

From Celebration to Crucifixion

John 19:1-16

Introduction

- Reading A Map and Using A Compass
 - Pull out our phone, punch in the address, wait for the instructions
 - It may work that way in the world of map apps and digital technology, but it doesn't work that way in life.
 - If only life were as simple as punching in the address and waiting for the exact directions!
 - It's been a long time since I've used a map and compass
 - A quick refresher course reminded me of something very important
 - You may have a map that shows you where you are and your point of destination, but if your desired destination is South and you are facing North, it's very unlikely that you will end up where you want to go!
 - This where a compass comes in handy-the compass gets you pointed in the right direction so that you can follow the map to your destination.
- Finding Our Destination in Life
 - I want to end up "here"
 - However, where we end up, may not look at all what was pictured on the map!
 - It's possible that we had the right map, but we weren't pointed in the right direction.
 - It's possible that we missed a turn, along the way
 - It's possible that the destination we were focused on wasn't even where we should have been focused on at all.
 - If only life were as simple as punching in the address and waiting for the exact directions!
- Sermon series, "Jesus Christ: Friend or Foe"
 - Everyone was looking for a similar destination: the Kingdom of God
 - Freedom
 - Salvation
 - Victory
 - Seems pretty simple; find the right leader and follow him
 - Luke 23:48-49, "And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things."
 - One group proud of their destination
 - Another group asking, "How did we end up here?"
 - The Kingdom of God sounds like a wonderful destination, but no one took into account the Cross. But it's not just the cross that people didn't take into account. It's the person on the cross that no one expected either!
 - If only life were as simple as punching in the address and waiting for the exact directions!

- As you and I are trying to figure out life, and how to get to our destination, Jesus offers us The Compass, “I am the Way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” - John 14:6
 - Easter is not a destination, but it does point us in the right direction.
- One of the pieces of the Easter Story that might help us: Pilate’s Experience
 - John 19:1-16
 - It’s a chaotic scene that requires a verdict.
 - Jesus has been betrayed by one of his disciples: Judas
 - Jesus is arrested and questioned by the Jewish high priest family
 - They want to get rid of Jesus because he creates an obstacle to their destination to the Kingdom of God
 - The problem with getting rid of Jesus is that they can’t put him to death under their own law
 - They appeal to the Roman appointed governor, Pilate
 - Pilate is commissioned by the Romans to oversee Judea
 - Judea is a strategic interest of the Romans
 - Pilate is given the task to keep the peace
 - Let the Jews have their religion, just make sure that they honor Caesar’s authority.
 - Pilate has the upper-hand with authority from the Roman government until Jesus creates a stir.
 - The crowds are shouting, “Crucify him!”
 - Pilate is looking at the evidence and concludes: Not Guilty
 - But the pressure from the crowds effects Pilates’ decision making
 - Pilate keeps going back between Jesus and the crowds
 - This chaotic scene plays out in our lives everyday
 - The pressure between fulfilling our daily tasks in life with the ultimate goal of ending up in a desired location vs. the daily pressures of life that bare down on our ability to do what needs to be done.
 - All the while, Jesus is standing in the middle, awaiting our decision.
 - Pilate’s Three Response
 - Tries to compromise the truth to get rid of Jesus
 - As fear escalates; Pilate appeals to his own authority
 - Insecure with his own power, Pilate appeals to the court of public opinion to make a decision regarding Jesus.
 - Pilate’s compass is spinning and he is struggling to find true north.

Compromising the Truth

- John 19:1-5
 - If Pilate didn’t find any guilt in Jesus, why did he beat and mock Jesus?
 - Pilate didn’t want to kill an innocent man, but he also didn’t want the Jewish crowds to create an uproar.
 - The charge against Jesus: Did Jesus claim kingship?

- Bear witness to the truth
 - Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.
 - What is truth?
 - Pilate's response is critical, because it gives us insight into Pilate's compass.
 - The truth was not significant to Pilate
 - If it was, he would have stuck with the verdict: Not Guilty
 - Instead Pilate tries to compromise with the Jews to get rid of the problem.
- Compromise is necessary sometimes to keep the peace in our relationships, however it is not appropriate when truth gets compromised.
 - As parents, if we compromise with our kids without holding them accountable; truth is being compromised.
 - As a leaders, if we compromise to keep the peace without considering God's direction; truth is compromised.
- Pilate's response was to mock Jesus by dressing Jesus up like a king
 - Crown of thorns
 - Purple Robe
 - "Hail, King of the Jews!"
- Behold, the man
 - To Pilate, Jesus was a joke
 - The Truth, Jesus was the Man; he was the Great I AM
 - You can mock the truth, compromise the truth, but at the end of the day the truth still stands!
- If Easter is not the destination, but it does point us in the right direction, what can we take away from this first response?
 - No matter how difficult the circumstance, Jesus has to be the king of our decision-making.
 - He has to be the compass
 - Jesus sacrificed his life for the truth
 - Pilate sacrificed the truth to remain in good standing with the crowd
 - The crowd sacrificed the truth because they wanted authority in the Kingdom of God.
 - What are you sacrificing?
 - Are you sacrificing the truth?
 - Or, are you sacrificing *for* the the truth?

Appealing to Our Own Authority

- **John 19:7-11**
 - "Son of God"
 - Pilate even more afraid
 - This isn't just an earthly king
 - He claims to be a king from another world
 - Who has more authority than Pilate?

- Pilate was commissioned by Rome to impose Roman law
 - The Romans did not send Pilate to be intimidated by other leaders
 - Yet, what if Jesus is God?
 - You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.
 - Jesus let's Pilate know that there is a greater power than Pilate's authority
 - Jesus let's Pilate know that there is responsibility that comes with Pilate's authority.
- If the Easter story is not the destination, but it points in the right direction; what can we learn from this response?
 - Jesus was give all authority by God
 - He could have requested the angels to remove him from the cross before he died.
 - He could have stopped everything with his own power, however he was given the responsibility to die for the sins of the world.
 - What responsibility have you been given with the authority you have?
 - The very definition of sin is that we choose to do our will instead of God's will
 - We have the authority to make our own decisions, but we have a responsibility to God in how we make our decisions.
 - Parents, what responsibility has God given to you with the authority you have as a parent?
 - Spouse?
 - Leader? Consider your responsibility to God, before your own desires!
 - Pilate made an appeal to his own authority without taking responsibility- you can't do this! You won't end up at your desired destination.

Appeal to the Court of Public Opinion

- **John 19:12-16**
 - You are not Caesar's friend
 - Pilate was already afraid of Jesus as the Son of God
 - But when the crowd inserted Caesar, Pilate had an even greater dilemma
 - Who was his friend and who was his foe?
 - Any king other than Caesar commits treason
 - Despite finding Jesus innocent, Pilate was committed to Caesar
 - Despite being The People of God, the Jews were not willing to surrender to God's King
 - Caesar had the power, Caesar was their compass to their desired location
 - Jesus brought out to the court of public opinion
 - Pilate was ready to wash his hands of Jesus
 - The crowds were ready for crucifixion
- If Easter is not the destination, but points us in the right direction, then what can we learn from this response?

- Pilate lost confidence in his own decision-making, so he turned to the crowd.
- In other words, he passed the responsibility that was his, to someone else.
- Although, Pilate washed his hands of Jesus, he could not wash his hands of the responsibility that had been given to him.
- As parents, spouses, leaders, etc. we have to come to terms with this reality
 - Passing the responsibility to someone else for our kids, our responsibility as a spouse, or the call of making decisions as leaders does not wash our hands of guilt.
 - God has given us authority to be responsible.
 - If we claim that Jesus is our King, then we have to take the responsibility to allow Him to lead our lives.

Conclusion

- If only life were as simple as punching in the address and waiting for the exact directions!
 - How many of you are looking at the map today, with an idea of where you want to go, but uncertain as to how to get there?
 - Do you know if you are even pointed in the right direction?
- When setting a compass, you can begin to walk in the direction it is pointed to, however, along the way, it's good to stop and check your bearings again, to be sure that you are still walking in the right direction.
 - Life isn't simple, because it requires difficult decisions
 - However, those decision are opportunities for us to check our bearings, and set our compass in the right direction.
- Easter is not the destination, but it does point us in the right direction.
 - **John 14:1-6**
 - When Jesus raised from the dead, the way was clear for the disciples.
 - They knew the cross was not a sign of defeat, but of victory.
 - Truth had won, and it always will no matter the cost!
- You and I are in Pilate's position every day
 - We have the authority to believe and follow Jesus
 - Or, we have the authority to crucify him.
 - Are you a friend of Jesus or a foe?