

John 18:28-40 - David Baumgartner

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Date: 12 March 2017

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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.

We are in John chapter 18. And if you've been following along, boy, we've seen a lot, haven't we? So many things that Jesus has encountered all of the discussions He's had with people. And literally, we are just hours now before Jesus' crucifixion. He's been arrested, He's handcuffed, and now He will be walking this path of sorrow.

This path, which goes from His arrest to Golgotha, the hill of the skull, it's commonly referred to as the Via Della Rosa. Anybody ever heard of that?

It's the way of sorrow. And it begins with this topic that we're going to be looking at today, Jesus' trials. Now, I mentioned last week, I think a better way to view it is not trials, it's actually interrogations.

[1:12] Because as you know, there's many things that go on when you have a trial. But anyway, Jesus will go through six different interrogations, and three of them are what you'd call rather religious in nature, and then there's three civil interrogations.

And if you may recall from last week, we actually skipped several verses that had to do with Jesus' interrogations, because we wanted to focus on Peter's denial.

So I'd like to look at John chapter 18, and we're going to actually begin with verse 12. This is a reading of God's Word here, and I'm going to skip through a little bit here. But let's read this.

18, verse 12. So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. And they led him to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. Just skip down to verse 19 here.

[2:19] The high priest, therefore, questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered him, I've spoken openly to the world.

I always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews come together. I spoke nothing in secret. Why do you question me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them.

Behold, these know what I've said. And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Is that the way you answer the high priest?

Jesus answered him, I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong. But if rightly, why do you strike me? Annas, therefore, sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

If you go down to verse 28. They led Jesus, therefore, from Caiaphas into the praetorium, and it was early. And they themselves did not enter into the praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but eat the Passover.

[3:31] Pilate, therefore, went out to them and said, What accusation do you bring against this man? They answered and said to him, If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered him to you.

Pilate, therefore, said to them, Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law. The Jews said to him, We're not permitted to put anyone to death, that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spoke, signifying what kind of death he was about to die.

Pilate, therefore, entered again into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered, Are you saying this on your own initiative?

Or did others tell you about me? And Pilate answered, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and chief priest delivered you to me.

What have you done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting that I might not be delivered up to the Jews.

[4:41] But as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm. Pilate, therefore, said to him, So you are a king. And Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king.

For this I have been born. And for this I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

Pilate said to him, What is truth? And then when he said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, I find no guilt in him.

But you have a custom that I should release someone for you at the Passover. Do you wish then that I release for you the king of the Jews? And therefore, they cried out again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas.

Now Barabbas was a robber. Heavenly Father, we come to this reading in this passage, Lord, with it's so touching.

[5:51] And it's just so unfitting that someone of Jesus' kind, generous, and loving nature should have to go through something like this. And yet, Lord, we know that you have a higher purpose for allowing this to happen.

Lord, we would pray, Father, that through the ministry of your word, through just the power of your spirit, that you would enlighten to us and bring this to the forefront of what your purposes are.

That we may be enlightened. That we may be your people and shine the light of this gospel to a lost world.

May we be encouraged as we read these because Jesus did this for us. And it's in his name we pray and ask these things. Amen. Amen.

Have you ever noticed just lately all the fascination with the TV programs that are out there concerning the law? Courtrooms?

[6:58] All that. There's some new ones out there. You know, Chicago Law. Law and Order. I had a list at home and I thought, you know what, I'm not even going to bring it because what's the sense?

We all know this. So much emphasis on legal things. I want to ask you, what's the big draw? Why is there so much interest in legalities and courtroom scenes and criminal activity?

I think, I suggest several things. One, isn't it true that when a crime is committed, usually there's a hero emerges and you and I are impressed by their skillful use of the law.

Maybe they're able to cite some case that goes back years and years ago. But I think there's another thing going on. Truth prevails when the guilty are punished.

And boy, we like that, don't we? I mean, who among us likes to hear about a crooked judge? Or maybe there's some jurist who's been bribed and we will say, boy, truth did not prevail in that situation.

[8:06] Where's the justice in that? Well, I'll tell you what. Take all that interest in all the legal proceedings and the interest in law and order and justice.

If you expect to find that in Jesus' life, you're in for a big disappointment. His trial, friends, was a sham. It was.

There were miscarriages of justice pretty much at every turn. In our text here, these legal hearings, they're rushed through and they take place in the middle of the night because they had to get it done by Passover.

And instead of the trials being open to the public, they're held in secret. Some of them in private residences of people. And instead of this concept of innocence before being found guilty, no, the outcome, as far as Jesus is concerned, had already been predetermined.

If you've been following in John's Gospel account, ever since chapter 11, when Jesus had healed Lazarus, the Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus dead.

[9:20] And he's getting too popular. And we can't have that. But here's the thing, and you know this as well, that none of this takes God by surprise.

Amen? It doesn't. This morning, we're going to see some of the details here in this account. But secondly, and more importantly, what does it mean to you and me?

So look in our text here. Jesus has just been arrested. Starting in verse 12, a band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and they bound him.

Notice that it says in verse 13, first, in other words, first, it's a series of interrogations here. They led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest.

Annas was appointed high priest by a Roman official, Quirnerius. And this was back in around 6 AD. You may have heard that name before, Quirnerius.

[10:20] If you've ever read Luke's gospel account, that's the guy who's connected with that census taken at the time when Jesus was born. Annas was from this elite, powerful Jewish family.

And he had five sons and he had one son-in-law, which we'll read about shortly here. Look with me in verse 19. The high priest, Annas, questions Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

We're not told here what he asked Jesus, but I think based on Jesus' answer, it appears that Annas is trying to get some kind of incriminating evidence against Jesus, as if Jesus was the head of some secret organization.

And Jesus answers him in verse 20. No secret organization, no wiretapping, no, nothing like that. Jesus says in verse 20, I have spoken openly to the world.

I've always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews come together. I've said nothing in secret. So I would say Annas is unsuccessful here. Next up, we have Annas, it says in verse 24, since Jesus bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

[11:34] Caiaphas is the son-in-law I talked about. Back in verse 14, John noted here that Caiaphas thought he came up with some clever way to get rid of Jesus.

Do you remember that? He said one man should die for the people. And friends, this is what God wanted. One man to die for the people.

And Jesus will die as our substitute. Well, this interrogation by Caiaphas, it's not recorded in John, but he too is unsuccessful. And so verse 28, then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters.

This is the praetorium. This is where Pontius Pilate would stay when he's in town, which would have been true at this time because of the crowds that would have been there for the feast of Passover.

I want to ask, why is that important? Why did John put that in there? Here's some facts about Pontius Pilate. He was appointed by Tiberius Caesar to serve as governor or prefect over Judea.

[12:46] And Rome's general attitude toward their subjects was this, keep everybody happy. Their slogan was Pax Romana, the peace of Rome.

But as a Roman official, Pilate didn't do that. No, he didn't. Josephus, the Jewish historian, records that at one time Pilate placed some statues of Roman emperors around some of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

And that offended some Jews. And so they complained to Caesar. But another time, Pilate took some money from the Jewish treasury to build some aqueducts.

And this caused riots. And the military had to intervene. People got hurt. And they write another letter to Caesar. And so by this point, Pilate's already walking on thin ice with Tiberius.

He needs to keep the peace with the Jews and make them happy. And he's going to find a way to do that. Verse 28 continues. It's early in the morning. Notice here that these religious leaders did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled to eat the Passover.

[14:04] Take a note of that. Verse 29. Pilate went outside to them and said, What accusation do you bring against this man? And they answered him, If this man were not doing evil, would we not have delivered him to you?

Notice here, these priests couldn't identify any charges against Jesus. In Matthew 28, his account tells us that eventually the religious charges fabricated bogus charges against Jesus.

They said he was opposed to paying taxes to Caesar. Secondly, he caused riots. And thirdly, Jesus claimed to be king in competition with Caesar.

That's not true. Those are bogus charges. Pilate said to them in verse 31, Take him and judge him yourself by your own law.

And the Jews said to him, It's not lawful for us to put anyone to death. You know, a few months later, the Jewish religious leaders are going to be killing Stephen.

[15:10] So, what's going on here? Well, these religious leaders, here's the thing, they wanted Jesus to die a public death by the hands of the Romans.

In other words, crucifixion. That's what's on their mind. Why? It's because crucifixion would prove to the people that Jesus was cursed by God.

In Deuteronomy, chapter 21, verse 23, it says, He who's hanged on a tree, placed on a cross, is accursed by God. But again, this is just another example that God is in total control of the situation. John tells us, if you look in verse 32, that this was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show what kind of death that he was going to die.

You know, besides the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus being pierced, Jesus had already predicted three times in John that he would be lifted up.

[16:18] Chapter 3, 14, verse, chapter 8, verse 28, and then look at this one in chapter 12. He said, And I, when I'm lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

And then John adds, this is to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So Jesus knew this. So verse 33, Pilate enters the headquarters again.

He called Jesus and he said to him, Are you the king of the Jews? You know, what Pilate really wanted to know is, Are you a threat to Rome? But notice how Jesus turns this question around. In verse 34, Jesus answers, Do you say this on your own accord or did others tell you about me? In other words, Pilate, who do you say that I am?

Pilate's the one on trial here. And then verse 36, Jesus launches into this wonderful teaching about his kingdom. My kingdom's not of this world.

[17:21] If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting that I wouldn't be delivered here. But my kingdom's not of the world. Pilate says, So you are a king. And Jesus answers, You say that I'm a king.

For this purpose I was born. I have come into this world to bear witness of the truth. And everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.

And look what Pilate answers. What's truth? Well, what an irony. The man here who's charged with determining truth did not himself know truth, even though it's standing right there in front of him.

Verse 38 goes on. After he said this, Pilate goes back and is outside to the Jews and he tells them all, I find no guilt with this man. In all four gospel accounts, Pilate repeatedly states that he finds no guilt, no fault in Jesus.

In Mark's account, chapter 15, it said that Pilate perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered Jesus to him.

[18:29] So, Pilate here, he's repeatedly trying to set Jesus free. First, and here's how he does it. First, in Luke's account, we read that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod.

Herod's sort of like the mayor of Galilee. And Herod wasn't entertained by Jesus. And so he had Jesus beaten and sent back to Pilate. But notice what else Pilate does.

He tries to manipulate a Jewish tradition. Verse 39, you have this custom that I should release one man for you at Passover. What do you want me to do? You want me to release him to you, the king of the Jews?

Pilate's referring to Barabbas. He's a freedom fighter who was on death row for stirring up trouble against Rome. Verse 40, they cried out again, not this man, give us Barabbas.

And Pilate gives in. And ultimately, they actually blackmailed him. There's a verse next week. I think, Teddy, you have this. Next, if you release this man, you're not Caesar's friend.

[19:37] So once again, Pilate gives in. Now let me catch my breath. What a story.

What an account that we read here. I want to ask you this question. What's the benefit of us pouring over these details in Jesus' account?

You know, this wasn't a fun thing to look at for me. I have to tell you that. You know, just reading this and just seeing, reading how Jesus was treated.

Plus, I lost an hour's sleep. I think you can relate to that, can't you? Yeah, everybody's out there having fun last night playing volleyball and I'm here working and looking at these.

Oh man, look at what they did to Jesus now. How can that be? What's the benefit of us going through this detail? I'll give you one answer.

[20:33] Doctrine. Doctrine. Yeah, why do we believe what we believe? If you were at the conference yesterday, there was that one speaker, Steve Sanchez.

He was talking about doctrine. like a bowling ball. How beautiful it is. But the thing is, they take that beautiful ball and they ram it down a bowling alley and it knocks pins down.

That's what it's supposed to do. It's supposed to inform us as to how we live and how we go through things and how we just love the Lord.

And of course, why do we believe what we believe? There was another topic talked about yesterday, the incarnation. Jesus, he taught people, he healed people, he did a lot of good things with people and he was popular with the people.

How do you get from being Mr. Rogers to being crucified? You know, am I dating myself, Mr. Rogers? Mr. Rogers is Mr. Nice Guy.

[21:46] How do you go from being Mr. Nice Guy to being crucified? Well, this is it. This is doctrine here. Understanding what we believe.

I met this, I had a doctor's appointment this past week and my doctor's so busy now that he has an assistant, a nurse practitioner that helps him.

So I met with her and we're talking. I was so refreshed. This lady, she had moved recently from Florida to Missouri to take on this job and she was talking about how she's been looking for a church and how so many churches are just doctrine is not important to them.

And she said, I'll tell you what, doctrine is number one for me. And you think about that bowling ball crashing into life. Here's a question.

Churches, I'll give you an example. Churches that are into the prosperity gospel. How will that be when they find that their prosperity dries up?

[22:53] That bowling ball will go crashing into their life and they'll have some questions about God. And that's why we study these things.

Everything is related to what we believe and why we believe it. On your handout there, I have some things in here about how did Jesus suffer?

Just look at that really quickly here. We covered this. You'll see this throughout in this text here. Jesus was falsely accused. He was hated without a cause.

He was betrayed by a close friend. He was oppressed and afflicted. He was rejected by His own people. He was pierced. He opened not His mouth.

He was numbered with the transgressors. Picture there Jesus being crucified with thieves and murderers. and there He is being numbered with them.

[23:52] I think it's really interesting that if you take all of these Old Testament witnesses, prophets and so on, their testimony could have been admitted into Jesus' trial for His benefit.

Was it? No. That testimony wasn't even admitted. Because Jesus' trial was a sham. So what truths can we see in this passage here?

I've identified four of them. I think there's probably millions of them. But here's a question. What Jesus' trials or His suffering shows us. Here's the first one. Don't we see the depravity of man?

All the people involved in Jesus' trial, hey, did you notice how deeply flawed there were? They were deeply flawed. There's lots of self-deception going on.

The priests are worried about keeping themselves undefiled so that they can take care, participate in the Passover. Pilate, he thinks that he's the ultimate authority or power over Jesus.

[25:04] He says, all the chief priests have delivered you over to me. I think it's really also interesting how if you read the gospel accounts, many of these people hated each other.

They did. The Pharisees didn't like the Sadducees. They didn't agree on everything. And they all didn't like the Romans. And yet, here they are.

They all came together as an unholy alliance against Jesus. But you know what, friends? I would have been right there with them. Would you?

Yeah, I think we would have. I would have been right there saying, give me Barabbas. Crucify Jesus. But it also occurs to me that just even when you and I acknowledge that, that that qualifies us for Jesus' ultimate ministry.

There was no justice for Jesus. But you know what? Justice is on display here. And here's how. Because God's getting ready to do something wonderful.

[26:12] Something wonderful. He will pour out His wrath on Jesus. And justice will be satisfied. What a wonderful thing that is.

Satisfied for who? For those who believe. Yeah, amen. Look what the writer of Hebrews says here. Therefore, speaking of Jesus, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation.

In other words, to satisfy God the Father for the sins of the people. For, because he himself has suffered when tempted and he is able to help those who are being tempted.

So, the depravity of man is one thing we see, but also, number two, Jesus gives his life in exchange for sinners. Notice here, verse 40, they cried out again, not this man, give us Barabbas.

And I asked the musicians to come up here. I wanted to read, come on up you guys with the music here. I'd like to tell of this account, this one commentator made this suggestion here.

[27:34] You may have seen in the movies that Barabbas is standing next to Jesus and Pilate's in the middle and he's going, okay guys, choose which one. You've seen that? Yeah, this one commentator, he doesn't think that it was quite like that.

He thinks that instead of Barabbas being in front, that Barabbas was actually being held in this tower of Antonia. He's awaiting crucifixion.

If that's so, when Barabbas would have heard these cries, let him be crucified, he may have thought that that was about him.

I want you to just imagine if that's true here. And I think this is true for all of us. You're on death row and you know that you deserve to be there.

That's Barabbas. You hear the crowd saying crucify him, crucify him and you think that that's about you. Then a little later you hear the steps of the soldiers.

[28:39] they're approaching your cell. You hear the dangling of the keys at the door and you're thinking this is not good.

You know what's about to happen. You've heard stories of people on death row, these tough guys, when they look at that hangman's noose or whatever, the electric chair, their knees buckle.

Yeah. And then to your amazement you're set free. Because Jesus, that carpenter from Nazareth, he took your place.

What a wonderful truth that is. What a wonderful thing to be able to say that Jesus took my place before this eternal cosmic judgment seat.

What a wonderful thing. Who can say that? Think about this thirdly, the truthfulness of the gospel.

[29:42] Verse 37, Jesus said, For this purpose I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth listens to my truth.

Friends, are you of the truth? You can hear the truth. Pilate was asked by Jesus, Who do you say I am? Pilate didn't know.

But I think that question is still relevant today, isn't it? Who is Jesus? Who is he? Is he just a good man? Well, a good man, how can a good man say the exclusive things that Jesus said like this?

No man comes to the Father but by me. It's pretty exclusive. How can a good man say that? Is he crazy? Is he delusional?

Is he a liar? It's a common thing said today. If he is the Lord, then why do we fight against him? But here's the fourth thing.

[30:47] All this suffering was part of his humiliation. As the Lamb of God, the suffering servant, he allows himself to be put to death, suffering to shame.

And friends, this glorifies God, doesn't it? More than anything, this glorifies the Lord that he would pay the price. But Jesus, it's not always going to be that way because Jesus will bring his kingdom. I'd like to read this last passage here in Philippians 2, verse 5 because we're going to transition into this time where we remember our Lord Jesus.

Remember that he suffered for a reason. This is what our whole lives rest on, friends. This is what our eternal life is on.

This is Paul writing to the church at Philippi. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [32:06] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

When he comes again, what will people say then? What can you and I say this day? Let's pray.

Father, so much, thank you so much for, you've put these passages in here, Lord, just to show us what Jesus went through.

And Lord, we still have some chapters to go in John. And yet, Lord, we know that none of this took you by surprise. In fact, it was by design. Because sinners, such as me, needed a way back to you. And I couldn't do it, Lord. I could not, I could never be good enough to merit a place with you. But because of Jesus, and Lord, because I have placed my faith in him and in his perfect work, I am able to stand before you as cleansed, forgiven.

[33:45] But Lord, we know that that did not come cheap. There was a price that was paid. And Lord, we have this opportunity now to just even remember that. to soak that in because you are a good God.

And you are deserving of all of our praises. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.