

John 18
In Pilate's Hall

Palm Sunday is an important day because it features the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It was his "coming out party"

In our 21st century world, we look at Palm Sunday from the perspective of what happened AFTER that day. The original Palm Sunday started out as a normal beginning to Passover week. No one knew what was coming...except Jesus.

COTTON PATCH GOSPEL SONG – "We're going to Atlanta"

DISCIPLES

*We're goin' to Atlanta for the hoedown,
we're goin to Atlanta don't you know
We're goin' to Atlanta for the bright light, showdown,
sure, 'nuff it's gonna be a show*

*It's time to take it to the big time. To try out our message at the top
This salvation trains is chuggin' right down the right line, ready to do anything but stop.*

JESUS

*What does Atlanta mean to me?
What does Atlanta seem to be?
The fears I fear are never gone
The things I know are comin on, are not so nice to look upon, so closely
That's what Atlanta means to me.*

The week that started off on such a joyous note ended with such sorrow.

It is common to read the Palm Sunday narrative as a joyous story of happenstance – Jesus decides to go to Jerusalem and a spontaneous crowd forms and a celebration begins. Jesus Christ is going along, and everybody came out and said "Hail! The Son of David!" And Jesus sort of looks around and says, "Aw shucks. I'm speechless. Well, OK. Sure, I'll get on the donkey. What a surprise. ("they like me, they really like me")

No, Jesus arranged this event. He told the disciples where to find the donkey, and he entered from Bethany, the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus – whom Jesus had just raised from the dead. He saved his biggest miracle til the end and he attracted attention. And he is in total control.

AND HE IS FORCING THE ISSUE AND HE'S MAKING SURE THAT HE COMES INTO JERUSALEM BEING DECLARED KING AS LOUDLY AS POSSIBLE, CONFRONTING JERUSALEM AND HER LEADERS WITH THE CLAIMS OF HIS KINGSHIP.

But this wasn't something planned in the last few days, weeks or even months of Jesus' ministry. Back in Luke 9 we read: Luke 9:51 "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵²

Jesus was determined in what he came to do. This was no accident.

THIS WAS AN EVENT PLANNED BEFORE TIME.

The cross was the center of the pre-determined plan of God for bringing redemption to the church.

Ephesians 1 speaks of the eternal plan of God to save a people; a people chosen before the foundation of the world, adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. This was all in accordance with the mystery of His will...v 9-11.

At the center of all of this is the CROSS. Without the cross there is no redemption, no forgiveness, no adoption, no inheritance. The triumphant entry turning into betrayal and death was not a good idea gone bad, it was the part of saving plan of the TRIUNE God.

Palm Sunday begins a very busy week in the life of Christ, and it is the focus of a large portion of the NT GOSPEL accounts

- Jesus enters Jerusalem
- He cleanses the Temple- chases out the money changers
- Numerous teaching and parable narratives of Jesus with the crowds or the disciples.
- The Last Supper – The Upper Room Discourse – The Garden of Gethsemane / The High Priestly Prayer
- The Betrayal by Judas
- The Six “trials” / the scourging, / mocking / crown of thorns
- The denial by Peter and abandonment by the other disciples
- The Road to the Cross / The Crucifixion / The Seven Last Words from the Cross / Laid in an empty tomb

Let’s consider a portion of this as we focus on the scene in Pilate’s Hall –

John 18:28-40

28 Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. 29 Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” 30 They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.” 31 So Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.” The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,” 32 to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

33 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” 34 Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?” 35 Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?” 36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” 37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” 38 Pilate *said to Him, “What is truth?”

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and *said to them, “I find no guilt in Him. 39 But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?” 40 So they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.

After condemning Jesus, the council of the Sanhedrin had come to Pilate to have the sentence confirmed and executed. But these Jewish officials would not enter the Roman judgment hall. According to their ceremonial law they would be defiled thereby, and thus prevented from taking part in the feast of the Passover. Pilate himself was in no mood for games and must have been frustrated that they brought in a man on charges related to their religion.

Pilate went outside, respecting the religious sensitivities of the Jews (see John 18:28). This sets up a dramatic sequence in which Pilate goes outside to face the Jews and the crowds (v. 29), then goes inside to speak to Jesus (v. 33), then goes outside to the Jews again (v. 38), then goes back inside to Jesus (19:1), then goes outside again to the Jews and the crowds, bringing Jesus with him (19:4-5), then goes back inside with Jesus to speak to him privately (19:9-11), then comes back outside once again with Jesus (19:13), then finally yields to the Jews and gives Jesus to them to be crucified (19:16). Therefore, many of Jesus' statements about himself in this section are uttered "backstage," out of the hearing of his Jewish opponents.

Jesus and Pilate were talking about Jesus being a king, but they were on different wavelengths. Pilate was frustrated and finally offered to release one prisoner to the Jews, as was his custom at Passover. Convinced that Jesus was not guilty of anything, he must have been surprised when the crowd call for the robber, Barabbas (son of the Father).

Pilate was likely wondering what the Jews had been wondering for the past few years, "Who is this Man?" They hoped that Pilate would give a death sentence without asking too many questions, but they were wrong. Something held Pilate back.

The Jewish rulers began to present Jesus as a threat to Roman control, but Pilate could sense that the man before him was not there to lead a military revolution. So, the leaders spoke of Jesus as a king, but Jesus didn't answer their charges. Pilate was confused

Pilate seemed to get a sense that something wasn't quite right, so he began the back and forth with the leaders outside, then going back in to speak with Jesus. The Jewish leaders saw that the religious argument was NOT convincing Pilate, so they played the political card -John 19:12 By saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

Pilate tried to pawn Jesus off on Herod who was in town, but Jesus was eventually sent back to him. Though he found no guilt in him he was willing to have Jesus scourged. At one point his wife warned him "not to have anything to do with this man", (Matt 27:19) but he ignored her and gave in to the crowd out of fear of a riot.

Pilate's name is forever, and only, really remembered because of his association with Jesus and his condemning Jesus to death. It is easy to read the account of Pilate and think, "I would not have done that." But if we're honest, we've all condemned Jesus in our own Pilates' Hall. Coming to faith is a process of being honest about part in ignoring, denying, or condemning Christ. This is well expressed in the Poem/ Hymn by Bonar.

Horatius Bonar, 1856

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eb5tY0Z52So> this link gives a song based on the Bonar text. The composer, Jered McKenna is our son-in-law

I SEE THE CROWD IN PILATE'S HALL,

I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
Their furious cries I hear;
Their shouts of "Crucify!" appall,
Their curses fill mine ear.
And of that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one,
And in that din of voices rude

I recognize my own.

Who are the key players Pilate's Hall? You have the religious and secular leaders who are opposed to Jesus. In the person of Jesus, we have a threat to the traditional view and experience of religion and the secular view of the State. The Pharisees and Pilate disliked each other, but they united in their dislike for Jesus. What do these two positions look like in personal experience?

First let's lean into "religion"

Traditional religion vs The Gospel Tim Keller

RELIGION

THE GOSPEL

| | |
|---|--|
| I obey; therefore, I'm accepted. | I'm accepted; therefore, I obey |
| Motivation is based on fear and insecurity | Motivation is based on grateful joy. |
| I obey God in order to get things from God | I obey God to get God – to delight in and resemble him |
| When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life | When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle, but I know my punishment fell on Jesus and that while God may allow this for my training, he will exercise his Fatherly love within my trial. |
| My prayer life consists largely of petition, and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment | My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with God. |
| My self-view swings things between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel humble but not confident – I feel like a failure | My self-view is not based on my moral achievement. In Christ I am simultaneously sinful yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad that he had to die for me, and I am so loved that he was glad to die for me. This leads me to deep humility and confidence at the same time. |

(See end of sermon for the full Keller comparison)

If we're not religious, then we are left with a secular view to evaluate values, morality, money, sex, and power.

When God is removed as an outside authority, then we are at the whim of those with power. "Might makes right" is the foundation of secular power.

Whether we take our own version of a religious view, or our own secular view, apart from Christ we too are crying, "Crucify Him. I don't want Him as my king. "

The Christian is one who recognizes his/her own voice in shouting "crucify him".

2. I see the scourgers rend the flesh
Of God's beloved Son;
And as they smite I feel afresh
That I of them am one.
Around the Cross the throng I see
That mock the Sufferer's groan,

Yet still my voice it seems to be,
As if I mocked alone.

The physical torment inflicted on Christ is described as being “stricken, smitten and afflicted”.
Is 53;

3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.

6 All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.

In the scourging and in the crucifixion both the secular Romans and the religious leaders were mocking Jesus.

EX: “Crown of thorns” – soldiers

EX: “You saved others, save yourself” – religious leaders

Coming to a place of faith and repentance means that we acknowledge our own mocking of Christ.

Even if it isn't out loud and hostile, we are among those who mock Jesus. It may be as simple as saying, “Lord you go your way and I'll go mine. If we get together one day, fine. But if not, No problem.” It is a PROBLEM, for apart from Christ we have no provision for our sin and rebellion against God.

Rembrandt painted himself in the crucifixion scene.

<https://credomag.com/2011/09/raising-the-cross/>



3. 'Twas I that shed that sacred Blood,
I nailed him to the Tree,
I crucified the Christ of God,
I joined the mockery.
Yet not the less that Blood avails
To cleanse me from sin,
And not the less that Cross prevails
To give me peace within.

Coming to Christ involves seeing that it was our sin, MY sin, that nailed him to the tree. Jesus didn't just die in a vague way, He died to pay for real sin.

The blood avails...Eph 1

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.

2:13 13But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Col 1:20

19 For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

1 Pet 1:18-19

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

1 Jn 1:7

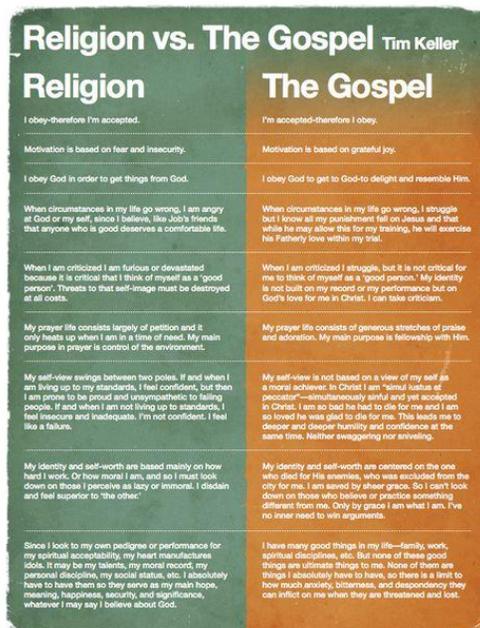
7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**APPLICATION*

– GOOD NEWS. We have a real savior for real sinners

Come to Him. Let your Hosannas ring out for the first time.

Walk by faith in the finished work of Christ. He shed His blood so that we might know redemption, forgiveness, restoration with God and fellowship with one another.



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