

John 18:36,37March 14, 2012 – Midweek Lenten Worship ¹

Our King ☩ Is Crucified

☩ **He conquered by His cross. (v.36)**

☩ **His kingdom extends to eternity. (v.37)**

Dear fellow citizens in the eternal kingdom of Christ the King:

Introduction: What did Pilate have to fear? If you could watch a video of his life and go to the very last scene, you would see him high on a cliff overlooking a dismal lake somewhere in Italy. Pilate's life after Bible history was one sad failure after another until he had no hope left at all. According to tradition, he threw himself off that cliff and drowned alone in the icy waters.

But play back his life back, and you would find at least one moment when it seems the Roman governor grew a spine. Was it a petulant joke to make the Jews look weak? Pilate put a sign above the cross in all the popular languages: JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS. Remember how irritated the Jewish religious leaders were by that? They demanded that Pilate change the sign to, "He claimed to be the king of Jews." But Pilate held firm on that one: "What I have written, I have written."

He had nothing to fear from the Jews and it looked like even less from this popular rabbi out of Nazareth. Pilate had access to all the power of the Roman Empire with its invincible legions. His soldiers could put down any rebellion by a king who dared to oppose Roman control. All Pilate had to do was find out whether this Jesus of Nazareth was leading a rebellion or something less sinister.

Let's look in on Pilate's Roman courtroom. Justice should have been served. The imperial law code of Rome gave us most of our legal terms from the Latin language still used in American courts today. Don't be fooled by what you see. With the Holy Spirit's help, **See His Cross! Our King ☩ Is Crucified.** And what no human author or authority could have imagined is this:

I. He conquered by His cross. (v.36)

A. Pilate remembered the charge that Jesus was a king.

1. His examination of Jesus begins in v.33: "***Are you the king of the Jews?***"
2. Jesus answer probes Pilate's memory to help him spiritually recall the Word of God. (v.34)
3. "***Am I a Jew? It was your own people...What is it you have done?***" (v.35)
 - Jews could not legally execute anyone.
4. "***My kingdom is not of this world.***"
 - When Peter tried to fight with a sword: "***Put your sword away!...***" (v.11)
 - Jesus showed His power in the Garden as the eternal three times: "***I AM.***" (vv.5,6,8)

B. These are awesome lessons for Christians today.

1. Millennialists' *Left Behind* series missing this Word of God: "***...not of this world.***"
 - Inmates at WELS P.M. B.C. admonishing fellow inmate: "***...not of this world.***"
2. Our hearts are foolish to look for worldly power in this tribulation. (Acts 14:22 KJV)
3. He came to "***humble himself...obedient to death – even death on a cross!***" (Philippians 2:6-8)
 - Jesus had been promising to conquer death on a Gentile cross. (John 3:14; 12:33; 18:32)

C. **See His Cross!** – for victorious life here and now.

1. His death vanquished death.
 - For sinners loved by God throughout the world. (John 3:16)

¹ Based on 2012 NPH Series by John Braun: *See His Cross!*

- If only everyone knew what you know, e.g. Lino Lakes prison guard. (John 3:16 Greek)
2. His death counts for the whole world.
 - Martyred leaders like Joseph Smith (Mormons) and Mohammed (Muslims) still dead.
 - Only one casualty in Jesus' march to victory: Himself – but now risen indeed!
 3. His death counts for now – the second purchase of us by God.
 - Jesus “has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature....lives and rules eternally.”

Transition: A little boy saw a puppy in a pet store. It kept coming over to him and no one else. The little guy could think of nothing else but to buy that puppy. In those days parents did not spoil their children; they made them work for what they wanted. It took many different jobs to earn enough to buy that puppy. He was so happy when he brought him home. And so devastated when his puppy ran away. He looked and looked until he found it in another pet store. But the owner would not believe that puppy was his! “You’ll have to pay for it,” he said.

Many more weeks of hard work until the boy finally raised enough to buy back his little friend. Imagine how tightly he held his little dog: “I bought you twice! I’ll never let you go! Don’t run away again!”

Think how dearly God must love you. First, He created you, but you ran away into sin. Then God’s Son would not stop looking until He found you. And when the price on your head was His own blood, Jesus bought you back. You are dearly redeemed by the price of God’s own Son. Holding you close to His heart, “I bought you twice!” He says, “I’ll never let you go! Don’t run away again!”

II. His kingdom extends to eternity. (v.37)

- A. Pilate thought he had Him: “You are a king then!”
- B. Jesus’ clear confession is meant to make us think about our response to Him.
 - Do you believe the Truth speaks the truth? (John 14:6)
 - Do you listen eagerly whenever He speaks – reading your Bible, hearing faithful proclamation of law and gospel, sin and grace?
- C. Don’t be fooled by beaten and bloody Jesus in Pilate’s courtroom.
 1. This King was hiding His glory under shame and suffering.
 2. This King has promised to rule eternally for all who put their trust in Him. (Isaiah 9:7)
 - **“I am not ashamed of the Gospel...power of God....”** (Romans 1:16)
 3. His eternal rule helps us here and now.
 - **“He who spared not His own Son....”** (Romans 8:28)
 - **“Cast all your care on Him because He cares for you.”** (1 Peter 5:7)
 - **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened...rest....”** (Matthew 11:28f)
 4. “My Life is But a Weaving”

Conclusion: We’re here on the porch leading into the mansion. **See His Cross – Our King ☩ Is Crucified!** We are all forgiven. Christ is our living hope. Heaven awaits. Press on to glory. Amen.

*My life is but a weaving Between my Lord and me;
I cannot chose the colors Nor all the pattern see.
Oftimes he weaveth sorrow And I in foolish pride
Forget he sees the upper And I the under side.*

*Not till the loom is silent And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvass And explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver In the pattern he has planned.* – Anonymous ²

² Rein, R.C. *Treasury of Themes and Illustrations*. Milwaukee, WI: NPH, 1983, ref. 27.