



EST FONDS VITAE

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SERIES

John: *That You May Believe*

TITLE & PASSAGE

The Sovereign God
John 19:1-16

OCCASION

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter on the Lord's Day to the congregation of First Baptist Church of Diana, TX.

INTRODUCTION

In Jesus' final hours, we see Him beaten, mocked, and crucified. We hear a cacophony of malicious voices, demanding Christ's degradation and murder. And yet, in the midst of all of this, Jesus thunders a powerful word of stabilizing clarity. He claims divine sovereignty over all of these events and actions. In this message, we shall observe the scene in John 19, and consider the words of divine sovereignty Jesus speaks.

MAIN POINT

God is sovereign over whatsoever comes to pass; therefore, we should fear Him, praise Him, and trust Him.

EMAIL QUESTIONS TO PASTOR@FBCDIANA.ORG

SCRIPTURE READING

John 19:1–16

1 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. So they took Jesus...

MAIN POINT

God is sovereign over whatsoever comes to pass; therefore, we should fear Him, praise Him, and trust Him.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) MORTALS COMPETED FOR SOVEREIGNTY

(2) THE SAVIOR RULES AND JUDGES ABOVE ALL

(3) 3 IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

MESSAGE

(1) MORTALS COMPETED FOR SOVEREIGNTY

- Pilate 'flogged' the King of Glory
 - "Flogging" was carried out in one of three ways.
 - *fustigatio* was a less severe beating, probably with a "*ferula*" or leather strap. This was more of a warning than a punishment, but a humiliating and painful assault nonetheless.
 - *flagellatio* was a brutal beating, probably with a "*scutica*," a whip made of twisted leather. This was a harsh punishment for actual criminals.
 - *verberatio* was the most terrible scourging of all, probably with a "*flagrum*," a whip made with several strands with interwoven pieces of bone and metal. This scourging sometimes killed the victim, it was always vicious, and it was always part of the tortures of Roman crucifixion.

- This flogging (Jn. 19:1) is before Jesus was sentenced to be crucified; therefore, it seems as though this is the first of two “floggings.”
 - See Carson’s note below for a more detailed explanation.¹
 - It seems Pilate intended to flog (*fustigatio*) Jesus and let Him go.

- The point is, Pilate was seeking to exercise his own authority over Jesus and over the Jewish leaders.
 - Pilate wanted to punish Jesus for being a trouble-maker, and Pilate wanted to reject the Jewish leaders’ push for the death penalty.
 - Pilate was competing for sovereignty here.

- **Roman soldiers mocked and pummeled the King of Glory**
 - While Pilate’s exercise of authority was in giving commands, the soldiers exercised their authority in a much baser and more tangible way.
 - These brutes “twisted together a **crown of thorns** and put it on his [Jesus’] head and arrayed him in a **purple robe**. They came up to him, saying, “**Hail, King of the Jews!**” and **struck him** with their hands” (v2-3).
 - In this way, these Roman soldiers took advantage of their authoritative role, and competed for sovereignty.
 - They were not dutifully exercising their responsibility, but instead were arrogantly claiming a power and authority that was not theirs.

- **Jewish leaders demanded the murder of the King of Glory**
 - Pilate flogged Jesus and then told the crowd Jesus was not guilty of any crime.
 - But the Jewish leaders cried out “**Crucify him, crucify him!**” (v6).

¹ “It is better to follow Sherwin-White (pp. 27–28), who argues that the flogging threatened in Luke and reported here in John is the *fustigatio*, the least severe form, and was intended partly to appease the Jews and partly to teach Jesus a lesson (*cf.* Luke’s *paideusas*; John’s *emastigōsen*, ‘had [him] flogged’, is a more generic description) for being something of a trouble-maker. The chronology of Luke and John is correct. But this means that Jesus received a second scourging, the wretched *verberatio*, after the sentence of crucifixion was passed. This would hasten death, and the nearness of the special Sabbath of that week provided the officials with some pressure to ensure that the agony of crucifixion, which could go on for days, would not be permitted to run on too long (Jn. 19:31–33). This also explains why he was too weak to carry his own cross very far (*cf.* notes on v. 17).”

- Again, Pilate said Jesus was not guilty, “I find no guilt in him” (v6).
 - But the Jewish leaders claimed that Jesus had broken the biblical law by claiming to be “the Son of God” (v7).
 - They did not care if the claim was true... they merely hated the claim and Jesus for making it.

- Finally, Pilate made his desire to release Jesus clear (v12, 14, 15).
 - But the Jewish leaders demanded that Caesar is king, and Jesus must be crucified (v15).
 - In this way, the Jewish leaders were competing for sovereignty by manipulating the political structures for their own gain.

- **So, in summary, we have the mortal competitors...**
 - Pilate (the government representative)
 - The Roman soldiers
 - The Jewish leaders (backed by the Jewish people in 1st-century Rome)

 - Does anyone seem truly “in charge” here?
 - **Pilate’s judgments** are authoritative, but he is being manipulated by the crowd.
 - **The Jewish leaders** are getting their way, but they are having to play a dangerous political game.
 - **The Roman soldiers** are physically capable of dominating Jesus, but they are under the authority of Roman law.
 - Is anyone “in charge” of this sorrowful charade of justice and power?
 - Is there any purpose in all of this?
 - Is there any harmony to be heard among this cacophony of actions?
 - Where is it all going?

(2) THE SAVIOR RULES AND JUDGES ABOVE ALL

- **Pilate is afraid and confused**

- Jewish leaders told Pilate that Jesus claimed to be the “**Son of God**” (v7).
- Pilate was “**even more afraid**” (v8) because of this.
 - Jesus was already not acting like a helpless subject of the Roman governor.
 - Jesus was refusing to defend Himself before Pilate.
 - Jesus was offering Pilate “**truth**” (Jn. 18:37) and claiming to be an other-worldly king (Jn. 18:36).
 - Now, Pilate hears that Jesus has made a claim of deity!
- But, Pilate does not seem to believe the claim.
 - Pilate said to Jesus, “**You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?**” (v10).
 - Pilate believes that he is the one in charge... he is the judge, the sovereign... but he is dead wrong.

- **Jesus declares His sovereignty**

- Jesus said, “**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**” (v11).
 - One, Christ judges the guilt of all.
 - Jesus sees every... single... thing... for what it is.
 - Two, Christ rules over all lesser authorities.
 - Jesus is, in fact, governing every... single... thing.
- One, Christ Judges
 - “**he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin**”
 - Jesus judges Pilate as guilty.
 - But Jesus judges Judas (who delivered Jesus) as guiltier.
 - This means that Jesus not only knows the intentions and actions of men, He also judges them... impartially.

- Even in the midst of His humiliation, Jesus shows His moral authority and judgment over all!

- Two, Christ Rules

- **“You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above”**
 - God delegates all authority.
 - Did Pilate have authority over Jesus?
 - Yes. Jesus was subject to Pilate’s “judgment” and sentencing (v13, 16).
 - Was Pilate’s authority under or subject to God’s/Christ’s authority?
 - Yes. Pilate could only exercise the authority that had been **“given you from above.”**
 - Pilate had real authority, but God’s authority was supervisory over Pilate.
 - Piper – **“Pilate’s will [is not] powerless, Pilate’s will is guided... [Jesus is in Pilate’s hands, but] Pilate is in the hands of Jesus’ Father.”**
 - Therefore, we are to take note: God/Christ governs everything!
 - But, why point this out here?
 - What is John (the Gospel-writer) stressing?

- **Jesus’ crucifixion was God’s plan**

- Isn’t this what Jesus has been saying for the last 5-6 chapters of John’s Gospel?
 - Jesus pointed out His betrayer at the Passover meal.
 - **“He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe...”** (Jn. 13:18-19).
 - Jesus spoke of His glory and His “departure” from the world.
 - **“Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him... yet a little while I am with you...”** (Jn. 13:31-33).

- Jesus told His disciples He was preparing the way to the Father.
 - “Let not your hearts be troubled... If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ...I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:1-6).
- Jesus warned His disciples of tribulation but promised them joy.
 - “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn. 15:11).
- Jesus prayed for His people, naming the ultimate purpose of His earthly ministry.
 - “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have give me because you loved me before the foundation of the world” (Jn. 17:24).
- And finally, Jesus resolved in real time to drink the devastating cup of God’s wrath, by laying His life down for His people.
 - Jesus said, “shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?” (Jn. 18:11).
- This is the clear testimony of Scripture
 - When Peter preached to the crowd gathered in Jerusalem after Jesus’ resurrection, he also highlighted God’s sovereignty over the events and people involved with Jesus’ crucifixion.
 - Peter said, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, **delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2:22–24).
 - From this we may learn that God was the planner of... the sovereign over all of the events surrounding Christ’s crucifixion... even the evil activities of wicked men.
- Friends, do you believe in this God?

- I'm being serious... do you believe in the God of the Bible?
 - I'm not asking if you understand God fully.
 - I'm not asking you to explain God's governance in the world.
 - With the Psalmist we must say, "Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all His praise?" (Ps. 106:2).
 - And with Job we cry out, "Behold, these [things we know] are but the outskirts of [God's] ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?" (Job 26:14)
 - I am asking you, "Do you believe God does rule sovereignly... really... comprehensively... over all things?"

- Do you believe that Christ came purposefully into the world to save sinners by being crucified on a Roman cross at the hands of lawless men?
 - I mean, think about all that has to be true in order for that to be true!
 - God (Father, Son, and Spirit) had to have intended a plan for redeeming guilty sinners.
 - The Father had to have sent the Son into the world to accomplish the plan.
 - God had to arrange the events and people of the world so that the plan of the Triune God would prevail.
 - And consider the 300+ OT prophecies Jesus fulfilled!
 - God was sovereign over Herod's edict which murdered all the baby boys in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:13-18).
 - God was sovereign over the Jewish people's rejection of Jesus as Messiah (Jn. 8:39-47).
 - And, yes, God was sovereign over Pilate, Judas, the Jewish leaders, and the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus (Jn. 19:1-16).
 - God the Spirit had to apply this work of the Son to the hearts of sinners in order to ensure that God's plan would not fail.

- Oh, don't you see that John here is showing us the God who holds all things in their place?!
 - There is someone "in charge" of this sorrowful charade!
 - And this is the same God who works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11) and for the good of His people (Rom. 8:28).

(3) 3 IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

- (1 of 3) We should fear God

- No one in our passage fears God above all else.
 - The Roman soldiers and the Jewish leaders show no fear for God here.
 - Only Pilate has a moment where he exhibits some fear (v8), but this is not real fear/reverence, because Pilate still thinks himself above Jesus (v10).
- But, friends, Jesus says we should fear God.
 - Jesus said, "I warn you... fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!" (Lk. 12:5).
- In our passage, we see worldly players with worldly motives and worldly fears.
 - The Jewish leaders fear/revere their religious and social status.
 - Pilate fears/reveres political power.
 - The Roman soldiers fear/revere strength and power.
- But, we are to see the world through biblical eyes.
 - We should fear/revere God above all else we see in the world.
 - For He is High King over all, the sovereign Lord.

- (2 of 3) We should praise God

- This is not immediately obvious in our passage, but what does it mean to praise?
 - Praise is the admiration of something or someone.
 - Praise is the worship of something or someone.
 - Praise is the honoring of something or someone.

- As we see God for who He is here – sovereign, purposeful, actively working all things according to His will – should we do anything other than praise Him?
 - Who is more admirable than the God whose transcendent beauty far exceeds anything we can imagine?!
 - Who is worthier of honor and worship than the God who is before all things, above all things, and the one in whom all things hold together?
 - We should praise God with all our heart, because He is worthy.

- **(3 of 3) We should trust God**

- In our passage, we see every reason to despair.
 - Who could look upon this scene of Christ’s trials, beatings, and crucifixion and think, “Atta-boy Jesus... You’ve got them right where You want them...”?
 - Jesus’ public approval is gone.
 - Jesus’ body is afflicted.
 - Jesus’ closest friends have abandoned Him.
 - The Roman governor is chiding Him.
 - Jesus isn’t saying the kinds of things that will help Him.
 - What a picture of despair!
- But, this picture is as God has painted it!
 - God intends it to be just this way.
 - God is painting His masterpiece, not by working around the messy strokes of evil men, but by using those malicious brushes to color the canvas exactly how He wants it.
- And this is always how God paints.
 - “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).
- No matter how the circumstances may appear, we should trust God.
 - For He is the sovereign Lord and King of Glory, who works all things according to His purposes.

God is sovereign over whatsoever comes to pass; therefore, we should fear Him, praise Him, and trust Him.

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe God is sovereign over whatsoever comes to pass?

- a. If not, why not?
 - i. Where did you read in the Bible that God doesn't control some things in life?
 - ii. If you object to this claim, is it because you have a tough time understanding it or accepting it?
 - iii. May God help us all to believe His word over our own thoughts and experiences.
- b. If you do believe that God is truly sovereign over everything, then how does this affect you?
 - i. Does it make you proud?
 1. What a foolish response!
 - ii. Does it make you impatient?
 1. This too is nonsensical.

2. Do you fear Him, praise Him, and trust Him?

- a. If you do not fear God, then you are not responding to Him in the way the Bible mandates you/we should.
 - i. If you don't fear God, then why don't you?
 1. Take time today to consider where the problem might be.
- b. Is your singing, praying, giving, and listening based on emotion?
 - i. Or are these things based on your knowledge of God and your praise of His greatness?
- c. Are things as you'd like them to be right now?
 - i. Is there any anxiety or difficulty or bad time in your life?
 1. Do you know that God is sovereign, and He is trustworthy?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR THIS PASSAGE/TOPIC

Jesus Appears Before Pilate by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-106/jesus-appears-before-pilate-part-4>

Where Our Comfort Comes From by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/where-our-comfort-comes-from>

Did You Kill the King of Glory? by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/did-you-kill-the-lord-of-glory>

A HARMONIZING TIMELINE FROM JESUS' ARREST TO HIS CRUCIFIXION

- The general flow of timeline seems to go as follows.²
 - Night **Arrest** (Jn. 18:1-12)
 - Questioned by **Annas**, the religious “mob boss” (Jn. 18:12-14, 19-23)
 - Questioned before **Caiaphas** and **Sanhedrin**, the official **Jewish trial** (Mt. 26:57-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:66-71; Jn. 18:24)
 - Brought to **Pilate**, the Governor or Procurator of Judea, the **first time**, starting the **Roman trial** (Mt. 27:11-14; Jn. 28-38)
 - Interrogated by **Herod**, the Tetrarch of Galilee (Lk. 23:6-12)
 - Interestingly, this Herod was the son of *Herod the Great*, who ordered the murder of every boy in Bethlehem 2-yr and younger. And he happened to be in Jerusalem for the time of the Jewish Passover.
 - Brought to **Pilate** the **second time**, where Pilate reluctantly passes condemning **judgment** (Matt. 27:15-31; Jn. 18:38-19:16)
 - The **crucifixion** (Jn. 19:17-30)

² Carson, in his commentary (the Pillar New Testament Commentary), says, “There are several ways by which the diverse Gospel accounts of Jesus’ passion, especially his arrest and trials, can be brought into a single story-line. There were two trials, one Jewish and one Roman. The former began with informal examination by Annas (18:12–14, 19–23), possibly while members of the Sanhedrin were being hurriedly summoned. A session of the Sanhedrin (Mt. 26:57–68; Mk. 14:53–65) with frank consensus was followed by a formal decision at dawn and dispatch to Pilate (Mt. 27:1–2; Lk. 22:66–71). The Roman trial began with a first examination before Pilate (Mt. 27:11–14; Jn. 18:28–38a), which was followed by Herod’s interrogation (Lk. 23:6–12) and Jesus’ final appearance before Pilate (Mt. 27:15–31; Jn. 18:38b–19:16). Other reconstructions are possible, but this one usefully co-ordinates the biblical data.”