

Luke 23:22-24; John 19:19-22 Pilate Capitulating/Insisting Apr. 2, 2025  
5th Wednesday of Lent @ Immanuel, Mercedes

INTRO: If it were not for his association with Jesus, how much to you suppose we'd know about Pontius Pilate, former governor of Judea? But from the little information we do have in the Bible, we can know something of his character and behavior. We can see a spineless Pilate on the one hand giving in (capitulating) to the mob that demanded that Jesus be crucified, but then stubbornly insisting that he would not change a few words on the title over Jesus on the cross.

## I. THE FACTS CONCERNING THIS CONTRAST

### A. Pilate insisted Jesus is innocent (*read Luke 23:22-24*)

1. he understood His accusers' motives!
  - a. Matt.22:18...knew it was out of envy...
  - b. knew Palm Sunday events; betrayal plans (embedded soldiers)
2. he had presided at Jesus' trial; weighed the evidence; cross examined
  - a. claimed kingship, but kingdom not of this world
  - b. repeatedly insisted Jesus was innocent, a 'just man'
3. he had heard his wife's message
  - a. Matt.27:19...sent word of dream; interrupting trial
  - b. she, too, called Jesus a 'righteous man'

### B. Pilate capitulated to the demands of chief priests & Pharisees

1. Pilate possessed absolute authority at Jerusalem
  - a. official ruler of all Judea; by Caesar's authority
  - b. with a Roman cohort to enforce it
2. but he gave in to some protesters
  - a. actually, chief priests and elders as agitators
  - b. he chose convenience over justice
  - c. in society, Derick Chauvin to appease BLM rioters in Minneapolis
  - d. in church, Paul Bode @ Melrose; Paul Biegner 'for the good of...'
3. Bode's career; Pilate ordered the **death** of a totally innocent man
  - a. knowingly, willfully, wrongly capitulating
  - b. trying symbolic hand washing to excuse himself from responsibility

### C. Pilate refused to change superscription (*read John 19:19-22*)

1. as requested by Jewish leaders
  - a. Pilate knew how to needle chief priests and elders
  - b. their minor request: "He **said**, I am the king of the Jews"
2. Pilate thus publicly proclaimed Jesus as King of the Jews
  - a. innocent, Messiah; but not as a personal confession of faith
  - b. more likely mocking the Son of David

(continued)

3. for all to see
  - a. near city; main road; Latin, Greek, Hebrew per Luke
  - b. **INRI** to this day

## II. CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM PILATE'S BEHAVIOR

### A. Pilate's actions were immoral and inconsistent

1. failing to do his duty, to administer justice
  - a. withstand false accusers; he is judge and executor
  - b. free the innocent, as per his duty
2. looked for easy way out (LCMS Dispute Resolution Panel)
  - a. don't rock the boat. corporation uber alles; step on fewest toes
  - b. or, don't get involved, when it was your duty to do so
3. standing firm at the wrong time!
  - a. life of innocent **One** vs. words on a superscription
  - b. why stand firm now? I don't know: guilt, power trip?

### B. God's word and God's plan must be fulfilled

1. Jesus' promises made/kept - Matt.20:18 Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day
2. but prophecy doesn't excuse Pilate's sinful acts
  - a. Matt.18:7 temptations must come...but woe...millstone
  - b. Matt.26:24 Son of Man must be...but woe...(re: Judas)
3. fulfillment accomplishes man's redemption
  - a. God's plan from eternity; use sinful Gentile ruler to sacrifice Son
  - b. enacting full payment for all sins of all sinners

### C. There is a lesson for us in all of this

1. confess our own sins...
  - a... of failing to stand up for what is clearly right
  - b... of stubbornly insisting on our way; or just for spite
2. acknowledge Jesus as Savior, God's promised King
  - a. not only righteous, but the promised Messiah
  - b. **my** Savior; also **Lord** of my-life (love Me, keep My comm.)
3. take a stand for justice and right
  - a. esp. fulfilling all our duties and responsibilities
  - b. seeking guidance and inspiration from God's revelation

CONCLUSION Teach us, Heavenly Father, to acknowledge our sins before You. Bless us, Jesus our Savior, with the assurance of Your grace and forgiveness. Move us, Holy Spirit, to stand firm in the truth we have learned from Your word. Amen.