

Session 4

March 28, 2021

THE DEATH OF JESUS

John 19:8-11, 16b-18, 28-30

At the center of history, is Christianity. At the center of Christianity there is Jesus Christ. The universe and all its elements exist by Him and for Him, and all of history revolves around Him. The world—which He created—was drastically changed in the course of three days. Since then, all the past makes sense, and all the future falls into place. In those three days, The Son of God was crucified, was buried, and rose again. And nothing has ever been the same.

Control (vv. 8-11). Outside the palace, the crowd was losing control. The mob that gathered was clamoring for the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate the governor was convinced the man was innocent. Twice in this chapter already, Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him.” But now, even Pilate was losing control. Verse 7 sets the stage for the anxiety he felt in verse 8. Jesus had been called the Son of God, and “When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever” (v. 8). Was Pilate afraid because this charge against Jesus would further incite the crowd? Or combined with the ominous tone of his wife’s dream, was the governor concerned that Jesus was indeed more than a simple Jew? As tensions rose, Pilate pressed the issue. His inquiry, “Where are you from?” was directed toward His deity rather than humanity because Pilate already knew Jesus was from Galilee (see Luke 23:6). In contrast to the crowd outside and the governor inside who were both losing control, Jesus was in perfect control. As the soon-to-be sacrificial lamb, He stood silent before His shearers (Is. 53:7). As Pilate raged about his own official powers over the condemned man (v. 10), Jesus reminded Him that He, the Son of God, was the true authority in the room (v. 11). For reflection: *Read what Jesus said in John 10:18. How do His words from there, apply in this context?*

Crucifixion (vv. 16-18). The Gospels, when taken together, describe the crucifixion of our Lord. But what is most striking to me is the lack of detail in each account. I fear we preachers are often guilty of dramatizing Christ’s gruesome death with graphic descriptions of what crucifixion was all about. And while historians tell us it was indeed a cruel way to die, the Bible gets right to the point. “There, they crucified Him” (v. 18). (We must be careful in our descriptions not to over-emotionalize the biblical account of Christ’s death, lest we push our listeners to somehow *pity* Jesus). The cruelty of the cross was a great reality. But the Bible’s emphasis is not on His *great suffering* as much as on His *gracious sacrifice*. For reflection: *Why do you think it would be misguided to feel sorry for Jesus...or to pity Him? See Gal. 6:14.*

Completion (vv. 28-30). It is important to understand that Jesus remained in control throughout this tortuous ordeal. He was never overwhelmed by His humanity; never ceased being God. Yet His humanity as well as His deity are on display here. As a man, he was thirsty. But that personal, physical need was only addressed after the eternal, spiritual need of humanity was met (v. 28). Commentators differ as to the effect of the sour wine. Some see it as an act of compassion; the wine acting to dull the senses. Others view it as one more act of cruelty; the sour vinegar burning the mouth more than quenching the thirst. In the end, Jesus declared, “It is finished.” He was not referring to His physical suffering only, nor His earthly death. Rather, the Greek implies a debt has been paid in full. The significance is furthered by the verb tense used. A

very literal translation might say, “It has been paid in full, the results of which continue on.” For reflection: *Why do you think Jesus used the verb tense He used? What results of His death go on even until today?*