



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Powerless Pilate!

Focus Verse: John 19:11 - Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Lesson Text: John 19:1-16

Truth About God: God is in control.

Truth For My Life: I will stand for God in the face of peer pressure.

John 19 opens the doors to a trial with eternal consequences. Although Pilate found no fault in Jesus, he bowed to peer pressure. **Where will you stand when we encounter challenges to our faith in Jesus?** Pilate exclaimed, “Behold the man!” but the priests charged Jesus with claiming to be the Son of God (John 19:5-7). Pilate quaked. The Jews saw they were making little progress with Pilate. Their impatience mingled with their untampered hatred. They knew Pilate was planning to release Jesus, so they pitted Pilate against his superior, Caesar. They cried out, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend” (John 19:12). That was the last push to knock over Pilate’s already weak convictions.

Matthew’s Gospel highlights the extent to which Pilate went to absolve himself of responsibility for the judicial murder about to take place. Despite his awareness of the envy at play and his wife’s warning to leave Jesus alone (Matthew 27:18-19), Pilate lost his moral center. He called for a basin of water so he could wash the sin from his hands. Although the high priest was responsible for leveling false charges, Pilate still surrendered his integrity to peer pressure that called for Jesus’ death. John summed up the last scene of judgment in a few words: “Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified” (John 19:16). The case was closed. It was time for sentencing.

As disciples of Jesus, we must carefully resist pressures to turn on Jesus, as Pilate did. Jesus’ accusers did not care that they violated their own professed use of the Law. To pledge their allegiance to Caesar alone accepted the Roman emperor as a demigod worthy of their worship. Pilate could not entangle himself from the web of pressures. We must stand firm for Jesus in the face of peer pressure in our world today. Standing firm testifies of the peace Jesus gives. Resisting pressure to reject Jesus enables disciples to proclaim He has risen and light has come into our deeply broken and chaotic world. We do this because He has redeemed us and because we can share the new life possibility with all those who scream, “**Away with Him,**” just as they did many years ago.

Only one question remains to be answered: how will we live now that Jesus’ suffering granted us pardon for our sins? Pressures from a chaotic world seek to distract disciples from our new mission as Jesus’ ambassadors in the world. Some pressures try to silence our testimony and cause us to be satisfied with just being a “good” Christian and being saved. This pressure robs the disciple of the opportunity to live on purpose. Other pressures conspire to rob the disciple of faith, hope, and love. Such efforts have caused some to go back on Christ as they say “**Away with Jesus,**” one more time.

As we reflect on the courtroom scene in John 19, we are called to stand with Jesus. Standing with Jesus goes beyond finding no fault with Him and dropping the charges. Standing with Jesus joins Paul in his prayer: “*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*” (Philippians 3:10). Rather than bending under the pressure, suffering calls us into a deeper relationship with Jesus. Suffering calls us to stand strong and witness one more time to the wonder of Jesus’ forgiving grace. That kind of stand shines the light of redemption into a damaged, dark world. Such glorious light will never be extinguished.