

“Kingdom Life”

Scripture: John 19:1-16

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. **2** And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. **3** They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. **4** 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.” **5** So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” **6** When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” **7** 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.” **8** When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. **9** He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. **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?” **11** 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.”**

12 From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” **13** So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. **14** Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” **15** 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** So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

Live fully in the Kingdom of God

Introduction: In one of the opening scenes of the classic, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, we read of the French Revolution and an Englishman who was trying to rescue those who had wealth in France from the mob who was portrayed as wanting them all dead. The Englishman was an unknown person known only as *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

A gatekeeper in Paris Tells the story of how a cart comes through and that the gatekeeper did not inquire. Then a policeman runs up with some other officers and takes the gatekeeper to task for allowing the cart through without examining all of the contents. Then he runs with the other officers in the direction of the cart. Later he learns that the policeman was the *Scarlet Pimpernel*.

The *Scarlet Pimpernel* was at work in plain sight, but only for those who had eyes to see. And today the Kingdom of God is at work in plain sight; but again, only for those who have eyes to see. The call for you and me this morning is two-fold: to not only have eyes to see God’s Kingdom and His work, but also to join in. He invites us to join in His Kingdom, but we must have eyes to see it.

The text we’ll be looking at this morning shows this very tension: the Kingdom of God working in plain sight, but not evident except to those who have eyes to see. This text is a call to us to

Live fully in the Kingdom of God

This passage reminded the first readers, people experiencing hardship and persecution after the death of Jesus, that they were living in the kingdom of God and not just the kingdom of Rome. For us, it is a reminder to get out of the kingdom of earth mindset focused on wealth, power, influence, and politics, and to fully enter into the Kingdom of God focused on truth, justice, mercy and humility.

Live fully in the Kingdom of God. To do so we must first

- **Behold the Man**

- Jesus as King and the Kingdom of God are themes that are running through these verses. The reality is that Jesus is indeed King. Chapter 19 begins with mockery of this truth.
 - Jesus is flogged at Pilate's command, a crown of thorns was placed on His head.
 - He was dressed in a purple robe, a color of royalty.
 - The soldiers came and struck Jesus, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
- Pilate ordered this atrocity to be committed despite his personal conviction that Jesus was innocent. He brought Jesus out to the crowd, saying that he found no guilt in Him, and said to the people, "Behold the man!"
- When the people beheld Jesus, they said, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate reiterated that he found no guilt, but the Jews said that Jesus must die because He, as they said, "has made Himself the Son of God."
- Here is the Kingdom of God at work and advancing in broad daylight, but not visible to anyone except those who had eyes to see.
 - The Kingdom of God is really just about His reign. He is King, and all who come under His authority are participating in His Kingdom. His Kingdom is a matter of righteousness and peace and joy.
 - Unlike the Roman Emperor, Jesus did not come to conquer with power, domination, affluence, and to rule by force. Here we see the Kingdom of God coming BECAUSE Jesus is about to die. He is going to defeat sin. He is about to defeat Satan. He is about to make available the means of the Kingdom: righteousness and peace and joy.
 - In His death and resurrection He fulfilled what He came to do.
 - to give justice to the oppressed
 - to give freedom to the captives
 - to give good news to the poor
 - and recovery of sight to the blind.
- **Application:** To behold the Man, Jesus Christ, we must see Him for Who He is. We must see the punishment that He took upon Himself as what should have been ours. There is no room for pride. Yes, you were created in the image of God and are so precious to Him that He paid the price of your redemption. But, as we all have, you have turned from Him. You have looked to your own wisdom instead of His. You have relied on self instead of relying on Him.
- Know who His enemy is. The enemy of Jesus is not the Republican or Democrat party, the World Health Organization, or groups who believe COVID-19 is a conspiracy. It is

Satan and sin. Satan is the enemy of your soul. He wants you to be distracted from Jesus. He wants you to care more about politics than about Jesus. Satan wants you to care more about your personal liberties than your debt to love others. He wants you to look down on others who don't think like you, rather than in humility considering others better than yourself.

- Consider: "How big is 'me'?" Your thoughts? Your rights? Your desires? Your views? How does the Holy Spirit want you to move from "me" to "we": God's people, His church, His precious bride? How can you prioritize "we", not "me"?
- And, how is He prompting you to move from "me" to "He" - He, the Man? We're still in the midst of this pandemic. The cases and the deaths in the United States are either above or close to where they were a couple of months ago. We're tired of how it has changed our lives, but God has more work. Take this opportunity to turn your focus from "me" to "He" and use this time to know Jesus, to pursue Him in His Word, to worship Him.

- **Behold the King**

- When Pilate heard that Jesus made Himself the Son of God, he went back to his headquarters and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" When Jesus didn't answer. I can just imagine Jesus looking into his eyes as Pilate says, "Don't you know I have the power to release you or crucify you?" Pilate was highlighting the kingdom of Rome, his power and his rule. But Jesus turned it around and highlighted the eternal kingdom: **"You would have no authority if it were not given to you from above."** God is on the throne. He is King. No one comes to power without God's permission.
- A real quick aside: I think we know this intuitively, that not all sin is created equal. There is truth here for us to grasp. Jesus makes it plain here that some sin is more weighty than others and the sin of Judas is greater than the sin of Pilate. However, that does not take away from the truth that all sin is sin and deserves the punishment of death and hell. As James says, anyone who has broken just one part of God's law is guilty of breaking all of it. (James 2.10)
- When Pilate heard Jesus, he tried to release Him but the crowd refused. Pilate again brought Jesus out, and said, "Behold your King!" But, again the response was, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate tried, "Shall I crucify your king?" They said, "We have no king but Caesar." So Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified.
- Behold the King, King Jesus Who is from God, from heaven, and rules over all. His Kingdom is over all. His Kingdom is forever. There is nothing that happens outside of His control. Live fully in the Kingdom of God by beholding the King.
- **Application:** Behold the King and see His Kingdom. Give His Kingdom priority in your life. Live beyond your senses. Our five senses point us again and again to the kingdom of the earth. Our culture strives for money, for power, for influence, for politics, for pleasure. This is the kingdom of the earth.
- The Kingdom of God is where God's reign is brought to bear. Where righteousness and joy and peace are. Where justice is done, and mercy is loved, and we walk with God in humility. Let me illustrate this in asking a few questions:

- Are you more concerned with your finances that you are storing up, or with the treasure in heaven you are storing up by loving God and others? Which do you think about more?
 - Are you more concerned with who will win the Presidential election in November, or with seeing the will of God being done on earth as it is in heaven, and helping others experience His love?
 - Do you look forward more to a TV show, or time to play games, than you do time spent with God in His Word, or with His people?
 - Are you more interested in convincing people to see things from your perspective than you are in listening to them?
 - I'm not just preaching to you, I'm preaching to me. This is difficult. It goes against everything we have been inundated with from the culture for years, and part of that culture comes with us into the church. But, brothers and sisters, this is the invitation that Jesus gives to
- **Live fully in the Kingdom of God**
 - **Application:** We can only do this with His help. There is no way to effectively live fully in the Kingdom of God without Him paving the way.
 - Perhaps the Holy Spirit has convicted you this morning but you can't live fully in the Kingdom of God because of guilt. You can only live fully in the Kingdom of God by beholding the Lord Jesus.
 - Behold Jesus, the One Who died for you. Celebrate His death and rising. Know that He has taken all of your sin if you believe in Him.
 - As you behold Him, allow Him to change you - to take the focus of self and put your focus on others, loving and serving them, in His strength.
 - As you behold Jesus and allow Him to take your eyes from self onto Him and others, you will see His Kingdom more and more. The Kingdom that is invisible to the eyes of the world will be seen as you behold the King, and as you live for Him.
 - As you behold Jesus the King, you will value His Kingdom more and more, and the earth's kingdom less and less. Your focus will move from money and power and influence and autonomy to humility and justice and righteousness and holiness.

Life fully in the Kingdom of God, by beholding the Man, and the King.

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