

A story is told of a boy who was constantly rebelling against his father. He was destroying his own life by his rebellion, but he refused to heed his father’s words. One day, the dad said to the boy, “I want to show you what you’re doing to your life. I’m going to put a wooden post in our front yard. Every time you rebel, I will put a nail in the post. Every time you obey, I will pull out a nail.” The first thought from the boy was, “I’m going to do everything I can to fill that post with nails.” And he did. In two months’ time, he filled that post with nails. But he also began to feel the damage he was doing to his own life and to his parents’ lives. With true remorse, the boy began to obey his father. One by one, the nails came out. When the last nail came out of the post, the boy broke down in tears. The father asked, “Son, why are you crying?” And the boy replied, “I got rid of the nails, but I can’t get rid of the holes.”

One of the most prominent universal principles of life is that when we reject God’s authority, we will experience the consequences of pain, suffering and death. This is the way our most sovereign, holy, omnipotent God created the universe and the world and everyone in it. The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, tells us this in Proverbs 24:21-22: “*My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?*” Brothers and sisters - this is not new news to us. This is what happened right after God created the universe and the world and the first two human beings on earth. Though created by God in the image of God to know God and love God and live with God and serve God - we chose instead to reject our dependence on God and our place in the family of God - by the sin of rebelling and rejecting the authority of God – with the consequences being untold pain, suffering and death.

The Word of God tells us that the consequences of our rejection of God’s authority even affected all of creation. In Romans 8:20-23 the apostle Paul tells us that we are *groaning together*” with the “*whole creation*” - in pain and suffering and death - because we are sons and daughters of Adam and Eve’s rebellion and rejection of God in the Garden of Eden. This is why God the Father sent Jesus Christ His son into the world to die a sacrificial death on the cross in our place for our sins, providing a way for us to be forgiven and redeemed and restored back into the relationship with God that we were created for – so we might truly worship God, by joyfully embrace and humbly submit to the authority of God, so we might truly know God and truly love God and truly live with God and truly serve God.

Our difficulty with the issue of authority has always been with us - *and it still is today*. We understand the word “authority” and we know what it is to be in authority and to be under authority – *and that’s why we struggle with it*. “Authority” is a word that is loaded and packed full of significance. It denotes permission, power, privilege, rule, control, domination. Despite the fact that we naturally push back against authority, the truth is, our world is filled with authority. We face it in our families, as fathers and mothers are given authority over their children. We face it in our schools and in our workplaces and in our churches. We face it in terms of our governments that are responsible to make laws and enforce them. We are all people who are under authority, and in some cases we have some authority, as well. And so we get it; we know what it means to have authority and be under authority. *But the true bottom-line issue is - we still struggle with is the issue of God’s authority* – whether it be in our own personal lives or in the world that we live in. This is why in Romans 13:1-2 the apostle Paula wrote: “*For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.*”

Jesus’ ended up on the cross because of humanity’s rejection of God’s authority. We saw this begin at in Matthew at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, after Jesus had laid out the principles of the Kingdom of God, which dismantled the false religion of Judaism and ended with an invitation to enter the narrow way by the narrow gate: “*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribe*” (Matt 7:28-29).

Note that the people were astonished not just at his teaching - but also that he taught them, *“as one who had authority.”* They weren’t used to people who were their own authority. They were used to people who quoted someone else or who identified with somebody else or who drew their authority from someone else. But Jesus spoke as one who Himself – as God - is an authority. Jesus stunned them again in Matthew 9:6-8, when he told them he had the *“authority on earth to forgive sins”* - an authority they understood that belonged only to the one true God. In John 1:12, John declared Jesus’ authority to save – which is authority to give life, spiritual life and salvation. In the Matthew 10:1, it becomes apparent that Jesus had the authority of God over all the forces of hell and the power of demons. In John 5:27, Jesus declared he had been given the *“authority to execute judgment.”* In John 10:18 he said he had been given the *“authority”* to *“lay down”* his life, and the *“authority to take it up again”* – which is God’s authority over death and authority over life. And in John 17:2 Jesus said he had *“authority over all flesh”* (mankind). Jesus is not under anyone but God – and he has been given God’s authority because his is God. Jesus re-affirmed his authority as God after his death and his resurrection in Matthew 28:18 when he proclaimed: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me!”*

This is why Jesus ended up on a cross. He is always the prime target for those who rebel against and reject God’s authority, *because Jesus is God.* We will see that truth in our text for today– and we will also see how Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sin, by taking upon himself the consequences of the pain and suffering and death for our sin, providing a way for us to be forgiven, redeemed and restored back into the relationship with God that we were created for, so we might know God, now and forever.

Our text opens in the context of Jesus having undergone the first two phases of his illegal religious trial. The gospel of John tells us that after Jesus was arrested, he was taken to Annas, who had been the high priest. Annas illegally questioned Jesus, illegally tried to get Jesus to bear testimony against himself, and had even had Jesus struck, which was also against the law. Since Annas was not getting anywhere with Jesus, he sent Jesus to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was the current High Priest. In Matthew 26:57-68 we then read that Caiaphas, in turn called an illegal assembly of the Sanhedrin and then illegally questioned Jesus; and illegally heard false testimony against Jesus and illegally accused Jesus and illegally passed judgement on him, and illegally allowed Jesus to be mocked and abused.

*When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. Matt 27:1-2*

As we open Matthew 27, we read that *“when morning came”* the Jewish council reconvened in the morning and delivered the official verdict to *“put”* Jesus *“to death”* - so that people could not say that their hastily called night meeting was unlawful. What this means is that they *“took counsel”* not in the sense that they were deciding if they would condemn Jesus or not - *but in the sense* of how best to proceed in killing him. They had problems to contend with now that they had condemned Jesus. There were many people now in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover who believed that Jesus was a prophet from God – and the chief priests and elders were afraid that the people might riot if they did anything to Jesus. In order to keep that from happening, they had to somehow give integrity to that what was happening to Jesus was proper and that they were not to blame. So even though everything they had done up to this point had been done illegally - now they wanted to do at least two things legally.

First, they called a meeting of the full Sanhedrin of *“all the chief priests and the elders of the people”* together - so that Jesus’ condemnation could be confirmed during the day when it was legal to do so. The fact that their condemnation was still illegal since their private meeting at Caiaphas’ house instead of publicly in the Great Hall, was of minor importance to them. It also did not bother them that they were violating the three-day waiting period for pronouncing a death sentence, and that they would also skip the mandatory fasting. Their interest was not justice, but getting rid of Jesus as quickly as possible without causing a riot. We are really good at ignoring truth when we reject God’s authority.

Second, they deferred the death sentence to the Roman authorities. Since Israel was occupied by Rome they had lost quite a few areas of authority including being able to carry out a death sentence. Capital punishment could only be legally carried out by Rome. But we must not presume for even one moment that these Jewish religious hypocrites were concerned about Rome's legal rights. The chief priests and the Sanhedrin wanted Rome to be involved because it would totally remove the responsibility for Jesus' death from their shoulders onto the shoulders of Rome. Rome's power would then put a stop to any riot that might be attempted. Rome would become the unwitting accomplice in their plans.

Their plan to use Roman power might not have worked if someone else other than Pilate had been Governor. Pontius Pilate became the fifth Roman governor over Palestine some seven years earlier. But Pilate was already in trouble, and if too many more problems occurred he was in danger of losing his position, and in fact did lose it three years later. And so those who had condemned Jesus counted on being able to intimidate Pilate. He had been ruthless in many ways and certainly was responsible for his share of murders, yet Pilate had shown early on that if enough pressure was applied, he would back down. When Pilate first came to Jerusalem, he had his soldiers bring with them their standards bearing the emperor's image. The Jews considered this to be an abomination and demanded they be removed. No other governor had done this before. Pilate threatened to kill anyone who objected, but they called his bluff and he backed down. And so they were taking Jesus to Pilate not because they respected Pilate's authority, but because they wanted to use Pilate's authority for their own purposes in keeping the people from causing problems when they found out Jesus was being put to death. And so they took Jesus, *"and they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor."*

*Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." Matthew 27:3–10*

Throughout history there has been much discussion about verses 3-4 regarding why Judas would suddenly feel remorse about what was happening to Jesus. Some have said that Judas did not really expect them to condemn Jesus to death, yet it was well known that this is exactly what they wanted to do (Matthew 26:3,4). Others have argued that the sight of Jesus being condemned and led away was more than even his conscience could stand, and he was filled sorrow over the guilt. Others have even tried to make a case that Judas actually repented, but Judas was well aware earlier what he was doing, and Satan had entered into him while he was doing it (John 13:27). Regardless about what any of us might think here, we do know the Holy Spirit's power in giving the apostle Matthew the right words to express God's intent of revealing what was in Judas' heart. In this we know that the original word in the Greek that Matthew used here expresses "remorse and regret" rather than "repentance." In fact there is a different word for "repent" in the Greek – and that's not the word that Matthew used here.

The original Greek word that is often translated into the English as *"repented himself"* or *"changed his mind"* in Matthew 27:3, indicates not a sorrow for sin that leads to a change of mind and action, but rather a regret at being caught, a remorse that leads to despair. This reflects the universal principle that pain and suffering and death that comes as a consequence of rebelling against and rejecting the authority of God. This is the ultimate reality of *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 3:23). Judas' response was one of remorse and regret, rather than repentance. We know Peter truly repented because Jesus restored him. But Judas did not repent, which led him to seek death by suicide.

Judas had sorrow, but it was not the sorrow of repentance. I'm sure Judas felt bad, really bad, about what was happening to Jesus. But there is no element of a corresponding change of heart, mind and soul that goes with repentance. This is the sorrow we see in the world; a sorrow for what has happened or is happening - but which is sorrow that is self centered. Like Cain in Genesis 4:14, there was sorrow that he had killed Abel only to the extent that he was now being banished and that someone might take vengeance upon him. His sorrow was completely self centered. So it was with Judas - and is with us in our world. Judas felt remorse at seeing Jesus condemned, and now in the procession that would take him to Pilate, Judas tries to return the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders who had hired him - because it has now become blood money, and Judas wants nothing to do with it. This is not a noble act. He surely knew Deuteronomy 27:25: "*Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.*" At best this is a feeble effort to calm his conscience by returning the price of his betrayal.

Judas confessed: "*I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.*" This was a confession of personal sin, as well as a condemnation on the chief priest and elders because such a confession should have halted the procession and forced it back for a re-hearing of the evidence against Jesus. But the false religious leaders had no interest in justice, only in getting rid of Jesus regardless of how many laws they had violated to do so. Take note also that Judas confessed his sin to the chief priests and elders. Judas's confession would have been good if he had brought it to the right person. Instead of coming to Jesus and confessing to him and asking his forgiveness - he went to those who had unjustly condemned Jesus. If Judas had been genuinely repentant, his greatest concern would have been for the One whom he had betrayed and offended. Instead, Judas only had a self-centered regret and remorse and went to those he thought could remove his responsibility, if they would take back the money. But they *could not* remove his responsibility and they *would not* take the money back. Judas continued to reject the One who could have forgiven him and granted him life *for* those who would scorn him and leave him to die.

Judas had sold Jesus for the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32) and in desperation, he threw the money on the temple floor and left. For Judas, this throwing the coins, with all the frustration that was pent up inside him toward the sanctuary, the holy place where only the priests could enter – was an act born out of the treatment he had just received. If the chief priests would not take the blood money *willingly*, then Judas would force them to have to pick it up from off the floor of the holy place *unwillingly*. This was not an act of charity, but an act of spite. Judas most likely wanted them to feel the guilt he had, by forcing them to handle the blood money. The Law would not permit the use of this kind of tainted money for temple purposes (Deuteronomy 23:18) and so here again we see these false religious leaders being careful to observe the Law even while they were guilty of breaking it. They used the money to buy a "*potter's field*" where Jewish strangers who died could be properly buried. From here Judas went off by himself, brooded over his terrible crime, and hanged himself. Acts 1:18–19 tell us his body was not discovered for some days, and because it became bloated, he fell and his "*bowels gushed out.*"

*Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.* Matthew 27:11-14

Now Matthew takes us to a conversation between Pilate and Jesus – as they stand before the chief priests and elders who had brought Jesus to the Roman governor over Palestine. The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of three crimes. In Luke 23:2 we read that they said: "*We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.*" These were definitely political charges, the kind that a Roman governor could handle. Pilate focused on the third charge—that Jesus claimed to be a king—because this was a definite threat to Rome. If he could deal with this revolutionary properly, Pilate could please the Jews and impress the Emperor at the same time. "*Are you the King of the Jews?*" Pilate asked. To which Jesus responded: "*You have said so.*"

The gospel of John fleshes this out even more. In John 18:34-37 we read that Jesus then asked Pilate: “‘Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.’” Pilate’s question and response revealed he was thinking of “kingship” in the Roman sense. So if Jesus was not that kind of a king; if his kingdom was not of this world, that he had no armies; that his followers did not fight – then Pilate had nothing to worry about. Pilate was convinced Jesus was not a dangerous revolutionary.

But that did not quite calm the waters. We read that when the “*chief priests and elders*” heard this they responded by continuing to accuse him, so much so, that Jesus “*gave no answer.*” The normal reaction of any prisoner in this sort of situation is to either deny the accusations being made against them, or start pleading for mercy. But Jesus remained silent. The evidence had been presented and the verdict had been pronounced. But Jesus did not say a thing. He was God. His authority reigned in all of this.

Luke 23:5 tells us as the Jews kept hurling their accusations, they mentioned that Jesus was from *Galilee*. Luke tells us that Pilate jumped at this chance to transfer the problem of Jesus to someone else. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of *Galilee* was in Jerusalem, so Pilate sent Jesus to him. Luke 23 tells us that Herod questioned Jesus for some time, mostly out of his own curiosity, but Jesus “*made no answer.*” The Jews present continued to hurl all sorts of accusations at Jesus. But Herod could not find any guilt in Jesus. And so he finally got tired of the whole thing – he had Jesus mocked by his soldiers and then Herod had a royal robe put on Jesus before sending Him back to Pilate. It was then that Pilate called the chief priest and elders and told them that neither he nor Herod could find Jesus guilty of any the charges brought against him. But Pilate began to see he was trouble again. If another riot occurred or major complaint was lodged with Caesar, he would surely lose his position and possibly his life. And since the Jews had forced Pilate to back down on one of his threats before, they were no longer intimidated by him. So it is here that even though Pilate had already pronounced judgment that Jesus was not guilty, the Jewish religious leaders simply started making more and more accusations.

*Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” Matthew 27:15-23*

Here Pilate found himself between the proverbial rock and a hard place – and he struggled to have the strength of character to act according to the verdict he had already reached. He wanted to release Jesus but he still wanted to appease the Jews. And so he decided that answer was to follow a tradition that had developed over time of releasing one prisoner in the place of another. But instead of selecting an unknown prisoner, Pilate deliberately chooses the most notorious prisoner he had, Barabbas – who was a robber, a murderer, and an insurrectionist. He was not only a threat to Rome but to the people themselves. Surely the religious leaders and the crowds wouldn’t want someone like Barabbas to be released in comparison to Jesus who had never hurt anyone. But Pilate was wrong. Even though Jesus had healed the sick and raised the dead, the people rejected Jesus and chose a murderer to be released. But this still was according to God’s sovereign plan and with the approval of the authority of God. It is not by coincidence that the name Barabbas – “bar-abbas” - literally means “son of the father.”

Pilate also felt pressure from his wife: *“While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, ‘Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.’”* The Romans put a lot of weight in dreams, and Pilate would have taken this message from his wife very seriously. Pilate was under pressure in both directions. Justice and his wife’s dream pressured him to release Jesus - while the Jews and the crowds and fear for his position pressured him to condemn Jesus. Pilate knew the religious leaders were envious of Jesus, but he did not know it was as strong as it was. While Pilate was getting the message from his wife, the false religious leaders took advantage of the time to incite the crowd that had gathered, to the point of when Pilate asked them: *“What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”* and the crowd cried out, *“Let him be crucified!”*

Pilate was shocked at their cry to crucify Jesus. *“Why? What evil has he done?”* he asked them. But they shouted all the more, *“Let him be crucified!”* In the midst of fears and the chaos of the crowds, Pilate made his decision, which we read of in John 19:10-13 as he asked Jesus: *“‘You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.’ From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.’ So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat.”* In hearing the threat of the authority of Caesar, Pilate relented and rejected the truth of authority of God.

*So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Matthew 27:24-26*

And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting - he bowed to the authority of the mob, because the crowd was now a mob ruled by mob mentality. Mobs are not sensible because reason and logic have no place in them. Pilate’s question made no sense to them. A mob does not need a reason to do anything, it simply follows the direction of those with the loudest voice as to whatever way it goes. It is fueled by blind emotion, not reason and logic. Pilate had kept trying to defer the question, to pass it off to someone else, to appease the crowd if possible. Earlier he had offered to scourge Jesus if that would satisfy them, but it would not. Now Pilate was reduced to uphold his earlier verdict and carry out justice by releasing Jesus or he could do the will of the mob.

Pilate turned out to be a coward and he yielded to the will of the crowd, but before he did, he wanted to make it clear again what he thought about all of this. He takes a hand-washing ritual from the Jewish law found in Deuteronomy 21:6-7 and uses it for his own purpose to wash his hands of Jesus’ innocent blood – to which the mob declares: *“His blood be on us and on our children!”* Pilate thought this would transfer the guilt to the people and absolve him, but of course it could not. In fact, his guilt was compounded by this because by doing so, he again proclaims Jesus to be innocent. His statement also shows that he has the power to do what is right, but that he is refusing to do so. He is willingly turning over his authority to a mob. He would not do it personally, but he would let the mob do it.

The people willingly accepted the responsibility, but they would only do so for a short time. In the Bible we see that by Acts 5:28 the same people are indignant that the preaching of the apostles was accusing them of being responsible for the blood of Jesus. They no longer wanted to have that responsibility, but it was theirs and they couldn’t get rid of it. Pilate then carries out his final decision to do what he thinks will save himself at the expense of Jesus’ life. Pilate had made an effort to be just and save Jesus, but once he caved into the will of the crowd, Pilate did not give Jesus any consideration or compassion. And so Pilate let the normal course of events of a crucifixion take place. *“Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified”* (Matthew 27:26).

The scourging was part of the punishment of being condemned to die. In some ways it was a benefit because it usually shortened the length of time a person could endure the horror of crucifixion. The whip used for scourging was made of several long pieces of leather attached to a handle of some sort. At the end of each piece of leather a piece of stone, bone, metal, pottery shard or other sharp object was tied. The victim had his hands tied to a pole over his head. Often there would be a scourger on both the right and left side who took turns lashing the victim. It would not take long before the back and sides were opened up exposing internal organs which would soon be lacerated too. It was not uncommon for men to die of the scourging before they were crucified. How badly Jesus was scourged is unknown, but it was severe enough that He could not carry his own cross a short time later.

*Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him. Matthew 27:27-31*

All four gospels record this wretched event. The fullest account is found in John 19:1-16, where the actual order of events which took place is given. Putting the accounts together, it seems that Pilate himself observed and supervised this abuse of Jesus. His motivation was to degrade Jesus and to make his claim as a King of the Jews to be outrageous. It is most probable that Pilate hoped by this means to get off without actually having to order the crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew introduces this idea of crucifixion in Matthew 27:26, but John 19:16 makes clear that the order for crucifixion came at the end of the mockery rather than at the beginning. Matthew is simply recording the facts here.

That Jesus was submissive to this entire procedure is the measure of his total submission to the will of God. Here, the Lord of glory, capable of destroying anyone who put a hand upon him, allowed himself to be abused in this painful and humiliating way. Although the Scriptures are graphic, even they state only the essentials. The prophet Isaiah anticipated this when he stated in Isaiah 52:14 that Jesus' *"appearance was marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind."* Our Lord Jesus was beaten to a pulp about the head and the body until he was almost unrecognizable.

Few incidents in history more clearly illustrate the brutality in the desperately wicked heart of fallen humanity that was inflicted on Jesus the Son of God – a consequence of fallen humanity's rebellion against and rejection of the authority of God over and in their lives. The mockery of the crown of thorns, painful as well as humiliating; being stripped naked in front of the large crowd; the mockery of the purple robe, intended to represent a kingly garment; his being spit upon and beaten over the head repeatedly, as well as the contemptuous worship testified to the unbelief and wretchedness of the actors in this situation. It was only after enduring all of this in complete silence, except for the conversation between Christ and Pilate recorded in John 19:8-11, that Jesus was finally led away to the crucifixion.

One of the most prominent universal principles of life is that when we reject God's authority, we will experience the consequences of pain, suffering and death. This is what Jesus did for us. This is why Jesus went to the cross. This is how Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. This is why God the Father sent Jesus Christ His son into the world to die a sacrificial death on the cross in our place for our sins - providing a way for us to be forgiven and redeemed and restored back into the relationship with God that we were created for – so we might worship the authority of God, causing us to truly know God and truly love God and truly live with God and truly serve God. This our joyful hope! *"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him!"* (Colossians 1:21-22).

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Pastor Leland Botzet

Arrowsmith Baptist Church