a very strong legal system.

[6 : 38] And if you were innocent, you got justice. If you were guilty, you got justice. They carried with them, they said they would carry these little statues or figurines of the Roman god Janus or Janus.

And it was a two-faced god. It had one face looking this way and another face 180 degrees looking that way. And that's where we get the month of January from. You're looking ahead to the new year, looking behind to the old year.

But it represented in their justice system, you got to look at both sides of the story. You got to look at the defense. You got to look at the prosecution. Make sure you're not partial. It's an impartial judgment.

And so justice was really important to Pilate. And he says, look, I find no fault in this guy. And this is the beginning of Pilate being trapped by the Jewish crowd.

He says he's innocent. At some point, we know that Pilate had pawned Jesus off on Herod. He said, look, I find nothing wrong with him. Why don't we go to Herod? Herod can try him. And then Herod made him Pilate's problem again.

[7 : 37] He shipped him right back to Pilate. But he says, look, he's innocent. Find no fault in him. So then he goes on and he says, you know, you Jews, you have a custom, in verse 39, that I should release someone to you at the Passover.

Do you therefore want me to release to you the king of the Jews? And they all cried again, saying, not this man, but Barabbas. Now, Barabbas was a robber. So Pilate says, he's innocent.

You know, I tried pawning him off on Herod. He sent him right back. But you know what, Jews? It's the Passover time. And there's this tradition where I usually go pardon somebody during the

Passover. Why don't we try that?

I think he's innocent. You think he's guilty. Why don't I say he's guilty? And then I'll just pardon him. I'll just release him. And Jews say, no dice. You know, we don't want him. We want Barabbas. And, you know, thinking back to my story, I think Pilate's probably thinking here, rats.

You know, what can I do? And so then you go to the biggest, one of the biggest understated verses in the Bible, chapter 19, verse 1.

[8 : 39] It says, so then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. It's just kind of a throwaway sentence. But you think about how severe of a punishment that was. And I think what Pilate is doing here is he says, all right, Jews, if you're not going to let me release him, I'll just beat the tar out of him.

You'll see that and you'll be pleased with it. And so it says he took Jesus and scourged him. Now, most of you in this room have been saved and studying the Bible longer than I've been alive.

Which isn't a joke. I mean, you guys have been saved and studying the Bible longer than I've been alive. And so you guys have heard about scourging before and you've heard about Jesus being whipped before. And you know all about it.

You know that you'd probably have some kind of wooden handle and then leather straps with bone or glass or metal, something sharp. And you would hit it and it would dig in and you'd pull it down and it would just strip the meat right off the bones.

It was designed to flay the meat right off the bones. And a lot of people would die. And you guys know this, right? A lot of people would die under a scourging. And that's why they would only do the 39 stripes, right, instead of 40 because nobody could lift your 40, which probably isn't true.

[9 : 47] But there's not a lot of meat between your outsides and your insides when it comes to your back, right? I mean, your thoracic cavity is right there, abdominal cavity is right there. And that's why a lot of people would die.

You'd get hit and you'd take some meat off. You'd get hit, take some meat off. And eventually your left, I mean, heart and lungs are right there. And if not them, then there's some kind of blood vessel or some other vascularized organ that's sitting right there.

And that's how a lot of people would die. And so Jesus, you've got to understand with this verse that says he took Jesus and scourged him, he beat him within inches of death. David says in a Messianic psalm that he could number his bones.

And most likely what he means by that is here's a rib, there's a rib, there's a rib. He could count his bones, the meat just taken clean off. So Jesus is beat within inches of his life here.

And that's the significance of that verse. And then not only that, verses 2 and 3, it says the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns, put that on his head, and they put on him a purple robe.

[10 : 51] They said, Hail, King of the Jews. And they struck him with their hands. You know, a crown of thorns, man, put on your head. We know from other accounts that they beat that into him with a rod.

You know, there's a handful of guys in here that go on the annual deer drives, right? And you know what thorns and briars and thistles feel like. You take one of those right in the finger sometimes.

And man, that just hurts like crazy. But the thing about getting a whole crown of thorns is pounded into your head, how bad that would hurt. And then it says that they took and they struck him with their hands.

And you guys know this, right? They blindfolded him and then get punched in the face. Just think about how brutal that would be. You know, I've never been punched in the face. I've never been in a situation of getting close to being punched in the face.

But I can't imagine it's a real enjoyable time. And not only that, but to be punched by grown men. And not only that, but soldiers. And not only that, but Roman soldiers who, I mean, are probably the most barbaric dudes ever to exist.

[11 : 51] You know, they got pleasure out of killing people and out of just ravishing and destroying people. And to think that they closed their fists and just would pound on them, it's just crazy.

You know, Isaiah said that his visage was marred more than any man. Or his face was torn up more than any man. And I used to think that that meant more than any other man ever.

Like a Tony Twist gets into a fight right back on the old hockey fights. Some guy's face would swell up or it would bleed, you know. And I used to think that that more than any man meant that Jesus' face was beat up more than any other man in existence.

But I think what that phrase means, and a couple of the commentators suggested this, that more than any man means it looked non-human. It was so, so brutal that if you were to look at his face, it wouldn't look like any man's face.

It would look non-human. It wouldn't even be recognizable as a man's face. And so that's what Jesus goes through. And the point of doing that was so that Pilate could bring him out and say, Look, Jews, this guy's innocent.

[13:01] I beat the tar out of him. You can barely recognize him. He's on death's doorstep anyway from the scourging. Why don't we just let him go? So that's what we see in verses 4 and 5 here.

It says, The Pilate went out again. He goes out to the Jews again and said, Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know I find no fault in him. He's innocent.

That's the second time he's said it. And Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, Behold, the man. And I think that's a little bit more irony that John uses here when he says the man.

Because Jesus would have looked like just a shred of a man, I think, at this point. And so Pilate says, Look, guys, he's innocent. I've got him within inches of death here. Don't you think that's enough?

Can we just let this go? But verse 6, That's the third time that he proclaims Jesus' innocence.

[14:07] And this time he's trying to pawn him off on the angry mob. Why don't you guys go do it? And a lot of commentators suggest that this might be where Pilate would have called for a basin of water and came and publicly washed his hands of Jesus.

We can't say for certain, but I think that would fit. That this may be when Pilate washed his hands of Jesus. But the Jews fire back in verse 7.

It says that they answered him, We have a law, and according to our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. And when Pilate heard that saying, he was more afraid.

And so I know that now Pilate's really thinking, Oh, rats. This guy is nothing to mess with. He's the Son of God. And he went again to the praetorium and said to Jesus, Where are you from?

But Jesus gave him no answer. And so we're going to skip verses 10 and 11. We're going to come back to them. But I want to continue to focus on how Pilate is being trapped here by this Jewish mob.

[15:08] And so verse 12, it says that Pilate from then on sought to release him, which he's kind of been trying to do this whole time. But the Jews cried out saying, If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend.

Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar. And this is where the final nail in the coffin, if you will. This is where the Jews trap him. They blackmail him politically.

They say, Look, Pilate, you let Jesus go, you're no friend of Caesar's. Anybody that says they're a king, man, they're talking against Caesar. There's only one king.

Pax Romana, right? Peace in Rome. And so they blackmail him. And particularly for Pilate, this has quite a bit of weight. Pilate, if you study him from a historical standpoint, he worked his way up from kind of a common man to a soldier and to a smaller governmental job and then to this job.

And he even married Caesar's daughter, one of Caesar's daughters, just to kind of get in with the family, if you will. And so for them to say, Look, if you are with Jesus, you're against Caesar, that forces his hand.

[16:19] There's really nothing that Pilate can do at this point. He's helpless before the mob because his job is to keep peace with Rome. And it's suggested, and I think it's probably correct, that if Pilate were to pardon Jesus, he would certainly lose his job.

He would perhaps lose his wife, who is Caesar's daughter, and then he almost certainly would lose his life as well because his job is to maintain the peace at this local level.

And so it forces his hand, and that's what we see in the next couple of verses. It says, When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Now it was the preparation day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour, and he said to the Jews, Behold your king. And they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.

And Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your king? And the chief priest answered and said, We have no king but Caesar. And so next week we'll look at that he delivers him over to be crucified.

[17 : 26] But the Jews here, hypocritically so, blackmail Pilate into crucifying Jesus. I say hypocritically so because they say, We have no king but Caesar.

The Jews hated Caesar. Caesar had the Jews under his thumb. The Romans treated the Jews pretty poorly. And it would be very hypocritical for the chief priest to say, We have no king but Caesar.

Not to mention 40 years later, AD 70, right? The Romans marched into Jerusalem and pretty much flattened the whole thing and killed most of the inhabitants there. And so the Jews and the Romans really didn't get along.

But they will do anything at this point to force Pilate's hand into crucifying Jesus. So I want to go back to verse 10 here.

And this is where Pilate is having a private discourse with Jesus. In verse 10 it says, Then Pilate said to him, Are you not speaking to me?

[18 : 29] Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you? That word power can also be translated authority. I have the authority or power to crucify you and the authority to release you.

And this is the great irony of this whole situation. You have Pilate, who is totally powerless. Everything that he has tried to do so far has failed. And this angry mob is forcing his hand against justice.

And this man was innocent. Three times declared innocent. And he is saying, I have power to crucify you or power to release you. He doesn't have power. And not only that, but who is he speaking to?

He is speaking to Christ, the omnipotent one, the all-powerful one. It is just the great irony of the situation. So three ways that Pilate was powerless.

One, he was powerless before the Jews. The Jews totally forced his hand. He found him innocent and sent him to Herod. It did not work. He tried to pardon him at the Passover. It did not work. He tried to beat him almost to the point of death so they would be satisfied.

[19 : 34] It did not work. He tried to pawn him off on the Jews themselves. It did not work. And so he was just totally powerless before the Jews. Pilate was powerless. He had no authority before Caesar.

If he were to pardon Jesus, Caesar himself may have come after Pilate in taking away his job, taking away his family, taking away his life, perhaps.

So we see a no power or authority over Caesar. And then finally, and almost obviously, Pilate was powerless before Christ. And that's what we see in verse 11.

It says that Jesus answered. And this is the only recorded statement that we have of Jesus in our passage. And kind of saved the best for last. Jesus answered and said, You could have no power at all against me unless it had been given you from above.

He says, You could have no power at all. No power at all against me unless it had been given you from above. So Pilate, clearly powerless before Christ.

[20 : 39] And that's the great irony of this situation is that the one presumably in control, completely powerless before the Lord. So I want to look at about six things or so.

And I was going to have a handout and I got in a fight with my printer last night, so it didn't work out. But six things about Christ that I think we can glean from this passage of his trial, his scourging, and then ultimately his crucifixion here.

And I think that this will transition us well into our time of worship in a few minutes. But the first thing, if you're taking notes, is that Jesus was in control.

Jesus was powerful. He was the authority in this situation. That Jesus was in control. If you'll turn to John chapter 10. John chapter 10, verse 17 and 18.

This is Jesus in the Good Shepherd passage. Speaking about the power and the control, the authority that he has given to him by his Father regarding his life.

[21 : 58] So John chapter 10, verse 17 and 18. It says, Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. I lay down my life that I may take it again.

No one takes it from me. Not the Jews, not Pontius Pilate, not Caesar. No one takes it from me. But I lay it down to myself. Get this. I have power, or that same word.

It's the same word used in John 19. I have power or authority to lay it down. And I have power to take it again. This command I have received from my Father. He says, No one takes it from me.

Pilate, you have no power over me at all. No power over me at all. I lay it down. And I can take it up again. And I have the power to do this. And this came from above.

This command I received from my Father. So Jesus, he was powerful. He was the authority. He's the one in control. I think we can see from this passage that Jesus was merciful.

[22 : 59] In Matthew's account, you don't need to turn there, but in Matthew's account where the mob comes after him in the garden and Peter draws his sword and hits Malchus' ear off, Jesus says, Put your sword away.

For those who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you not think that I can pray down to my Father and he'll provide me with more than 12 legions of angels? And that's, I think, just a figure of speech.

What Jesus is saying is, Don't you know I can just wipe everybody out if I wanted to? You know, he can give me 12 legions of angels. That'd be like 70,000 angels or something like that. Don't you know that if I wanted to, I could just pray to my Father and just wipe everybody out?

But Jesus doesn't. He shows mercy over the hands of the soldiers and over the hands of Pilate and over the hands of the Jews.

He's merciful in this situation. Third, Jesus was obedient. We know this from John chapter 10 where it says, This command I've received from my Father.

[23 : 59] So he's obedient to the commands of his Father in this situation. And we know this from Philippians chapter 2, right? He's obedient to the point of death. Obedient to the point of death.

Even the death on the cross. So Jesus was obedient here in this situation. Fourth, Jesus was gracious. And I think this ties in with the mercy component.

But just how gracious of the Lord. You know, the soldiers twisting together a crown of thorns. And those thorns representing the curse of sin. You know, cursed is the ground.

You shall toil all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles. You know, the curse of sin placed on his head. And it's not just that the soldiers placed it on his head and that they wove them together.

But it was the very fingers that he created. You know, the very hands he created, he allows to twist together the crown of thorns and put it on his head.

[25 : 00] It's the very hands he created that struck him in the face over and over again while he's blindfolded. And he allowed that graciously. You know, it's the mouth that he made and the lungs that he made to expand and reverberate the vocal cords in such a way that the words would come out, Hail, King of the Jews, to mock him.

He created those voices. And he created them for his glory. And in sin, it's been twisted to now mock him and make fun of him. Just how gracious of the Lord to allow all that.

And then if we can go to Philippians chapter 2, just to look at the last two points. I think we see that the great humility of the Lord here in this passage.

That, you know, he was equal with God. Omnipotent. Omniscient. All these things.

But yet, became just a man lower than the angels. You know, came in the flesh, went through all this physical pain, all the, I'm sure, spiritual and mental anguish as well.

[26 : 15] And so, in Philippians chapter 2, we'll start in verse 5. It says, It caused him literal, physical death.

He was humbled. And, you know, you and I, we were talking about pride in Sunday school today. You know, you and I, we elevate our pride onto this high shelf, right?

And in our wishes and our desires, we exalt ourselves onto the throne of life. And humility's hard.

The thing about being the Lord Jesus, I mean, the one that deserves all the glory, the one that does deserve to be on the high shelf.

The one that's, the one that should be the object of our worship. He humbled himself. Just think about how amazing that is and how, you know, contradictory to fleshly wisdom.

But he's the one that humbled himself. Just how magnificent that is. And if there's any application from today's lesson, it would be verse 5.

[27 : 41] Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Jeffrey, last weekend at the conference, shared that verse. Let this mind also be in you. Some verses, or some versions will say, let this attitude be in you.

And so think about it in your own life. What kind of things do you need to die to? What kind of things do you need to die to? Is it your job? Is it the pursuit of money? Is it working on this stupid house

that you bought, that you should have just bought a house that was ready to move into? What kind of things do you need to die to and humbly so you can come and be obedient? Be obedient to the Lord. So let that be our small aspect of application today. And then the last one, if the musicians want to come on up here. The last one is found in the next section of Philippians 2, is that Jesus was exalted. And we can say was slash is exalted, because Jesus still is exalted. So this comes from verses 9 through 11. It says, It says, Therefore God has highly exalted him, given him the name above every name.

[29 : 16] And that the name of Jesus, every niche about, every tongue confess. You know, those verses are always an encouragement to me. Whenever you get on Facebook or you get on the TV and the news and you see people just slamming Christianity, whether it's someone on the left or just even someone that you know.

You think, man, one day they're going to bow to the name of Jesus. And it's almost in a spiteful way. I don't know that it's necessarily a good thing that I think that. But one day you're going to bow to the Lord Jesus.

One day you're going to confess his name. And it's neat that the Lord Jesus is exalted. And now as believers, we get to do that willingly.

Not in a way of any kind of punishment or anything like that. But we get the opportunity to come and willingly express Jesus' name as an exalted one.

We get to confess that he is Lord. And for what purpose? It says, To the glory of God the Father. And so that's what we get to do now. And I think that's pretty neat that we get to just confess his name to the glory of God the Father.

[30 : 26] So Father God, we just love you. And we thank you that you've allowed us to be here this morning. And God, I thank you that you are in control even when your son was being persecuted by his own creation, Lord.

And going through an unfair trial and ended up with a humble, obedient death at the hands of an angry mob. God, we thank you that you are still in control.

And God, we thank you now that you've exalted him. And we thank you that we get to come together and worship and exalt and lift up his name to your glory. And so we pray all this in Jesus' name.

Thank you.