

Introduction: A Proverb sheds light on this morning's Gospel and Psalm readings: God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:34). This principle is so important that both Peter (1 Peter 5:3-7) in the context of youths submitting to elders and Christians to God, and James (4:1-10) in the context of the spiritual battle between God's people and the people of the world, use this Proverb as the starting point for how disciples of Jesus should live. *** I am currently struggling with how to love God and my neighbor so I do not respond to people with cutting sarcasm, for which I have a talent, but which is one of my ongoing sins. I have a hard time discerning if people who support unhealthy ways of living are merely ignorant or willfully contrary. I am not talking about physical health, but spiritual health and well-being. If only all people could become reconciled to God so as to have a strong relationship with Him. But, this requires doing everything God's Way, submitted to The True King, Jesus. We are told that our weapons are not of the flesh (sin nature), but mighty through God for pulling down strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4) *** Here is a true story I heard someone share. A participant in a new member's class of a church shared that he had been in a long-standing gay relationship, and though he wanted to make a clean break, he was having difficulty finding an affordable apartment. What should he do? The leaders of the church advised him to be honest with his roommate and say he needed the relationship to be celibate. Two months later, when the class ended, this man shared that when their relationship only consisted of talking, for the first time they had become friends. And, his new friend wanted to be present when he joined the church. Situations like this are always difficult. I believe that in this case both the leaders of the church and the members of the class acted with wisdom and grace, and were both truth and love to this man. *** But how many times do we respond politically, according to the ways of the world and the kingdoms of the world, and not as subjects of God's Kingdom according to the ways of Jesus? How many times are we more like the Jewish leaders in our text where *Jesus' own people reject Him for Caesar*? *** Let's now look at our texts in humility before God.

I. After humiliating Jesus, Pilate finds no guilt in Him; but, the chief priests demand Jesus be crucified because He claims to be God's Son, causing Pilate to fear. (John 19:1-9)

A. After Pilate had Jesus severely whipped and soldiers mock Jesus, Pilate told the chief priests that he found no guilt in Jesus. (Verses 1-4)

1. Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and whipped Him. (Verse 1)

Scourging: The whip had sharp hooks attached to every end and ripped the skin open, drawing blood.

Flogging and scourging would be more accurate. Some men died of this and were spared crucifixion.

2. The soldiers, having woven a crown from thorns, they put (it) on His head and they clothed Him (in) purple robe; and, they were coming to Him and they were saying. 'Hail! The King of the Jews'; and, they were giving Him slaps on the face. (Verses 2-3)

Mocking: They put trappings of kingship on Jesus and spoke to Him mockingly. They began to strike Him across His face.

3. And Pilate went out again, outside, and he is saying to them. 'Behold! I am bringing Him to y'all outside that y'all may know that nothing (of) guilt or fault I am finding in Him'. (Verse 4)

No fault: After harsh treatment of Jesus, Pilate's conclusion is that Jesus is without guilt or fault, innocent of any crime.

B. Pilate presents Jesus to the chief priests and they demand Pilate crucify Jesus because He made Himself God's Son, which causes Pilate to fear, and Jesus is silent before Pilate. (Verses 5-9)

1. Then He came, Jesus, outside, wearing the thorny crown and the purple garment; and (Pilate) is saying to them, 'Behold the Man!' (Verse 5)

Behold Man: Pilate is presenting Jesus to them as a king – purple is the color of royalty. He is exhorting them to look carefully at The Man Jesus.

2. Therefore, when they saw Him, the chief priests and assistant ministers, they cried out, saying, 'Thou must crucify! Thou must crucify!'; and, he is saying to them, Pilate, 'Y'all must take Him and y'all must crucify Him; because I, not I am finding in Him, guilt or fault'. (Verse 6)

Crucify: The chief priests and Temple ministers twice cry out to Pilate demanding he crucify Jesus.

Second verdict: But Pilate repeats himself, saying for a second time he finds Jesus totally innocent.

3. They answered to him, the Jews, 'We, a law we are having, and by the law He is being liable to die, because Son of God, himself He has made'. (Verse 7)

Must die: The Jewish religious leaders know that by declaring Himself God's Son, Jesus is saying He is equal to God. To them, this is blasphemy, punishable by death.

4. Then, when he heard, Pilate, this word, more he was made afraid; and, he went into the Praetorium (judgment hall) again, and he is saying to Jesus, 'From where Thou are being, Thou!'; but, Jesus, reply, not He gave to him. (Verses 8-9)

Pilate's fear: The very idea that Jesus may in some way be God, God's Son, is enough to arouse great fear in the Roman governor, Pilate.

Questions Jesus: He strongly asks Jesus from where He has come: what is His connection to God?!

No Reply: And, this must have shaken Pilate even more, Jesus remains silent before Pilate.

II. Pilate seeks to release Jesus, King of the Jews, who say He opposes Caesar, whom they declare king; but, for centuries they sang God's praise as King of needy people. (John 19:10-15; Psalm 146)

A. When Pilate tells Jesus he has authority to crucify Him, Jesus responds that Pilate's authority is God-given; as Pilate seeks to release Jesus, the Jews cry out, 'This man opposes Caesar'. (John 19:10-12)

1. Then, he is saying to Him, Pilate, 'To me, not Thou are speaking? Not Thou have known that, authority I am having to release Thee, and authority I am having to crucify Thee?' (Verse 10)

Pilate's authority: Pilate is claiming to have authority and power of life or death over Jesus.

2. He answered him, Jesus, 'Not thou were having authority against Me, not at all, if not it was being (it) had been given over to thee from above'. (*Verse 11*)

From God: Jesus makes it clear the source of Pilate's authority is God, not Tiberius Caesar. In Jesus' parable about the things of God and Caesar (Matthew 22:13-22), He challenged people to realize that because the earth is Yahweh's and all that is in it (Psalm 24:1), nothing should be rendered to Caesar, unless God directs it by His Spirit according to His Word.

3. From this (time), Pilate was seeking to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, 'If this man thou may set free, not thou are being friend of Caesar; each, king himself making, he is opposing Caesar. (*Verse 12*)

Release: Because of his fear of God, Pilate was seeking a way to release Jesus from being a prisoner.

Caesar: The Jewish leaders are pitting Jesus against Caesar. At this time in the Roman Empire, the Caesars had ultimate authority, providing stability for the citizenry. They had control of the army. So, if they did not offend the Senate, they were the law. The Jewish leaders are putting Pilate in a bind. If he releases Jesus, both he and they, will be on the wrong side of Caesar. They choose Caesar. **Jesus' own people reject Him for Caesar**

- B. Then Pilate, having heard this, sits in judgment and tells the Jews to, 'Behold your King'; but, they demand crucifixion, declaring Caesar their king. (*John 19:13-15*)

1. Therefore Pilate, having heard these words, he brought out Jesus and he sat down on the judgment seat, in a place being called 'Pavement', but in Hebrew Gabbatha (Raised Platform); it was being the day of preparation of the Passover, hour it was being as sixth; and he is saying to the Jews, 'Behold the King of y'all!'; then they cried out, these, 'Thou must take away! Thou must take away! Thou must crucify Him!' (*Verses 13-15a*)

Judgment seat: Paul wrote to churches in Rome that all will appear before God's judgment seat (Romans 14:10); and, also to churches in Corinth that all will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Behold your King: Now, at noon, Pilate is bolder to declare Jesus is The King of the Jews, as well as the Man.

Crucify: But, the Jewish leaders 'double down' on their desire to get rid of Jesus by crucifixion, double demanding He be taken away and then executed.

2. He is saying to them, Pilate, 'The King of y'all, might I crucify?!' (*Verse 15b*)

Question: Pilate is incredulous. If he, representing all the power of Rome, can find no reason to crucify Jesus, King of the Jews, why would they demand His crucifixion?

3. They answered, the chief priests, 'Not we are having king, if not Caesar!' (*Verse 15c*)

Blasphemous idolatry: Why would Jewish religious leaders choose Caesar over Jesus? In choosing a human leader over their Covenant God, Yahweh, they are indulging in idolatry and blasphemy! They have chosen Caesar over The God who delivered them out of Egypt! And, they choose him over Jesus. **Jesus' own people reject Him for Caesar**

- C. God's people praise Him as The Eternal King of Truth who acts on behalf of all needy persons. (*Psalms 146*)

1. Y'all must praise Yah / Thou must praise, my soul, Yahweh // I will praise Yahweh in my life / I will sing praises to my God in (the time I am) still me. (*Verses 1-2*)

Fourfold praise: The Covenant God's people are commanded to praise Him together. The psalmist commands his soul to praise Yahweh. In his life he will praise Yahweh. Finally, he will sing praise in the time he is still himself.

2. Y'all must not put trust in princes / in the son of *adam*, whom not to him salvation // it will go out, his breath, he will return to his ground (*adamah*) / in that day it has perished, his thoughts. (*Verses 3-4*)

Not men: It is foolish to trust in men (*adam*) who have been taken from the ground (Genesis 2:7).

3. Happy whom God of Jacob his help / his hope upon Yahweh his God // (He) making heaven and earth / the sea and all which is in them / the one keeping faith (truth) to eternity // (He) doing justice to the oppressed / (He) giving food to the hungry / Yahweh setting free those being bound. (*Verses 5-7*)

Blessed people: Blessed (made happy) people are those being helped by The Covenant God of Jacob-Israel, and who are hoping in the Creator God who keeps truth and faithfulness forever.

Advocate: He will provide justice, food and freedom as the advocate for the oppressed, hungry and those unjustly imprisoned.

4. Yahweh is opening (eyes) of blind / Yahweh is lifting up those made to bow down / Yahweh is loving the righteous // Yahweh is watching over alien sojourners / the fatherless and the widow He will restore. (*Verses 8-9b*)

Lowly people: Blind people, those who have been burdened, alien sojourners, orphans and widows (five categories of lowly and humble people) have always been taken advantage of by wicked people who look to exploit whomever they can.

Provision: The Covenant God provides for them and becomes their source of hope and salvation, not 'good people' but God!

The lowly find hope in God

5. And the way of the wicked He will pervert (overthrow). (*Verse 9c*)

Wicked: Though the wicked may prosper for a time on this earth, his ultimate fate is ruin. He will be completely overthrown. All who pervert God's justice will ultimately be perverted (overturned – Psalm 73:1-12, 16-20).

6. He will reign (rule), Yahweh, to eternity / thy God, Zion, to generation and generation / Y'all must praise Yah. (*Verse 10*)

Forever King: Yahweh will be King forever, to eternity, from generation to generation. And since Jesus is Yahweh, even though He was crucified, He rose to life again and is the eternal King of kings.

Conclusion: Even though Pilate finds no guilt in Jesus, and fears Him as King of the Jews, he gives in to political expediency and hands over Jesus to be crucified by Jews who claim their only king is Caesar. These Jews were unlike their ancestors who had sung a Psalm for centuries praising their God who IS The Eternal King of Truth who always acts on behalf of the needy.

Jesus' own people reject Him for Caesar