

April 6, 2014

Lesson 26: Jesus Condemned



John 19:1-16

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus,

'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

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John 19:1-16

“He said to the Jews,
‘Here is your king!’
They cried out,
‘Away with him!
Away with him!
Crucify him!’”

The Big Story Truth: Jesus is our king!

About This Scripture Passage: This passage is filled with political language. In order to understand what is happening here it is necessary to know that the Jews lived under Roman occupation. The power that the Jewish leadership enjoyed came in part from their relationships with the Roman rulers. They used political allegiance to the Roman emperor as an excuse to have Jesus killed by the Romans. They knew that if they could paint Jesus as a political criminal, and charge him with inciting rebellion, that the punishment would be crucifixion. That Pilate’s soldiers respond by having Jesus dressed up as the “king of the Jews” is a mockery both of Jesus and of the Jews’ claim that Jesus is a serious threat. So the Jewish leaders resort to accusing Pilate of not following the law--- not doing his duty as their ruler. The thought that his own political position could be threatened by

how this trial proceeds makes Pilate fearful and he gives in to their demand that Jesus be crucified. The reality, though, is that for all this political maneuvering and strategizing, Jesus is adamant that the power all the rulers have is only that which they have been given by God. The truth is that Jesus really does stand before them as king and the one who has authority over what will happen next.



Making the Connection: The people in our Bible story may be trying to accuse Jesus and make fun of him, but ironically, Jesus really is king! Jesus is a much different kind of king than what their image of king is, though. People think of kings as being powerful and bossy and trying to make people do things. Jesus is the opposite. Jesus is powerful, but he doesn't use his power even to stop his own death. Jesus willingly lays down his life for those he loves. Jesus didn't come demanding to be served, he came to serve. Jesus' isn't like any other king. Jesus' kingdom is different. Today's lesson is an opportunity for us to think with our kids about the kind of king that Jesus is and what it means that we say that Jesus is our king.

For Your Reflection:

Few of us have much personal experience with kings, but plenty with authority. We are often even in positions of authority ourselves: in our families, in our classrooms, maybe even in our workplaces. How might Jesus' example of authority shape how you use your authority?

Where in the World Are We?

Like last week, still in Pilate's headquarters in Jerusalem. The same two possibilities exist for location:

1. The royal palace
2. the fortress Antonia.

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