

the gospel of

JOHN

all intents and purposes

JOHN: WHEN PRIDE GETS THE BEST OF US

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John 19: 1 – 11

The death of Christ was seen as a horrific tragedy by his followers, but unknown to them. It was a plan carried out, an intentional act of sacrificial love. Every moment of his perfect life, his death, his resurrection, all of it was done to intentionally display his rule and reign over the world. How do we obey his commands to love others with the same intentional love? Join us for our final installment. In our walkthrough, the Gospel of John. We will see that God's love is behind all of his intents and purposes. Go to doxa-church.com to learn more about Doxa, find service times or support the making of disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

The reading today's from the Book of John chapter 19, verses 1-11.

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him and the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him saying, hail king of the Jews, and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, see, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him. So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, behold the man, when the chief priest and the officers saw him, they cried out, crucify him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, take him for yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. The Jews answered him, we have a law, and according to that law, he ought to die because he has made himself the son of God. When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, you will not speak to me. Do you not know that I have the authority to release you, and authority to crucify you? Jesus answered him. You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Hey everybody, how are we doing? Thank you. I missed you guys. I missed you. I did. I was gone for four weeks from you guys, and that was hard. You look great. By the way, <laugh>, all you

guys look amazing. For those of you that are like, who is this guy? Uh, <laugh>. My name's Eddie. I'm the lead pastor at Doxa. I typically teach most Sundays. We have a great team of, of pastors that can also teach. And so I'm thankful for a team like Pastor Justin who's so witty and funny and corny. Uh, so the very opposite of me, uh, and very just off the cuff, well done. And Pastor Donald and pastor Tim, everyone that can teach. Man, thank you guys, uh, for being able to fill in. Today's Palm Sunday and you got your palm, right? Um, your actual, like your actual palm tree palm.

Awesome. That's great. Very cool. Uh, today, uh, it, well, typically, um, Palm Sunday in John is taught in chapter 12, and we're teaching chapter 19 today. So a little different, but we are starting the, the sort of section on, uh, Jesus or rather finishing the section on Jesus' trial. And so this is a really big deal. So if you've got your Bible turn, John, uh, chapter 19 verse one, we're gonna be there. Um, this is a big Sunday for all of us. Um, if you have not signed up for the go class, I just wanna reiterate, pastor Justin said, there is nothing more important a Christian can do, aside from loving God and loving others than to learn how to go forth and make disciples. In fact, the way you love God and love others is by doing that. And so if we would love for you to participate in that, it is totally free. But I will say this, if you don't like the content, we'll give you all of your money back, guaranteed. Okay? So we want you guys to come and be a part of that. So it's at 12:45 right after this. Okay? If you've got your Bible, John 19, I'm gonna pray. We're gonna get started.

Well, Lord, I ask for your providence as we talk about a hard message. We come to a passage, just feels like bad news after bad news, Lord, in this text. And so I pray for our hearts and minds that we'd be prepared and ready. I pray for the Holy Spirit, like he's come in this room, settle this room, open my heart and mind that I could clearly communicate what you have for me to communicate. And for my friends here, that they would hear, we you've brought them to hear, we all come in different forms and fashions. Some of us Christian, some of us not Christian, atheist, agnostic, uh, different religion, wherever they come, Lord, I pray you be kind and gentle that they might hear the good news of you and, um, that their hearts and minds might be transformed and renewed for something special. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, let me just start by saying this is a tough sermon to come back to after four weeks off, okay? Because this passage is so shocking that words refuse to communicate how offensive and how hurtful it all is. I mean, this is really difficult. And I was trying to, I was warring over this. Like, how do I get back with like a punchy, awesome introduction that's just a hook everybody and get 'em all excited like a prop or something cool. And I just thought, you know what? There's nothing to be said here. The most important thing to say is exactly what the text says. This is very, very difficult passage to be on because the last four weeks, it really felt like a downward spiral journey towards the inevitable. It's just this coming. And as much as I love the book of John, it, it hits a point where we seemingly get nothing but really bad news after really bad news, after really bad news.

And I just wanna call that out. That's hard. It's been a tough road in John 18. And now here we are in John 19, and the news isn't stopping. Now, in case you're wondering, the inevitable that's

coming is that Jesus Christ will ultimately be killed. He'll be executed by the over oversee, by the Roman Guard and at the, uh, behest of his people, the Jews. Okay?

When I became a Christian, uh, in college, I went to school in Moscow, Idaho, which is very north Idaho. Uh, probably somewhere you'll never go, but it's close to Pullman. So that may might help you out with that. Um, wow. Someone whistled from Moscow, huh? Not Russia. You heard me say that, right? We're okay. So <laugh>, uh, it sounds more beautiful than it is. Let's just put it that way. Um, but I, I was bouncing around different churches with my, uh, girlfriend, my now wife, Sarah, and we went to a Good Friday service at the church and they were doing a really cool service around the stations of the cross.

Now, stations of the cross are basically like parts of the crucifixion story in different parts. And how they would do this is they'd break the room up into different stations, and then on each station when they would get to it, um, someone would come on the stage and sort of like talk about what they were experiencing in that moment as we were going through that story. And we came to this story where Jesus essentially is tried and Pontius Pilate is standing and holding court over him about whether, whether what's about to happen to him.

And I remember, like it was yesterday cause I'm 19 years old and I'm really new to the faith. And, um, this person gets on stage. It was a woman, and she, and she, this person would speak basically how she believed the story could have gone differently. Uh, and, and what might have happened had, um, I don't know, she, if she would've just been there, uh, for the story, like what would've happened. And I remember her sort of saying in this point where Jesus was being beaten and scourged and, um, mocked, and she said, she kind of cried out in this loud voice, Jesus, this would not have happened if I were there. Jesus, if I was there, I would've protected you. I would've stopped you from this brutal and vicious murder.

Maybe you've, uh, been thinking the last few weeks, it's been hard hearing about Jesus betrayal. It has, it's been really tough, hasn't it? Like I, I, I have a hard time. I'm reading this over and over again. I spent about 20 hours like prepping this, like trying to get this ready for you guys. And I'm, I'm going, man, this is just so hard. I, I so badly want this to be different. It's been hard. That's sort of why we look forward to Easter with such expectancy where Easter can sort of relieve the tension we're all experiencing in our guts.

And maybe you feel like as you've read the story, if you heard the story, if you were present at the trial of Jesus, you would've stepped in and maybe you're feeling like, man, what if me or my pastor or Billy Graham or Rick Warren, I don't know, some other famous pastor would've just been there and been able to communicate to everyone, this would never have happened and everything would've been fine.

Well, let me relieve your mind a little and provide some feedback unsolicited, of course. Um, there is no circumstance in which you would've stepped in to save Jesus, okay? From his brutal torture and execution. None. There's no scenario in which you, as a sort of 2023, Christian would've said, no, Jesus, this is enough. I need to, I need to stop this now. On, on behalf of you, I will stop this execution. That's not gonna happen. Okay? Now, this is the sort of story where

we just need to accept the brutal reality friends, okay? Just accept it. The humanity is fundamentally flawed. So much so that in this story, they're either going to desert Jesus, his very best friends, they're going to listen to orders to harm him, how he's going to be harmed and do nothing, or they're going to literally oversee his trial and execution.

You and I are no different. If Peter, James and John didn't step in for Jesus, you wouldn't have, if Pilate who doesn't believe Jesus is guilty at all, at all and is actually afraid to kill him, doesn't step in, then we wouldn't have. And if the Jews who have literally been actually been waiting for Messiah, like him to show up, actively kill him, then certainly we wouldn't have stepped in and prevented this. Okay?

So this leaves us with sort of the burning and obvious question in which we must sort of attempt to try to answer today. And that's this, how on earth is it possible that created human beings got to a place where they could execute God with a straight face?

I think the beginning of John 19 actually helps us answer this question. I do, I think that, and I think there are three looming questions that the Jews and Pontius Pilate, um, failed to answer honestly about themselves in this whole process. And if we want to honestly look at our relationship with God, whether we have one or whether we feel like we don't, we're going to need to look deep into our souls and answer these questions as well as we discover and uncover how we relate to God and how we relate to Jesus in this story. Okay?

So let's look at these three questions. Let's look at the beginning of our passage for our first question. Starting in verse one says this:

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him and the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him saying, hail king of the Jews, and struck him with their hands.

Now, Pilate has Jesus flogged. Now, we're gonna talk about more of this on Friday. So implore you guys to come to our Good Friday gathering. It's gonna be awesome and we should be there. Um, we're gonna talk more about flogging then, but I say, I will say what, what I find curious about, about all of this, and I, every time I read this story, I get really confused, is how Pilate just got done saying, uh, and I quote, I find no guilt in this man, and yet has him beaten within an inch of his life, mere moments later. So he knowingly and volitionally beats the daylights out of an innocent man. I mean, literally, look at verse four. Even our pastor today, it says Pilate went out again and said to them, he's talking to the Jews:

See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

Okay? So he says, I he's not guilty. I washed my hands with this. That's last week. He beats him and he comes back and says, oh yeah, he's still innocent. Like he, he, he beat him on each side of, of saying, I find no guilt in this man. This is crazy. And so Pilate beats him. And we see in this passage again like verse five, it says, so Jesus came out wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe. And Pilate said to him, behold the man. So he parades Jesus out before him. And when

the chief priest, that's the religious rulers, and the officers saw him, they cried out, crucify him, crucify him. Now don't be lulled by how low I just said that they screamed that at the top of their lungs with as much anger and as rage as they could possibly muster, they wanted him dead.

And Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and crucify him for I find no guilt in him. He doesn't want to kill him, does he? He doesn't wanna kill him. Why does Pilate have, uh, have Jesus brutally beaten if he doesn't think he's guilty of anything? That's sort of the million dollar question that we all need to wrestle with.

And I think it's because he fails and the Jews fail to answer one big question about their hearts. And it's this, what is a true king, exactly? If Jesus is really the king as he seemed to be and said he was, then why would he allow himself to be beaten like this? I've had conversations with friends that have brought this up, like, I don't wanna worship a feeble God like that. I mean, why, why, why would God allow that? God should be big and powerful and raging and huge and sovereign? He allows himself to be beaten?

Pilate's thinking this, I just beat the heck outta this guy, right? So Pilate has Jesus beaten to show the Jews that, Hey, listen, like this guy isn't as crazy as you're all thinking. You think he's gonna craze riots? He, he can't. Guys look at him. He's weak and feeble. He can barely stand up. This isn't a, this isn't a king. This man is weak. He's not capable of stirring up riots and he certainly couldn't bring destruction to your religion. He isn't a king. Caesar's the emperor, not this guy. You've got nothing to worry about. I find no guilt in him.

Then the soldiers, Pilate's soldiers, sort of mock the idea that he's a king. And then twist this crown of thorns. By the way, some of the sharpest and thick thorns that you could find, not some like blackberry stickers that like sort of gets you when you're like reaching for your soccer ball out of the yard. We're talking about massive thick thorns wrapped and then jammed onto the head of the Messiah. Blood runs into his eyes and they clothe him in purple, which is the color of royalty. And they mock his kingly nature. They're mocking him.

And when the religious rulers of Israel see that, do they have compassion? Are they, do they come the people of God and they live with shalom in peace? Do they do that? No. They chant kill him, crucify him, execute him in the worst way you can possibly execute somebody. It wasn't enough to have him mocked. They wanted him to die.

How did we get here? Like how did this happen? We preached Ezra early in the middle of last year sometime we're watching the story of God unfold. Like they're waiting for him.

Let's go back down memory lane for a second.

Again, like I say all the time, the whole story of the Bible is about a people, people, Israel, waiting for a cosmic king to come back into the world, to reign for them in a place, uh, with a people (that's Israel) and take away their brokenness, take away their sin and provide hope that they might be one day reconnected with God. That's what they're waiting for. This is the thing

that they're coming for. And then the guy shows up and they cry for him to be killed. This is so ironic. It's like it, it's bleeding irony. It's horrible.

You see, the Jews and Pilate had an image in their minds of what a real king was supposed to be in their head. They had an idea of what a king was supposed to be for Pilate. The kings supposed to be powerful. He's supposed to be domineering. He's supposed to show no weakness. Kings don't let themselves be beaten and marred like that. That's not a king. It's a bum. It's not a king at all. That's what he was thinking. A king's supposed to be a little bit more like me, shiny armor, power authority, people listening. He's got no followers. And if he did, they're gone. This guy's not gonna kill anybody. This guy's not gonna cross a riot or an uproar. He's nobody. He's no king. That's what he thought.

And for the Jews, they thought when their king came, oh man, that king would love the way that they worship and praise him. They love it because they've set up their religious system so well. They've got the Sanhedrin and they tithe out of their out of all of their dill and their cumin. And they're so meticulous with every little detail they've, they've gotten rid of all of the sort of anarchy that's come up in the church. And certainly any guy trying to say He's Messiah, get rid of him, kill him. We're good to go. And then this Messiah, real king as he would come back, would look at Israel and go, well done. Good and faithful servants. I praise you in your loyalty. That's what they were expecting.

What they didn't account for was the obvious, which is, well, what if, what if God showed up in a way they didn't expect him to come? Wonder if he came and looked a lot different than they imagined him to be. Wonder if that happened.

You and I need to pay attention to this very, very carefully. Okay? Many of us have expectations about God if he's real, of course, how he should act, what he should tell us to believe about our politics, sex, religion, gender, the world, everything. And many of us have a God in our heads that we are absolutely willing to submit to as king, but that God suspiciously agrees with everything we believe about the world.

Hmm, but what if God, when he showed up, had a different approach than you? What if he didn't agree with everything you agreed with? What if the way you've understood the world and the way you've understood God and your king, what if that's incorrect? What if you're wrong? Should you account for that? In other words, you have to ask yourself, do you have a king who can contradict you? Do you have a king in your mind, a god in your mind that you've conjured up, that disagrees with anything you're doing?

Because if not, you don't have a king, you have a clone. You've crafted for yourself a God in your own image, A God who agrees with the political party that you love agrees with the sex ideologies and gender ideologies and and political ideologies and what you like to eat for dinner and what's right and whether or not you should do this, this, or this, and what you should vote for, everything lines up perfectly. That's curious. Oddly, the king you've imagined created for is exactly like you.

Don't you think if someone was actually big enough to be king over you, that he might have different ideas about the world than you do. Isn't that possible? Does that make sense? It's possible, right? If if the king, if the king has the same ideas as you do, then you don't have a king, you have a clone. And, and here's the thing. If the real king shows up and he contradicts you, well then, you might crucify him. You might, oh no, not literally crucify him. Jesus has already been crucified.

But you might do a few other things. I mean, for instance, you might change the way he says things in the Bible to make him more palatable for you to meet your expectations. Or you might reject God's word altogether. Or you might just throw out certain commands because of course I couldn't believe in a God who would say, [gesture to indicate anything].

Sometimes in the midst of us trying to manufacture and control our lives, God doesn't show up. The king doesn't show up in the way we expect him to show up. He doesn't show up in our timing. He doesn't show up in the way we hope him to show up for. And sometimes we get angry as a result of that or even disbelieve him all together or change what he says. But friends, sometimes our expectations of God don't match the truth about God.

It's possible. And guess what? Just because that's true doesn't mean he's not your king or even the real king. If he disagrees with you. You're gonna have to wrestle with that this palm Sunday and this holy week as we lead up to the crucifixion.

But the next question we need to answer is found in the next section here in verse seven. So check it out with me on the screen, or in your Bible it says this,

The Jews answered him [Pilate] we have the law. And according to that law, he ought to die because he has made himself to be the son of God.

So they state it sort of matter of factly like this is just as what it is. But remember, the Jews had an expectation of God that doesn't match the real truth about God. Okay? They have an expectation of God that doesn't match the truth about God. The problem is Jesus is actually God. So when he shows up, they've aligned their faulty understanding of God's law with their false ideas of who God is. And as a result, they're able to judge God with his own law. How backwards is that? The irony, the mental gymnastics that human beings have to go through to be able to get there is insane. And yet we all just as we just saw, do the same thing. Verse eight:

Pilate was listening to that statement and says, when he heard this Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.

Okay? I just wanted you to understand something about Pilate. This isn't Pilate's like first time executing somebody. Pilate is a professional judge. He's a professional murderer. He does this all the time. Okay? He has oversaw the execution of hundreds, maybe even thousands of people, crucifixion. He could do it in his sleep. This is not a big thing. And yet, when the Jews said that about Jesus, as he's trying to let him go, he goes, oh no.

Oh no. I might have to kill this guy. Pilate's afraid. And he's not just afraid in this moment, it says he's even more afraid, which means he's been afraid the whole time. This guy's terrified to have to execute this homeless guy who has no followers, but he's standing there all creepy. He's just not even saying anything. I just beat him. Why isn't he? Why isn't he upset or begging for his life? He's just standing there. He's terrified of this guy. He doesn't know what to do.

Pilate, deep down, had an understanding about something about Jesus the whole time. It's this, something is different about this dude. There's nothing the same about this guy that I'm trying to crucify. I've executed thousands, I've never seen anything like this. And I'm not a Christian or a Jew or anything. I'm just telling you this dude's, wow, plus he's not even guilty anyway. He's calm, he's cool, he's beaten and bloody, and he's standing there confidently and sure of himself. It's almost as if Pilate can hear the faint echoes of the spirit crying out to him in Isaiah 53 where it says he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that has led to the slaughter and like a sheep, that is before its shearers is silent. So he opened not his mouth.

A prophecy from centuries before about this very moment. Pilate's feeling that tension. So Pilate, he's, he's gotta figure this out. So he, he actually goes back to Jesus to figure this out, right? He, he grabs, he goes to Jesus and he is like, I gotta have a private word with this dude cuz this is, this is crazy. So he grabs him and says, verse nine, He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, where are you from? And, and I think that's so crazy that the question he asked them is, where are you from? Not like, what are you doing here? Are you sure you did this? Like, should we get you outta this somehow? Or you know, why? Who do you work for? Or like, what's your purpose here? He goes, dude, where are you from? His only thought in his fear is like, you must be from some other crazy place. Cause I've never seen anything like this. A professional murder, a professional executor has no idea what to do with him.

And then verse 10 again, Jesus, or rather, let's let's read uh, verse, yeah, verse 10. So Pilate said to him, you will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and authority to crucify you? So he is quiet and Jesus is, and Jesus is just standing there. But then he says this, and Jesus answers in verse 11, finally talking, You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

<laugh> Jesus is so cool. Like that is like the coolest thing. Like when you watch movies, you're kind of hoping for that moment the bully like gets what his comeuppance, right? And like the, the scrawny guy comes back and he's got a suit on and he like, you know, does this thing or whatever you're like hoping for that moment.

And Jesus gives us like a way better version of this moment, like a way better version. Jesus doesn't say anything until Pilate's, like, I have the authority to save you. And Jesus is like, oh no, you don't have any authority unless I gave it to you. Also, I know you're really afraid right now, but don't worry, the Jews out there are in way worse shape than you are. So like that's what he just did. He's so cool.

But this leads us to sort of answer the next question Pilate and the Jews need to answer and then really we need to answer. And it's this: whose rules do you play by? Whose rules? What is the true king? You really, and then whose rules do you play by? Both the Jews and Pilate believe they're essentially serving a greater cause when they're actually serving their own cause.

Now, how many of us are guilty of that? Pilate believes he's serving Caesar in Rome and he's operating with the good of both parties at heart, right? Like, I'm just doing my job. But secretly though, Pilate is serving his own needs. Can you see that in the story? See, he can't afford a dangerous man. If he's dangerous to be let loose and potentially cause riots and upheaval in the region, he can't afford that. That's his job. That's a bad look, isn't it? So that had been going on in the region, there had been riots in the region, and Pilate does not want this. And that is an offense to his pride and its offense to his standing. He says he's doing right and good by Caesar. But you know what, if he was doing right and good as a judge, he would've let Jesus go, wouldn't he?

Why? Because he said he was innocent several times. He was told not to execute innocent people, but to judge the matter by his authority. But he wants to save face. So he is not playing by anyone else's rules. He's playing by his own rules.

And of course, the religious Jews, the, they masqueraded as if they were executing Jesus by the letter of the law. Well, it's quite simple here I turn to this part of the, the Hebrew scriptures and I see that he calls himself Messiah. Therefore by the letter the law needs to be, uh, assassinated or executed. Uh, it just is what it is.

Ah, oh really? Not so. In fact, the Jews weren't just executing him by the letter of the law. They actually were embarrassed by Jesus several times. They were offended by him. In fact, there are eight separate scenarios in the Bible where Jesus does something massive and and the Bible teaches that the, the the people, the Jews as a result were plotting to kill him afterwards.

You want an example? Maybe you thought, oh, you know, I don't know. I feel like I'm on the side of the religious rulers because they are just obeying and they just sort of missed that Jesus was God. Let me lemme show you Mark three verse one:

Again he, Jesus entered the synagogue and a man was there with him with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath as a religious people so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with a withered hand, come here. And he said to them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill? But they were silent and he looked around at them with anger and grieved their hardness of heart. [There it is, there it is.] And he said to the man, stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out and his hand was restored. And the Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Okay? There's nothing more toxic sometimes than some of these toxic religious meetings in churches. Like, you know, let's all cuddle together and like stew on some horrible thing. We got

another church meeting about some horrible thing we're gonna go try to do. It's, it's crazy. So, so Jesus heals somebody on the Sabbath and, and, and their response is, hold on a second, you're not allowed to work on the Sabbath. And it's like, aren't you missing something? Like this dude's hand was healed? Don't you think that means God had something to do with it? Aren't you missing that? Clearly if God's healing people, he has other plans around the Sabbath than you do, they just miss it in their anger and in their pride.

Here's what you need to understand about human nature in this passage, guys. This is for all of us, for whatever reason, especially today in modern times, okay? We have a tendency to believe our own motives and to believe our own rules and to believe our own desires for our lives are pure and honest. And anytime we hear anything about the way God should ask us to live, we vet and examine with great scrutiny because we inherently trust that our motives and are, are good and pure and honest. And if there's a God trying to get in my way, he must be wrong some way He must be wrong or I must misunderstand him and he must agree with me.

And somehow, I mean just insert any hot button sort of doctrinal issue into this passage, people will say, well, well I believe X because it's mean not to believe or to allow it. So, so God must either allow said issue or he's not real, or the Bible's been mistranslated somehow cuz there's corrupt people that don't want people to understand that God agrees with me and will look at the Bible that way. It must be mistranslated.

Aren't we forgetting a massive variable in this whole equation? Mainly that we are fallible sinners who seek our own will and we often cause our own demise? The whole Bible is a book about people misunderstanding God and him trying to fix it. Now all of a sudden right now in 2023, I've got all the answers because I have the internet. It's like really we miss it.

This is a huge variable when God crafts the law for our flourishing. Um, he crafts it for our good and for our rightness and for our peace and our joy. And when we play by our own rules instead of his, they're often to our confusion and to our destruction, not our peace, joy in flourishing.

And by the way, if you heard me, if you heard a political thing right there, y you didn't, uh, you can do this on either side, quote unquote, okay? Let me just let us state this. You can take the law like a religious ruler and use it as a battering ram on a human being, by the way, not God's intention. Um, and in that, in doing so, you're playing by your own rules, okay? You can also take the law and dissect it and filter it through your modern sentiments, by the way, not God's intention for you searching out the, the, the, the theologians and the the bible scholars that agree with you, but then you'd be playing by your own rules. Either way, you've become the authority and God's not the authority anymore either way.

Okay, last question. Last question. It's found in verse 12. Okay, let's look at it: From then on Pilate sought to release him. So, so here, get the scene. Pilate just has this conversation with Jesus. He goes in, they're like, I can save you in Jesus. Like, oh, you can't save me, only I can save me. And he leaves and goes, I gotta let this guy go somehow. Like that guy's, that guy's crazy. He's like so special, like I gotta, I gotta run. So he is trying to release him, but then the Jews cry out in fashion. If you release this man, you're not Caesar's friend. What about Caesar

here now Pilate? Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. So now he's got Pilate in a bind cuz Pilate wants to let this guy go. But Pilate's pride is getting a hold of him because he is said repeatedly, I don't want any part of killing this guy.

And yet here he is wrestling with the fact that, man, I might have to kill this guy to save face. And the Jews now are all of a sudden, I mean they're deeply concerned about Caesar being opposed by anyone. I mean this is, this would be an unheard of to oppose Caesar. I mean, are you serious Pilate? Ah, geez, I don't know. You might wanna look a hard one in the mirror (if mirrors existed back then, I don't know) like you might wanna look real hard at yourself somehow in a water or pond and go, uh, am I doing the right thing here? <laugh>?

And on the surface, they'll both present these altruistic motivations upholding the will of Caesar. But their deeper motivations are actually really guiding the process, aren't they? They fail to become honest with themselves and answer this last question, a question we all need to answer to, which is,

What are your deepest motivations? Why are you really doing what you're doing?

The Jews here present a motivation to protect Caesar and uphold their own law. Might be partially true. Uh, the devil loves to work in half truths, but their deeper motivation starts to seep in. Cuz you see in verse 14 it says, well, we have no king but Caesar. Wait a second. That's curious, right? Because I could have distinctly remember the entire Bible being about you waiting for a king. Do you think Caesar's the king? I don't think so.

So that begs the question, if your real king Messiah shows up, can he oppose Caesar? They are not interested in making sense. Guys, this is not a logical decision they're making. This is a repressive one, as Romans 1 says, suppressed the truth by my unrighteousness. This is not, this is a spiritual decision that motivated by spiritual and powered to the principalities of the air in their own flesh. This is not a logical decision, okay? They are rejecting Jesus.

God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 is really all about what they're trying to get to. Look at verse 12 in this text it says, (by the way, this is God speaking to King David): When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body. And I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom [for how long?] forever.

To be clear, the hope of all Israel, that everything they look forward to is found right here. If you were looking for a summary of the Old Testament, it's really hard to do, but the Jews are looking, Israel is looking for this king to come. It's not a stretch to say that the hope of the entire Old Testament is found right here in these verses.

But then that hope the king, they're looking for shows up finally ready to fulfill everything that their ancestors look toward. And what do they yell? Away with him, away with him crucify him. Their deepest motivation -- it's not a Caesar or a king.

I'll just be straight with you guys. The deepest motivation they have is they sort of like the way things are. They like the status quo. They're in charge. They have the best seats in the synagogue. Now let me tell you, the, the Sanhedrin was corrupt. I mean one guy is the chief of priest and he gets out of it, but he's still running the show. It's like a whole mob situation. It is not -- but, but they didn't think that, oh, I mean they like the honor, the recognition that comes with being a ruler. They should be proud and respected. They were definitely proud, but proud to their core.

And then Jesus shows up, tells 'em to stop, and they sort of get well salty. They don't like it. Look at John back, look back at John 11, verse 45: Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Snitches, they snitched. And so the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said (another church meeting, here we go), What are we to do, for this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come to take away both our place and our nation.

Oh, we get a little Freudian slip here from them. We know what they're really interested in protecting. And it's not Caesar and it's not the law, it's their place. It's who they believe themselves to be. The rest of the passage actually reads: From that day on, they made plans to put Jesus to death. So we got to see them try to do that eight other times.

Here's the thing, they believe Jesus needed to die for his transgressions against them, not the other way around. The irony!

In order for you though, to access your relationship with God in a way that makes sense in this passage, you sort of need to ask what your deepest motivations are. Not just for uh, being a Christian, if you're a Christian, or being an atheist, if you're an atheist or an agnostic, if you're an agnostic. But, but why do you get up in the morning? Like really why? Like why do you go to work? Like why do you do the things you do? Like not the company line, okay, not the, yeah, well I love Jesus and I love my family and that's what I'm doing. Like why?

Like really why like, oh man, am I part of a church? Because I just always have been? Because I heard a really awesome preacher once and I sort of just got hooked to 'em and now I'm just doing it? Because my parents told me to and now I'm just doing it? Or because you actually have, or you want to seek an actual relationship with Jesus, like a deeper one. Why do you do the things you do?

I told you earlier, I was gone for a week and um, during this week I got to meet a woman who, uh, who is not, uh, not a Christian, she's actually an atheist, hates God, uh, made that clear, uh, hates pastors, uh, which is one uncomfortable conversation for me. Uh, like I hate pastors was like one of the first things she said. And every time anyone prayed, if they prayed at this thing, she would get up and walk out. So it's very uncomfortable.

And uh, and we started having those conversations around like why, like why that is, you know? And she was telling this story about how when she was 10, she had this neighborhood that was

really close knit, but everyone went to this Presbyterian church and she like loved that everyone went to this church because they'd always come home on Sunday afternoon with like drawings and books and talking about this guy, Jesus or David or somebody. And she always was really interested in that and she wanted to be part of that, like as a little kid, as an eight, nine, and 10 year old. And so she started asking the other parents to take her. So she started going to this church and um, and soon she was dragging her two atheist parents to the church. And so they would like begrudgingly go, all right, you know, for, for the, for the girl, we'll go.

And they went and they went and they went for months. And pretty soon she got to the point where she's like, you know what? Um, just like Pastor Justin did, someone got up and said, Hey, we're gonna do baptisms. Would you like to be baptized? And she's like, that sounds great. She's 10 years old. I can finally profess my faith to Jesus. I don't know how she said it like that, but she said it something as a 10 year old, like I love Jesus or whatever. And she's all really hyped.

And so she goes in to meet with this, uh, one of the, of the pastors who sort of oversees the baptismal process and um, like basically oversees like how, you know, giving them the sort of interview to make sure everything's above board. And so she walks in with her, her little drawings after church one day she's got a little doll in tow and she sort of gets really excited and sits down and the pastor says, oh, good to see you. I, uh, my first question for you is why did your parents condemn you to hell by not baptizing you as a baby?

And so this 10 year old little girl who was once excited about Jesus was denied the cross and sent her way and she's never been back to a church. And now can't stand the sight of a pastor or stand the sight of hearing anyone pray to God cuz God, if he is real, just wants to send me and my mommy and daddy to hell.

Now this pastor, um, who, who did this, his motivation wasn't love, was it? It wasn't the love of Jesus for a little girl who's come to the cross, like the woman at the well or the leaving the 99 and coming to the, the the lost sheep or the lost coin or, or the, any of that stuff. It wasn't any of that. You know what his motivation was? It was control, it was hierarchy. It was, I'm better than you because I, my parents had the wherewithal to baptize me as a baby and get me saved unlike your wicked parents who are destined for eternal hellfire, which is a heck of a thing to say to a 10 year old girl who's looking to be baptized as if she's supposed to recognize that, oh geez, my parents are going to hell, at 10 years old.

This man set in forth a a a, a generational, uh, abandoning of who God is, all because of his control issues as this religious ruler is. It was control, it was dominancy. He wants to adhere to the rules. He thought it was better because he was baptized -- he wasn't!

Man, you give a religious person a big red button and they get all puffy. You give me this button I can press it. If you don't want me to press it, I can press it. If you don't want me to, you want me to press it, I can just watch over it. This is my button, <laugh> not for you. And we gate keep people from the cross in our religion by our behavior.

His deepest motivation wasn't Jesus, his deepest motivation was control. Here's the thing, we should all examine our control. Clearly, I'm fired up about this. Jesus' trial and beatings ought to invoke in us a reality check for our own motives.

God doesn't always agree with us whether our lives have Christian stickers on them or not. He doesn't agree. He may or may not, but here's the thing. He's the one we're supposed to be trying to agree with. So examine our lives and look to see whether or not we're doing this right.

Jesus' trial and beatings ought to invoke in us are just reality. Check that our motives are our motives for following Jesus honest, are they legitimate? Are our motives for not following Jesus honest or legitimate? Are they deep or are they just surface level? Because that's just how things have always been.

One thing's for sure. For those of you who are Christian, Jesus didn't endure all of this pain and suffering for us to have this superficial christian life.

Okay. Answering these three questions honestly might put some fear in us. And maybe my demeanor is doing that. I don't know. It's doing that to me. I understand. And it's possible you maybe feel like maybe your motives aren't maybe as pure as you thought. Or maybe, uh, uh, you, you know, your motives aren't as pure and you're like, dude, I really know that mine aren't.

But you, you can be, uh, here, here's the thing about all of this is that you can be the most altruistic, agnostic or atheist who loves people so strongly walks the old lady across the street and, uh, you know, votes every day on voting day and you know, eat, you grow your own vegetables or doesn't drive a high, uh, doesn't drive gas vehicle, whatever it is. And you can be perfect.

But here's the thing, you're still not actually perfect. You've backstabbed people, you've manipulated people, you've gossiped against people, you've hurt people. You've done a lot of, you've done a lot of damage. You can be the, conversely, you can be the most christian person. Maybe you don't even remember being baptized. You were so young and you've always loved God and you've been so great and I was baptized and I love people and I serve and I give. And guess what, you could also not be perfect

In the midst of a spiritual gut check we all need to take, collectively, we have to realize the really big idea. I don't want you to miss or to be lost on us in this really holy season. And here's what it is. Jesus was beaten, he was mocked, he was ridiculed, and he was unjustly judged and eventually he'd be murdered and he could have stopped it all, but he didn't.

We talk about, man, why, why didn't Peter, James or John or somebody else stop it? Jesus was the one with the most authority and he could have stopped it and he did not. He went knowingly.

And now every part of me wants to just look at this story and go, Jesus, do something for yourself. Like stop this Jesus. Like I'm going through this book. Like, man, use your laser eyes or levitate off the cross and shoot 'em with clouds. Like whatever God's due Jesus lightning bolts and Thor hammer, like I want my bring me Thanos moment. Like Jesus, come on. And he doesn't do it every single time. Now I'm not gonna say, I'm gonna go stop it, but Jesus, you have the power to stop this. Stop letting yourself die.

God allows this suffering to come upon him. And it's so hard and I feel like I just put myself in this story and I'm like looking at Jesus and I'm crying out from the crowd. Like, stop it man. Let it get off the cross. And I feel like in this moment he just turns his head and he stares right at me and he goes, I know I haven't done anything wrong,

But you have. And that's why I'm here. I'm not here for me. I'm here for you. It's never been about my safety. Jesus says, I, no one takes my life from me. I lay it down and I pick it up again. Jesus willingly, intentionally endures this for you.

God allows suffering to come upon him because he knows the penalty of sin for sin against God is death. And Jesus steps in to take the punishment meant for the Jews and certainly meant for us. And Jesus, he just subverts the narrative of the Jews and Pilate. He subverts it, he goes totally under the surface here cuz while they thought they were putting him to death, it turns out Jesus was putting sin to death. This is crazy in this thought process.

The heart of the subversive nature of God is that, is that the sin committed against him is how he pays the penalty for said sin. He allows sin to come upon him. And that's the way he pays the penalty for all the sin. He is willing, his willing submission is not in vain. It shows us that he's our true king.

His sovereignty electing to go to the cross willingly shows us that his rules are best not ours. His willingness to suffer enables our deepest motives to be made clean, even if they're not, sometimes. You and I have the chance to allow the suffering and the blood of Christ to cover us and have his brokenness, his suffering count as our suffering and our brokenness.

But you have to make sure he's your true king and that's your task for this next week. You have to make sure that you're playing by his rules because his rules lead to flourishing, not your confusion and your brokenness. And you'll have to make sure that you work as best you can, that your motives with him are honest. So this holy week, Palm Sunday, in Good Friday and Easter, make his blood count for you. Utilize that blood and let it cover you. Let's pray.

Father God, I thank you for an opportunity to open your word. It's such a hard message. I feel like it's funny that after four weeks off, I come back and have to preach something so difficult. But I consider it an honor. Um, and I, and I'm thankful that my friends were so receptive to what you might have to say. And maybe that's by your power, the by the power your spirit. So I, I do pray for the rest of our time together as we respond to a good God and a good savior. Would you, would you fall on us as we reflect back at how our motives may be pure and honest and good, or whether or not they, or if they're not any of those things, Lord, that you'd be

gracious and kind to us. And as we wrestle whether or not we have a true king or a king, that is a clone that you would be kind and gracious to us and gently show us that you are our true king and you're willing to die for us and no other king we could craft would ever do so.

We love you, we praise you on this Palm Sunday in his name. Amen.