

Matthew 27:11-26 | Kent Stiles

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Preacher: Kent Stiles

[0:00] Well, it's good to be here this morning. I feel like it's almost like coming back from being away from the summer. I think I've only been here a few times in the last couple months. A lot of the people gone today are down enjoying a fall retreat at Dayspring.

I can tell you it's been a really encouraging weekend, profitable time. There's about 30 or 40 young ones that are there listening to the Word this morning. And just good to see those that are being disciplined.

And so just keep them in your prayer. I was told, or I've inferred, that I can speak 30 minutes later than what Teddy spoke last week. So hopefully that's the case.

So coming back from our summer schedule into fall, it may not feel that way here, as Jeff said, a couple days from now. But it is good to be rolling into September.

It's supposed to be getting slower as you get into the fall, but I feel like it just gets a little busier here through December. So with that being said, if you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Matthew chapter 27.

[1:02] And what we're going to see here in chapter 27 of Matthew, we're approaching the end of the book. I don't know how long we've been in Matthew. It's been a while. So we're coming up on the end.

And what we see this morning is chapter 27 contains the final events of the process of leading up to the crucifixion. And these events are laid out before our eyes.

And I think Matthew specifically wants us to understand the nature and the purpose of Christ's death. And he wants us to understand that Christ's death, there's been much that has led up to this point, but none of it has been by accident.

And his death, it's filled with redeeming significance. And it's for the purpose of accomplishing the redemption of his people. And so last week, if you were here or if you were listening online or got to listen to the message during the week, Ted spoke and we saw that Matthew opens up this chapter and showing us something of the wickedness of man's heart and the sovereignty of God and what Jesus was going to do.

Excuse me. What Jesus did and what he underwent was the fulfillment of the scripture. And so he opens the chapter affirming that. And even in Judas' death, we see that scripture was fulfilled.

[2:20] And so the question might be asked, like, what is the purpose for Matthew telling us that? As I'll mention here in a moment, we see in chapter 27, and again, you've got to remember that chapter breaks are just artificial breaks in the gospel account.

But when he opens up, he introduces Christ, but then he takes a brief reprieve and references Judas and then comes back here to Christ. And, you know, the question is, what is he telling us? I think what's important is he doesn't want us to approach the cross thinking that somehow, again, this was by accident. That somehow that this was a big mistake. That somehow this was all something that God didn't realize that was going to happen or could have been avoided, that he wasn't in control.

But on the contrary, this was something that God himself, that had been planned from the foundation of the world for the forgiveness of those who had rebelled against him. He was in a complete 100% control.

And so bearing that in mind, turn with me again, if you haven't already, Matthew 27. And we're going to look at verse 11, and we will look at the trial of Jesus before Pilate. And we're going to be looking at verse 11 down through 26.

[3:33] It says this, Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned him, saying, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus said to him, It is as you say. And while he was being accused by the chief priests and the elders, he made no answer.

Then Pilate said to him, Do you not hear how many things they testify against you? And he did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

Now at the feast of the governor was accustomed to release for the multitude any one prisoner that they wanted. And they were holding at the time a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said to them, Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus, whom is called the Christ?

For he knew that because of envy they had delivered him up. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, Have nothing to do with this righteous man, for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of him.

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes to ask for Barabbas and put Jesus to death. But the governor answered and said to them, Which of the two do you want me to release to you?

[4:43] And they say, Barabbas. Pilate said to them, Then what shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ? They all said, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why? What evil has he done?

But they kept shouting all the more, Let him be crucified. And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood.

See to that yourselves. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on our children. And then he released Barabbas to them. And after having Jesus scourged, he delivered him to be crucified.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. Lord, this morning we come to this passage, which is the pinnacle of the time in the book of Matthew, as your son made his way to the cross, Lord.

As we're going to see this morning, not by anything of his own doing, Lord, but to serve as a redemptive act for us, Lord, for sinners.

[5:47] Lord, we ask that you would just open our eyes and ears as we look at the passage this morning. We thank you for this time, and we ask this in your son's name. Amen. Amen. This passage in Matthew 27, it's fairly, I would say, fairly straightforward.

There's nothing that's really cryptic about it. There's nothing that is super in-depth in regard to doctrine and such. But I think there are a lot of amazing truths contained within the passage for us. And I want to focus our attention on just a few things. And the passage we'll see this morning, it really is broken down into two parts. You have the first part, which is verse 11 through 14, and that's the trial of Jesus.

And then we'll see the second part, which is in verses 15 through 26, and that is the sentencing of Jesus. So we have the trial, and then we have the sentencing. So let's start with the first part here, that's the trial.

As you look at the trial of Jesus proceeding in verse 11 through 14, what you see is initially, I think, what really stands out to me is just the dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6:49] That his accusers and his judges, and you see something of the commitment of Christ, and that what he's doing is he is putting himself in a position to die for our sins.

And so Matthew here in verse 11, he's picking up on a story, as I mentioned earlier, that he had left in verses 1 to 2. And you may recall in verse 1 and 2, he references, it says, When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death.

And when they bound him, they led him to be delivered, and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

So he starts the story, he starts the account there, but then he stops. And it's almost as if he says, you know, before we get going on that, let me tell you a little bit about what happened to Judas.

And I think he does this somewhat deliberately so we can contrast Peter and Judas at the end of 26 and the beginning of 27. And so Matthew sets these stories side by side as a warning and a

comparison for the contrast.

So he's got that out of the way, we looked at that last week. So we're back in verse 11, and he continues essentially where he stopped in verse 2. He picks up the story. And if the gospel accounts, if we looked at them in parallel and we read them together, we learn a lot of information about Pilate.

[8:08] And that's the central figure here, along with Christ in these verses. And what we learn is that he was apparently very reluctant about carrying out this trial of Jesus Christ.

And he's certainly about condemning him and convicting him. And when we read the gospels together, in fact, if you look at them again side by side and fill in the gaps, we find out that already before this point, Pilate had tried to hand Jesus to the Sanhedrin.

And we see that in John chapter 18, in verse 29 through 31. After first hearing the charge of the chief priests of the elders, he said to them essentially, won't you take him back and try him in your court?

So he already wants to kind of push this aside. And they replied to him and they said, no, we want the death sentence and we can't pass along the death sentence. And we want you to try him.

And so they went on and they went to add to that argument. They said that this man here has caused an uproar in all of Israel, even up into Galilee. And when Pilate heard that phrase Galilee, he saw yet another way to get himself off the hook.

[9:17] And he said, oh, he's accused of a riot all the way up into Galilee. Well, if that's the case, then Herod is in charge of Galilee. So he sends him off to Galilee like a package that won't go away.

However, Jesus makes its way back. And because Herod didn't want to deal with him and he sends him back to Pilate. And at that point, Pilate wants, I really believe you read this, Pilate wants to grant him amnesty.

It was a custom at certain feasts. Let's give me one moment here. It was a custom at certain feasts to offer people the opportunity to either spare a man who had already been convicted or to spare one who was currently on trial and sentencing.

And so we offer Jesus. And I have to believe he probably thought, you know what? The crowd here, they're not going to convict this guy. He's done nothing wrong.

You know, this Brutus guy, he's a bad dude, right? He's dangerous. I mean, it would be akin to somebody saying like, if you're in St. Louis and I say, hey, we can let out this guy who did nothing wrong, who was falsely accused, or this guy who's a serial killer.

[10:31] Who do you want on the streets? Well, it would be a no-brainer as to who you would say to let off. And so he offers them. And they said no. And Pilate is a man who's very reluctant to deal with Jesus.

And he's in this predicament. So let's look through the story of the trials that were accounted for us in 11 through 14. It says, Pilate goes outside the praetorium and he meets the crowd that has come to see him.

The Sanhedrin and the chief priests and the elders who have come there to accuse Jesus. And you'll notice he'll say that they won't go into Pilate's house, so to speak.

You see, Pilate was a Gentile and it was the eve of the great feast. And they would be declared, if they were to go into the house, they would be declared defiled for having gone into the home of a sinner. And they would not be able to participate in the religious ceremonies of the Passover.

And heaven forbid that these righteous men who were attempting to execute an innocent man should soil themselves by entering into the place or the home of a Gentile on the eve of Passover.

[11:38] And so they refused to go inside. And so Pilate comes outside to see what the ruckus is. And they bring this charge against Jesus. And it's very clear what the charge is in verse 11.

They bring a charge that he is a sort of political revolutionary. They call him the king of the Jews. Because they know that Pilate is not interested in Jewish doctrinal disputes against the God of Israel.

They know that Pilate would want a political charge as he's interested in acting on a specific or a particular crime. And so when Pilate hears, not that they charge him with A, B, or C, but that they charge him with being essentially an insurrectionist or a political revolutionary, he says, I'm going to

question this guy.

I'm going to question this man. And so he has Jesus brought into the hall so he can question him in some context of sanity. And he puts a direct question to him.

And he asks if Jesus is in fact claiming to be the king of the Jews. And that was the charge that was brought by the Sanhedrin.

[12:55] And Jesus answers Pilate. And it's interesting. He answers him in the same way that he answered Judas. In the same way that he answered the chief priest.

Just as when Judas in Matthew 26, 25 said, surely not I. Jesus says to him or responds to him, you said yourself.

And just as the chief priest said, are you the Messiah? Jesus responds and he says, you said it yourself. And then Pilate said, are you the king of the Jews?

And Jesus says, you said it yourself. So essentially the same response to three different questions in three different situations. And so what he's not doing, he's not evading Pilate's question.

He's actually answering it in such a way to clarify specifically what it means when he asks, is he the king of the Jews? And we'll come back to that here shortly.

[13:50] But what we notice in verse 13, so there are these questions. So you have this ruckus going outside. You have these charges. He's before Pilate. And what you notice when you read this is there's a calmness of Jesus.

Again, remember, none of this is a surprise to him. It doesn't mean it wasn't difficult, but he wasn't surprised by it. He didn't find himself in a situation where he doesn't know what's coming next.

And I think Pilate is stunned, it says, by the way that this man reacts. He's amazed at his calmness and his quietness. You see, Pilate would be in this situation often.

And he would be used to prisoners who come to his courtroom who are essentially foaming at the mouth, who are making excuses as to what they've done or who are declaring themselves innocent with assertions that they've done nothing wrong.

They would be begging. They would be making some assertion that they were a part of a greater conspiracy, that they were only accomplices in some type of crime.

[14:57] That's what he would see on a daily basis. And here, with these ridiculous charges, he sees a man who sits before him who's completely calm, who's completely quiet, who's completely subdued.

And that would amaze Pilate. Again, he's used to people begging for mercy, making a case for themselves. And yet here we see Jesus, and he stands there quietly.

He won't answer any of the charges that are brought against him by his accusers. And in fact, the only person or the only people that are foaming or frothing at the mouth are his accusers.

And that's a striking thing to Pilate. Pilate, because again, he's used to every criminal that comes before him having excuses as to what he or she's done, or he's pleading that he didn't do what he did.

And so Pilate, he's used to this, and yet Jesus here stands quiet. And I think that's significant. And we'll look at that here in a moment as well as to why that's important.

[16:02] So he's before Pilate. And then Jesus, though he answers Pilate's questions directly, he refuses to answer any of the charges of the Jews. And I think this shows his commitment in part to what God is doing for us.

I want you to see a few couple points here, key points I think come out in the trial of Jesus. There are many, but again, I'm just going to highlight a couple. And first of all, notice that Jesus, he's basically accused of treason.

You know, he's accused of being a revolutionary, and he's trying to overthrow Rome. And this was a capital offense. And that's why this charge was made, specifically. And the Sanhedrin, they needed something of a political nature if they were going to reach their goal or achieve their goal of having Jesus crucified.

And so Matthew lets you know of the charge or the nature of the charge, because what Matthew has been showing you is that Jesus taught about his kingdom in public and in private with the multitudes and with his disciples.

And when he did that, what would be said? Matthew's already shown us, he's already been showing us throughout 20-something chapters that every time that Jesus' disciples or his own disciples misinterpreted him as being some sort of religious leader, Jesus did what?

[17:25] He corrected them, and he said, no, that's not what I'm about. My kingdom is not of this world. He wasn't looking to overthrow the government. And so Matthew knows that when you hear that Jesus is accused of being a political insurrectionist, you will know that that is utterly false and a groundless accusation.

Because we know that Matthew shows us over and over again that this man, that he's dying absolutely innocent of all the charges that are brought against him.

He's utterly righteous. He's utterly innocent. And that's the first thing that you see in this passage.

Second, Jesus in this passage, he responds to being called the king of the Jews, and he points out several things about that title, about that phrase to Pilate.

In our passage, all Jesus says is, you said it. As you said it, you're the one who said it, essentially. And we could translate it many, many ways.

And it's basically the gist of Jesus' response. And you're left wondering, well, what exactly did Jesus mean by that? There's not a lot of context here in Matthew. But fortunately, as I mentioned earlier, if you line up the four Gospels, if you look at them side by side, John, in fact, has recorded for us a little bit longer description of this conversation between Pilate and Jesus.

[18:49] And in John 18, in verses 33 to 37, John records for us a little bit more in detail about this specific exchange between Jesus and Pilate and what helps us understand exactly what Jesus was saying to Pilate when Pilate asked him that question, are you the king of the Jews?

And so I'm going to read, you don't have to turn there, but I'm going to read from John 18, 33 to 37, because I think it gives us good context this morning. It says, therefore, Pilate 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? Pilate answered, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the 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 so that I would not be handed over to the Jews.

But as it is, my kingdom is not of this world. Therefore, Pilate said to him, so you are a king. Jesus answered, you say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born.

[19:55] For this I have come into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. So basically, Jesus says three things in his response.

First of all, he tells Pilate that this phrase, king of the Jews, it's something that others are either acknowledging about him or they're accusing him of. That he himself, he's not using that title to make some sort of political claim.

In fact, he backs it up by saying, look, if I were aspiring to be a political ruler, wouldn't my followers be following me to prove that this was happening to me?

He says the proof is in the pudding that I am not aspiring to political rule. Okay, so Jesus makes it clear, and this is what Pilate had already expected based on what he had seen.

That this charge, that he's a political revolutionary, that it's a trumped up charge in the mouths of his enemies. And it's not something that can be accredited to his own teaching.

[21:03] Secondly, he explicitly says in his answer to Pilate's question in verse 36 of John 18, that he is not an earthly king with a political aspiration. He says, my kingdom is not of this world.

And I think Pilate knows at this point what he means. So you're claiming to be a king, and Jesus' answer is basically, yes, but I'm the king of truth.

My mission is to come into this world and to bear witness to the truth. And I think Pilate understood that Jesus wasn't claiming to be, again, a social revolutionary. He was claiming to be a king in a spiritual sense.

And Pilate recognized that he was not guilty of any political designs against the Roman Empire. I think that's really important to know, because if there's ever a doubt as to whether Pilate ultimately convicts him based on what the evidence is, or what he thinks, or what he sees, I think it's clear in

these accounts that that's not the case.

Well, Jesus continues to refuse to answer the questions of the Sanhedrin. And this is important. You see, Pilate, we've already seen, who is a man who's reluctant to deal with Jesus, and from every indication was looking for an excuse to get Jesus off the hook.

[22:16] Jesus refuses to do it. And Jesus refuses to do it, the reason is because he's already been to the garden.

He's already wrestled with the consequences. And he will not do anything that will give in the way of dying. And again, we see a glimpse of the dignity of our Savior in his manhood, his complete and unequivocal commitment to go to the cross for you and for me.

And I think Jesus' silence in his trial, it's not, this is not a model, per se, of how Christians ought to respond in a trial when we are unjustly accused.

I think that's important to note, that Jesus isn't saying, now, all Christians, if you're unjustly accused, and you're in a court of criminal law, make sure you don't respond, make sure you have, you don't have, make sure you don't respond, make sure you don't have, you know, representation, make sure that you just stand silent.

Jesus isn't saying that. He's not showing us how we ought to respond in the face of unjust accusations in a criminal court. We know that happens. And we defend ourselves.

[23:36] Jesus' actions are unique because he is unique. His silence is a reflection of his commitment to die for you and for me because of his love for us and because of his love for the Father.

So the Lord Jesus Christ, who does not open his mouth, excuse me, he's sending a thunderous message to you and to me that he wanted, he wants to bear your sin, he wants paying that price for us.

He was sending a message that he, there is nothing more in this world that he delights in than doing the will of his Father, even if it means being condemned unjustly. You see, because he loved to do the will of his Heavenly Father, and it was the Father's will that he should die for the sins of people, of his people.

And therefore, the Lord Jesus wasn't willing to do anything that would compromise that, that would spare him from the torture of death, which would, he would have to unfortunately endure in order to release you and me from the bondage of the condemnation of sin.

That's what he went through. And incidentally, there will come a day when men will stand before the Lord on the day of judgment with valid charges.

[24:57] And when they stand before him, they will have nothing to say before that just condemnation of God. You and I, those of us that have placed our faith and our trust in Jesus Christ, we can give thanks, and we can give thanks that not only, that we will not stand silent, we will not be of that party because Christ took that silence for you and me as he stood here and ultimately led to the death of the cross.

And so number one, we see the trial of Jesus. And briefly, let's look at the sentencing as we wrap up here of Jesus. In verse 15 down through 26, again, we see Jesus' sentence from Pilate.

We see that the innocence of Jesus is reaffirmed, and we see the injustice of the sentence. We see the weakness of man in the face of the wickedness of man.

And the incident, which is recorded in verses 15 down through 18, where Pilate would normally release a Jewish prisoner at the festival at a request of the crowd. This passage, it's recorded for us, again, to show us that Pilate, again, he thought that Jesus was innocent.

Pilate was suspicious of the charges that the Jews were bringing. He was suspicious of the motives of the Jewish leaders. And we know from history that Paul had a really difficult or horrendous relationship with the Jewish people.

[26:29] He had contempt for them. They had contempt for him. And so there was an abrasive contact between Pilate and the religious leaders of Israel for much of the time that Pilate was governor. And so this man was inherently suspicious as to why these men wanted to cooperate with him.

Why would they want to help me out? We've never had a good relationship. In verse 18, it specifically says that he figured these men were envious of Jesus.

And so he tries to provide a way for Jesus to be spared their particular condemnation. And Matthew is telling us that Pilate, the man who will eventually condemn Jesus, again, he thought, he knew him to be innocent.

In verse 19, it's mysterious. We saw this strange story of a dream that Pilate's wife had had. And it says she wrestled in her sleep.

And Pilate's sitting there on the judgment seat. And a messenger comes up to him and whispers in his ear. And he says, you know, by the way, Pilate, your wife, she had a dream last night. And she says, don't have anything to do with this man.

[27:33] He's innocent. And so Matthew is saying, not only does Pilate think he's innocent, Pilate's wife thinks he's innocent. And so you've opened up Matthew 27, what's happening?

In 27, 1 through 10, Jesus' betrayer declares that he's what? That he's innocent. Then Jesus' judge declares that he's what?

He's innocent. And Jesus' judge's wife declares what? That he's innocent. He's innocent. What's Matthew trying to tell us? That this man, Jesus Christ, he is the spotless lamb of God.

And we're seeing right here that he is the victim of injustice. He's been unjustly accused by those who are bringing these charges. And yet we see in verse 20, the chief priests and the elders, it says they will not relent.

They demand that he be put to death. And so finally, after pushback and pushback, Pilate gives him a choice. Who do you want? Do you want Barabbas or Jesus Christ?

[28:36] The anointed one, Jesus the Messiah. Which one do you want? Jesus the criminal or Jesus the Christ? And the answer is an unequivocal response from the crowd. We want Barabbas.

Bring him. Kill Jesus. Imagine how Pilate must have felt at that time. He thought he had a way out. And yet this response from the crowd.

Well, finally, Pilate weakens before the wickedness. He weakens before this miscarriage of justice. And he literally washes his hands from this matter.

And that's where we get the metaphor. He washes his hands, which is a sign that he declares himself to be innocent of this matter.

And he puts all the responsibility for the condemnation of Jesus Christ on his accusers. And his accusers mockingly accept it. His blood be upon us. Be upon our children.

[29:34] And they mock him. If the musicians want to come up, just we're going to wrap up here briefly. Again, Matthew's showing us here this morning the innocence of Christ.

He shows us that his betrayer pronounced him as innocent. Jesus' judge pronounces him as innocent. He is utterly innocent of what he's being accused of.

He is the righteous lamb of God being led away to slaughter for the sins that he had not committed. And what is Matthew doing here? He's building for you a theology of the death of Christ.

He's telling you why the death of Christ occurred. Was it an accident? No. Was it out of the control of God's plan? No. Was it something whereby Jesus did something wrong?

He accidentally fell into a situation that he had done something that would warrant his crucifixion? No. Matthew is saying over and over again, this is an innocent man that is going to die.

[30:48] And so we have the trial. We have the inquiry. We have the sentencing. That we see finally in verse 26. Pilate has Jesus flogged. And he sends him away for crucifixion.

And we see the wounds which he bore for our transgressions. You remember the verse, very well-known verse, Isaiah 53, 5. He was wounded for our transgressions.

And the torture and the beating and the flogging that the Lord Jesus Christ received here, he received not because of what he did, but rather he received this for you and me.

You know, when he remains silent, when Jesus refuses to talk himself out of these charges, Jesus is as much saying, I choose to be beaten.

I choose to be scourged. I choose to be crucified for that man's bitterness, for that woman's anger, for that man's rebellion against God, for that man's estrangement from his wife, from that child's disobedience, I choose to be scourged and flogged and crucified, dead and buried, because I wish to stand in the place of all who trust me so that they may never receive the just sentence of God.

[32:11] And I receive this unjust sentence so that you might receive the sentence of grace. 2 Corinthians 5.21, we'll close with this verse. It says, He who knew no sin, Jesus Christ, he who knew no sin, became sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Let's give thanks as we close. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, Lord. Lord, we thank you. It's difficult for your son to stand there, silent, Lord, to know what was coming before him, to know that he was taking on a punishment that wasn't earned by anything he had done, but rather, Lord, to provide a way for sinners like myself, like each person in the world, Lord, to take their place, Lord.

We thank you for his willingness to do so, Lord. We thank you that he wanted to fulfill your will, Lord. We thank you for that shed blood on the cross that we may have a way to be reconciled, Lord. We thank you for this in your son's precious name this morning. Amen.