

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DEC 26TH-27TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

BLOOD MONEY (MATTHEW 27:1-10)

"JUDAS... WAS FULL OF REMORSE"

Matthew labels Judas "His betrayer." We really start to see the tragedy and darkness of sin as Judas realizes what he has done and admits that he has "sinned by betraying innocent blood."

- Judas probably still didn't believe in Jesus' divinity, but His friendship must have prompted him to want to right his wrong.

"WHAT'S THAT TO US?"

The religious leaders wanted to distance themselves from Judas. They wanted to use Judas for their gain and then discard him.

- Humans void of God are self-serving and self-preserving. **Without the Holy Spirit we become individualistic consumers that care little to nothing about others. This is not the heart of God.**

A MONTH'S WAGE FOR AN ETERNITY

30 pieces of silver was about a month's wage. Though Judas was greedy, it was more about his expectations of Jesus not aligning with what he wanted.

- **What are our expectations of Jesus? Do they align with His Word? Do we tend to sell Him out for what, in hindsight, is so insignificant?**

BLOOD FIELD

After Judas threw the coins at the Pharisees, they used them to buy a field because it was against the law to keep money used for unethical reasons. Ironic, knowing they were plotting murder.

- The field fulfilled prophecy from Jer. 19 and Zech. 11. **The ones that thought they had control were unknowingly fulfilling the plans of the Master.**

THE GOVERNOR (MATTHEW 27:11-14)

IT WAS NOT JUST THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The fact that Jesus was convicted by both the Jews and Romans showed the responsibility of all people for His death.

- Many people have accused Matthew (a Jew) of anti-Semitism, but his record condemns all people, Jews and Gentiles, of treating Jesus unfairly. **Every nationality and race shares in the reason for the Cross.**

"ARE YOU KING OF THE JEWS?"

Pilate was the Roman governor that had jurisdiction over the region of Judea (the large southern part of Israel). If the Jewish leaders were to have Jesus executed, it had to be by a decree of the Roman officials. Though pagan, the Romans had strict laws. Pilate questioned Jesus in the hopes of discovering the truth about Him.

"YOU SAY SO."

Jesus responded to Pilate exactly as He did to Caiaphas in 26:64. Though these are the last words Matt records before Jesus' death, the other gospels give us more of the conversation.

- In John 18:36-38 we learn a very important lesson. **Jesus' kingdom is "not of this world," meaning that it doesn't function like the institutions of this world.**

WE ALSO LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH

In John 18:37, Jesus says, "Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." To this, Pilate responds "What is truth?"

- **Jesus sets the standard for what is truth, but the world, shown by Pilate, thinks truth is relative and ever changing. We must be honest and ask, "What do we believe to be true?"**

SILENCE THAT SPOKE VOLUMES

At all of the false accusations, **Jesus remained silent because He knew who He was and what His mission was.** Jesus' silence in the face of opposition "amazed" Pilate who represented modern society.

- **If we're confident in our identity and mission as a Christian, we need not scream and fight when we're challenged.**

CRUCIFY HIM (MATTHEW 27:15-26)

THE TRIAL WAS NOW PUBLIC AND HEATED

The private conversation between Pilate and Jesus now moved to the courtyard. The crowd, led by the religious leaders, wanted a quick verdict to crucify Jesus.

- To try and get out of condemning a man he thought was innocent while also respecting local religion, Pilate showed mercy at the Passover festival by releasing a prisoner.

A "NOTORIOUS PRISONER"

To Pilate, the choice of a beaten up meek man like Jesus and a violent terrorist like Barabbas was an easy way to get off the hook. Pilate thought that their "envy" of Jesus wasn't so extreme to let a mad man loose **We can never underestimate the power of envy and jealousy. This is why the Bible commands us to address it.**

PILATE'S WIFE HAD A DREAM

To add to the complexity of Pilate's situation, his wife tells him that she has "suffered terribly in a dream because of [Jesus]." **Was God pulling on her heart?**

- In contrast to Pilate and his wife questioning the conviction of Jesus, the Jewish leaders "persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and execute Jesus."

JESUS BAR ABBAS

Mk 15:7 describes Barabbas as a murderous rebel. Some historians and early church leaders said his full name was Jesus Bar Abbas and was the son of a well known teacher.

- Pilate offered the people Jesus the rebellious and violent son of a celebrity, or Jesus the Son of God. **Society still chooses rebellious celebrities over righteous leadership.**

"CRUCIFY HIM!"

The anger and hatred towards Jesus from the religious leaders and the crowd escalates even though Pilate asks, "Why, what has He done wrong?" Matt writes that Pilate was not just "getting nowhere," but that a riot was about to break out during what should have been a holy week in Jerusalem.

"I AM INNOCENT OF THIS MAN'S BLOOD"

Pilate wanted nothing to do with Jesus' crucifixion, but he also didn't want to risk his livelihood and comforts. **Passivity to evil will also be held into account by God. We must not only address evil, we must do something about it. We must pray, show love and grace, and be benevolent servants.**

"HIS BLOOD BE ON US AND OUR CHILDREN!"

Pilate released Barabbas to go back to his life of crime and an innocent Jesus was flogged by Roman soldiers. The arrogant and evil religious leaders said they would take full responsibility.

- Flogging was done with a leather whip with pieces of bone and metal attached on the ends. It would rip the flesh and almost permanently scar the victim.

MOCKING THE KING (MATTHEW 27:27-31)

NOW THE GENTILES JOINED IN

To this point it had only been the Jewish community mocking and hating Jesus, but now the non-Jewish people joined in. The main suffering was at the hands of the Roman soldiers. A cohort of 600 soldiers in the "governor's residence" stripped Him, put a scarlet robe on Him, and shoved a crown of thorns on His head.

"HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!"

After placing a staff in His hands and making Jesus look like a broken king, the soldiers mockingly addressed Him as the King of the Jews. They also "spat on Him...and kept hitting Him on the head."

- **Imagine the Creator of everything being mocked and abused by His own creation. In humility, Jesus restrained His power.**

ONWARD TO THE CROSS

Matt writes, "After they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him." **Why did it have to come to this?** The King of the Universe came as a humble man, led away by the very people He came to save, to die in the most violent manner. **Why? Because we had strayed from God.**

I AM RESPONSIBLE

It is easy to villainize Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, the Jews, and the Romans, but it was all of humanity's sins that led Jesus to the Cross. **It is easy for us to villainize others today, but we must own our part in the rebellion that caused an innocent Savior to die.** If the world is messed up, it is because I have contributed to the mess.

ADDRESSING THE EVIL IN ME

The point of the Gospel is not to pass the blame to others, but **to identify the evil within ourselves.** A relationship with Jesus is personal. That means it is going to get personal. **Though it stings to extract the sin and selfishness from our lives, it is allowing Jesus to dig into us that saves our souls.**

LETTING THE CROSS CHANGE ME

Ironically, my sins that led Jesus to the cross are also forgiven by its bloodshed. Not only can we be forgiven, we can be delivered and changed. **An encounter with the Cross changes us. It is by the Cross that we can love God, love people, love enemies, and love who we are in Christ.**