

John 18:28 – 19:15 “The Irony of the Cross”

Read John 18:28 - 19:15

1. As an overview of this story how do you see both Pilate and the Jewish officials following the pattern of the kingdom of this world?
2. In the interaction between Jesus and Pilate in vs. 33 – 37 what do we learn about the nature of his kingdom (33-37)?

(Note that when Jesus' says his kingdom is not of this world, he is not being dualistic as if to say we have an earthly kingdom and a heavenly kingdom, but rather the pattern of my kingdom is different from the pattern of your kingdom)

3. (40) Barabbas means “son of the father”. The earliest texts of Matthew give his first name as Jesus. Mark tells (15:7) that he was arrested in the insurrection (terrorist activity against Rome). The word robber was used of a freedom fighter who would rob, pillage, and rape to further their cause. The officials are saying don't give us this Jesus son of the father, give us that Jesus son of the father – give us Jesus the terrorist. What does the irony here tell us about how they view kingdom and power?
4. (19:15) The officials charge Jesus with blasphemy – saying that he is the son of God – at the end they say – “we have no King but Caesar”. They are accusing Jesus then of the exact same things that they are guilty of – for which he is condemned to death. John Stott says that the heart of the human problem as the we “claim prerogatives that belong to God alone” and the nature of the divine solution is that “he accepts penalties that belong to us alone’. How is this scene an expression of both the heart of the human problem and the nature of the divine solution?
5. (19:14) John interrupts the dialogue to locate the moment of condemnation at the “day of preparation for Passover, the sixth hour”. At that very moment across town, in the temple, the Passover lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal. John is saying if you want to understand the meaning of the cross look no further than the Passover story. That first Passover the forces of darkness bearing the face of an Egyptian Pharaoh were defeated, the people set free to worship their God and be formed into a new people, a new kingdom. This Passover the forces of darkness bearing the face of high priests and Rome were defeated, the people set free to worship their God and be formed into a new people, a new kingdom. From the witness of the cross, and Jesus' conversation with Pilate, what does it look like practically to be formed into a new people, a new kingdom?