

Theme: Behold Jesus!

1. The Man who carried your faults
2. The King who wears your crown

Every now and then when I'm trying to explain something to Micah or Allie, I can tell that the message isn't getting across. As a parent, you still say what needs to be said, hoping that something sticks. But, you can't be too sure. Usually, in these kinds of circumstances, Gretchen and I will look at each other and roll our eyes. It's frustrating knowing that the message is going in one ear and out the other just as quickly, but there's nothing much you can do about it. That's part of growing and learning. You hope that as you repeat what needs to be said enough, it will eventually find a home.

We see the same thing happen as we view Jesus. This entire Lenten season we have examined events upon His walk toward the cross. It's easy to see, but do we understand? Is the overall message of the cross lost on us as a simple lesson is on a child? Sadly, all too often, yes. We get a sense of that very thing this evening in our text, as Pontius Pilate beckons the Jews to "Behold Jesus." From John 19:1-5,14-16:

**John 19:1-5 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. 3 Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. 4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." 5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"**

**John 19:14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" 15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" 16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away.**

With eyes of faith we ask the Holy Spirit to help us see and understand our Savior Jesus Christ, as the Man who carried our faults, and the King who bears our crown.

Part 1: The Man who carried your faults

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In our verses, we see Pilate use the word "Behold" three times. "**Behold, I am bringing Him out.**" "**Behold, the Man.**" And "**Behold your King!**" What may be of use for our faith this evening is to understand that although these three words appear the same in our English translation, they are not all the same word in the Greek. In verses 4 and 14, the word "Behold" means to see something with your eyes and to understand what you are seeing. Think of it as seeing both with eyes and the mind. The observer recognizes what is being seen and the significance of the matter. This is probably the more common way of using the word "see" in English.

However, verse 5 uses a word that fits better with "Behold." This is a type of seeing that is calling attention to something significant. It doesn't mean to understand what is being seen but just to take note of it. We might think of saying "Pay attention" or "Hey, look at that!" The idea is to awaken someone up to what is going on.

Now, I can't say for sure that the Holy Spirit intended something specific by using these two different words. We can only speculate. But, it does remind us of the importance of not just looking at Jesus, but truly see who He is and what He has done. In verse five Pilate called the appearance of Jesus to the Jew's attention, but the meaning was lost. Here He was, arrayed in a purple robe, bloodied from the crown of thorns and bruised from the beatings. Did the peoples' attention perk up? Certainly, but no one appreciated the significance of the moment, no one understood who Jesus was. He was simply a spectacle for grab their attention.

They gave Jesus attention because He was an attraction. He was a sideshow upon which they placed their frustrations with the oppression of the Romans. Even Caiaphas had admitted earlier that it was good for one man to die for the people (John 11:50). Jesus carried this burden alone. He was the scapegoat upon which they threw their problems, and they both despised and marveled at this spectacle. So, Jesus was worth taking note of for a moment, but soon forgotten by the masses.

What was missed was that this Man carried much more than just their personal problems. Yes, Jesus ended up being the pressure relief valve for the tensions between Rome and Jerusalem but that division would remain. It would eventually end in the destruction of Jerusalem some 30+ years later. Pilate, too, was clearly trying to use Jesus for this purpose too. His final verdict was "innocent", yet the mob persuaded him to go against his conscience. Pilate also didn't want to be seen as an opponent of Caesar, better to err on the side of caution and give no cause for accusation.

But, the true problem was much deeper. The Jews actually were honest about this in verse seven, **"We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."** Here, in the midst of all this deceit and lying, we have a tiny moment of honesty. The festering sliver of the Jewish conscience was revealed. They hated Jesus because He claimed to be the Son of God. Remember what came along with this claim. It was more than just a statement about deity and divinity. It was a promise about deliverance and salvation. Jesus was God because He was the Messiah. When He claimed this status He was also claiming the power of forgiveness; the elusive right to righteousness as we studied on Sunday. This set Jesus apart from all the other teachers and religious leaders. And they were too busy feasting on their jealousy to give it a second thought.

As God and Messiah, Jesus carried sins that day too, even of those that rejected Him. It's easy to see Him as the object of their scorn, as the One to bear their excuses, fears, and hatreds. They took the brunt of their frustrations out on Jesus. But, He also carried every other sin too; the secret ones that only the individual knows, the ignorant ones that are committed in foolishness, and the hardened ones that were never repented of. Even ours. Though Pilate determined He was innocent, Jesus was responsible for an enormous weight, it just wasn't His own. No faults on His name, yet the sins of the whole world on His shoulders.

## Part 2: The King who wears your crown

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The Jews saw Jesus but did not perceive Him. They beheld this spectacle, but the attention soon wavered. But, not for lack of effort on Pilate's part. He beckoned them twice to see by not just calling to attention but understanding with their eyes and mind. He said, **"Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."** One need look no further than the actual passage to see the intent. Pilate called them to "Behold" so that they would "know." He wanted them to understand what was happening. He wanted them to know that Jesus was innocent. This was more than a mere grabbing of their attention for a minute. It was a call to knowledge. The same was

said later when Pilate, at this point exasperating by the whole ordeal, called out, **“Behold, your King!”**

As much as Pilate showed his own cowardice by trying to cleanse himself of guilt in the matter, he certainly wasn't afraid to stick it to the Jews. He had already mocked them somewhat when he asked about releasing Barabbas or Jesus. Matthew tells us that Pilate called Jesus “the Christ” and specifically measured Him up against the notorious Barabbas, because he knew they wanted Jesus killed out of envy. He wanted them to say it themselves, knowing full well the wickedness behind it all.

Here again, Pilate ‘trolls’ the Jews by calling Jesus their King. He knew how to get under their skin. But, he also wanted them to be fully aware of what they were asking. See it. Witness it. Understand it. Ah, once again the Jews were prophetic in their cries. Last week we heard how they said, **“His blood be on us and on our children!”** How true that was and it actually happened that way. Here, they cry, **“We have no king but Caesar!”** Again, they were correct, for although they hated Caesar in their hearts, they were more loyal to him than to Jesus. As the King of the Jews Jesus is the King of believers, of God's true people. They could reject Him all they wanted as an earthly monarch, but it could never change the truth of the matter. Jesus was the King of the Jews in that He was the true God of God's true people, believers.

To be a king, Jesus needed a crown. We think, of course, of the twisted crown of thorns. What we may not readily see is that He wore the crown that we deserve. The pressing into the head of sharp thorns is indeed excessive, but do we not deserve it? Think of how often someone has wronged you and you cannot wait to get back at them, with “How do you like it?” How many times have you wished that upon your enemy; even upon a loved one in a moment of heated anger? Isn't it human nature, some might even say natural right, to return in kind to those who deserve it?

Can you imagine Jesus taking on that attitude? He was completely innocent; surely by human reason He would have just cause to press the thorns into our heads. Can't you see Him saying, “How does it feel? How do you like it?” It almost sounds like the moment of vindication from an action movie, something the human flesh clamors for so intensely that we resound in our hearts with approval.

Yet, even against us Jesus **“opened not his mouth”** nor His divine fist. He willingly kept the crown of thorns on His head and chose a different crown for us. “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).”

By faith in the crucified and risen Jesus, we have the promise of a greater crown of righteousness. We didn't deserve this crown, yet it is ours just as much as the crown of punishment. This promise is never in doubt. Our blessings in Christ abound day after day. The question we should ask ourselves is if we see Him. Do you need someone to call to you to “Behold” Jesus, to wake up from your spiritual slumber? Has the Gospel become so commonplace for our lives that we naturally gravitate toward something different? A wake-up call may indeed be proper and helpful.

Are we like children when it comes to the message of the cross, in one ear, and out the other? In humility we confess all too often, yes.

May we train our eyes to remain on Jesus. May we both see and understand by faith, with deep humility and appreciation, everything He has done for us. Just as there is much to be gained from Jesus, so equally there is much that can be lost. God grant His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts a

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confidence and faith to trust His Son; that is, to awake to what He has done for us and also to believe and understand what it means for our lives.

“Behold the Man,” alone and suffering on the cross; carrying your faults. “Behold, your King,” wearing your crown of punishment, giving you the crown of righteousness. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Preached at Redemption, 4-5-17 - Preached at Ascension, 4-6-17