

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 16TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

REMAINING SILENT (MARK 15:1-5) "THE CHIEF PRIEST TIED JESUS UP"

After being taken to Annas and the illegal nighttime trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus was brought in front of the Sanhedrin again before being handed over to Pilate.

- We again see **the religious leaders taking precautions that were not necessary**. Jesus **allowed them to arrest Him**, so tying Him up to hand Him over to Pilate was not needed.

"HANDED HIM OVER TO PILATE"

Pilate was appointed the Roman governor of Judea by Tiberius Caesar in 26 A.D. He is believed to have been **cruel, ruthless, and indifferent to individuals' feelings about morality**.

- The religious leaders thought they would receive a favorable outcome from Pilate, but historical writings tell us that **he didn't trust the Jews and was constantly suspicious of them**.

SEEING WHAT WOULD STICK

The religious leaders could not carry out a death sentence. They needed the Romans to believe Jesus was guilty of treason since a religious crime like blasphemy wasn't enough for the Romans to execute a person.

- The Sanhedrin brought three charges against Jesus: **misleading the nation, not paying taxes, and claiming to be Christ, a king** (Luke 23:2).

FOLLOWING RULES WHEN IT'S BENEFICIAL

Pilate tried to get the Jews to address the matter with Jesus themselves. They said, **"We have no right to execute anyone"** (John 18:31, NIV) but later stoned the disciple Stephen to death (Acts 7:58).

- The stoning of Stephen was illegal, but the religious leaders did not believe the Romans would take note as they would with the killing of Jesus, whose popularity was growing.

THE CHARGE OF TREASON

Pilate did not care if Jesus claimed to be God. The Romans had hundreds of gods, so one more added to the roster would not make a difference.

- Jesus was brought before Pilate as the **King of the Jews**, which did pose a problem because **the Romans believed there was no king except Caesar**.

"BUT JESUS STILL DID NOT ANSWER"

Pilate was amazed at Jesus' response and countenance. Pilate had likely seen many men grovel and beg for their lives, but not Jesus.

- When **Jesus remained silent** and did not offer a defense, He was in a sense forcing Pilate to side with His accusers and view Him as guilty.

RELEASING BARABBAS (MARK 15:6-15) SKIRTING RESPONSIBILITY

Pilate saw through what the Jewish leaders were doing, but he was stuck between executing a man he believed to be innocent (Luke 23:14) and causing an uproar among the Jewish leaders by releasing Jesus, which could have been viewed as a mark against his ability to govern the area.

- **Pilate chose to use a festival custom as an attempt to free Jesus**.

"DO FOR THEM AS WAS HIS CUSTOM"

During the Passover festival, it was customary for the Romans to release a prisoner as a sign of leniency and to maintain order.

- **The people could have chosen to release Barabbas ("son of Abba")**, a man arrested with a group of his followers for insurrection and murder, or **the one true Son of the Father, Jesus**.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WERE ENVIOUS

Pilate knew the religious leaders had handed Jesus over because **He was gaining too much popularity and influence over the people**.

- Sensing that Pilate was trying to release Jesus, the religious leaders influenced the crowd to ask for Barabbas instead. **They would have been easy to influence because of their disdain for Pilate and their trust in the religious leaders**.

"WHY? WHAT HAS HE DONE WRONG?"

Pilate would have been shocked that the crowd wanted Barabbas released, but even more shocking was the crowd crying out, **"Crucify Him!"**

- Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd and his own interests, so **he declared his innocence and "washed his hands" of the the situation** (Matthew 27:24).

BRUTALLY BEATEN BEFORE BEING CRUCIFIED

"...after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified" (v. 15).

- A flogging was meant to bring the recipient to a state **just short of collapse and death**. Iron balls and sheep bones were used to cause **deep contusions and cut through the first layers of tissue**. Eventually, ribbons of **flesh would rip off as the cuts went into the underlying muscle**.

CROWN OF THORNS (MARK 15:16-20)

BEATING AND MOCKING THE KING OF KINGS

The Roman soldiers took Jesus to the private residence of the governor (the "praetorium") and **played a game of cat and mouse with the King of Kings**.

- The entire company of troops from all over the Roman empire "played" with Jesus, beating and mocking the already weakened Jesus for claiming to be a king.

A PURPLE ROBE

Purple was the color of royalty, and a robe was a sign of authority. Most likely, a **tattered military cloak that had faded from scarlet to purple was placed on Jesus' beaten and bloodied body**.

- The cloth placed on Jesus' skin would adhere to His body and absorb His blood. Any time the cloth was removed, it ripped off the blood clots and reopened His wounds.

A CROWN OF THORNS AND A REED FOR A SCEPTER

Caesar and the kings of this day wore gilded wreaths of leaves on their heads, so **the troops fashioned a wreath of thorns and pressed the more-than-inch-long thorns into Jesus' scalp**.

- The troops then took a stick (like a wooden broom handle) and began to **hit Jesus on the head with it, driving the thorns deeper into his scalp**.

FURTHER MOCKERY

To mock Jesus further, the troops shouted, **"Hail, king of the Jews!"** in the same way that the Roman emperor would be greeted by shouting, "Hail, Caesar!"

- The troops then continuously spat on Jesus, **falling on their knees in false adoration before ripping the robe off His back and putting His clothes back on Him**.

"THEY LED HIM OUT TO CRUCIFY HIM."

John's Gospel says that Pilate brought Jesus out, making one last appeal to crowd, but they showed no compassion towards the bloodied Christ (John 19:4-5,12-16). **Jesus was then led off to be crucified**.

- A person to be crucified would be **flogged then marched in a parade, carrying their cross as their crime was shouted out along the way**.
- Mark 8:34

THE MARKERS OF A DISCIPLE

- When we stay composed and calm in the midst of trials, it is a great testament to the power of Christ for those around us.
- **Jesus said they will know we are His by how we love one another (John 13:35)**.
- **There will be evidence ("fruit") that we are following Christ (Galatians 5:22-23)**.

THE GUILTY SET FREE

- Barabbas was the first example of the innocent taking the place of the guilty, as Jesus would go on to die on his behalf.
- We all are Barabbases. We all are guilty, and Jesus is willing to stand in our place.
- Will we reject His sacrifice and bear the punishment of our guilt ourselves? Or will we accept His sacrifice and be set free?

THE BRUTALITY OF THE CROSS

- The first response to the cross may be an emotional one, but we are not to stay there.
- We should respond with a willingness to endure pain and humiliation for the sake of Jesus, if necessary.
- We respond with praise, adoration, and confidence in and assurance of the completed work of the cross.