

Lent Day 38

Thursday March 29, 2018

Reading: John 19:1-15

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” ⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

Reflection

It's an interesting scene; Pilate considers Jesus innocent, maybe to just upset the Jewish people whom he despised, but he goes a head and issues a punishment. Jesus is beaten, mocked and crowned with thorns. The idea is to humiliate this, perhaps innocent but certainly crazy, man. What kind of king is this? This is about appeasement. The heart of the complaint for the Jewish leadership, as far as Pilate can discern, is a fear of the political power and popularity of Jesus. The idea here is to put the lie to this. Everyone can see at a glance that this is no king. Any followers should be slipping out of the crowd at this point. Jesus's political life is over now. Let him live, he's no threat to anyone now.

Not good enough! He must die, he must have the ultimate humiliation Rome can throw at him, he must be crucified! Jesus has not just claimed to be king, but to be the Son of God. This would mean he shares in the divine nature — it's almost a pagan thought! That kind of claim in a Hellenistic (Greek culture) time could cause some to follow even a broken king. No he must die to show everyone that he is no god. The only action which will suit is death.

Then the rejection becomes total. The leaders, after another attempt by Pilate to free Jesus, say, “We have no king but Caesar.” Remember how upset the Prophet Samuel was when Israel asked for a king like the other nations had? He felt Israel was rejecting God, because the understanding was God was king over Israel. Here we go again. Now the Messiah (king) and Son of God (God) is to be put to death.

This is what we do. We claim to love God but when faced with him we desire to be rid of him. This is part of our problem. We prefer ourselves and our order to God's. This isn't new it's been that way from Genesis. The good news is God uses our rejection as the means of his redemption. Thank God!

Prayer

God and King, forgive us for the times when we reject you as you. We desire to love you but struggle with our ability. Thank you for being our King. Amen.