

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

Pilate declared Jesus' innocence three times (18:38; 19:4, 6), yet he caved under the pressure of the Jewish leaders. He hoped after seeing Jesus scourged they would be satisfied that He had suffered enough. Still they insisted on His crucifixion, and Pilate wilted under their threat of reporting him to Caesar if he released a man who claimed to be a king, which would make him appear to be an accomplice to a conspiracy (19:12). He gained some redress by having the sign placed on Jesus' cross that read, "The King of the Jews"---a humiliation to them but ironically the absolute truth. Jesus was their King who will some day rule the world from the very city in which He was crucified.

Although it appeared, from a human standpoint, that Pilate was master over Jesus, holding His fate in his hands, the truth was that Jesus was master over Pilate and held his eternal fate in His hands. The only reason that Pilate had any temporal authority was because it had been given to him by God (19:11). This is true of anyone who has any authority over others, as all authority is ultimately granted by God (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, anyone who has authority over others will have to answer to God if they misuse it. The rule for those in authority to follow is: "Treat others just as you want to be treated." That goes for political leaders, judges, police and all employers.

Jesus, of course, never abuses His authority, and always judges righteously. It is astounding that, under the circumstances, He told Pilate, "...he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin" (19:11). That is, Jesus knew that Pilate was in a hard place and was facing a situation that he would have preferred to avoid. That did not, however, exonerate him of responsibility to do the right thing. He still sinned, but not as grievously as Judas and the chief priests.

Apparently, at some point in Jesus' life, his stepfather Joseph had died, which would seem to be the only logical reason why Jesus, during His final moments on earth, assigned John (whom we assume is "the disciple whom Jesus loved") to take care of His mother, Mary (19:26-27). It was Jesus' final act of "honoring His parents," and it teaches us something about our responsibility to take care of our adult parents in the event that they need our help. It also once again demonstrates the incredible love of Jesus, who, in the deepest agony of the cross, was more concerned about someone other than Himself.

When Jesus cried out with His final breath, "It is finished!" He meant more than just the fact that His life on earth had ended. Unknown to anyone who watched Him die, He had accomplished the work for which He had been sent, paying the full price for the sins of humanity. The New Testament teaches us that our redemption was completed on the cross (Col. 1:22).

When the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with his spear, John tells us that "there came out blood and water" (19:34). According to medical authorities, this reveals that Jesus most likely died from a ruptured heart.

Pilate was surprised to discover that Jesus was dead after being on the cross only six hours (Mark 15:44-45). Many survived for days. Jesus, however, was half dead before He arrived at Golgotha.

Not wanting anyone to be hanging on a cross during the Sabbath, which would begin at sunset, the Jews requested of Pilate that the legs of the two thieves be broken to speed their deaths by asphyxiation (19:31-33). To remain alive on the cross, a condemned person had to push himself up by the nails in his feet in order to fill his collapsing lungs with air. Broken legs made that impossible. Because Jesus was already dead, His legs were not broken, fulfilling Psalm 34:20, "He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken," and making Him a more perfect fulfillment of a Passover lamb, of which it was commanded of Israel, "They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it" (Num 9:12).