

## **The Judge is Judged**

(Mark 15:1-15)

(preached 1/24/16; Sunday AM)

### **Introduction**

Last July, a most unusual trial was held in Philadelphia, Penn..

A man by the name of Willis Berry was on trial for theft and criminal conflict-of-interest.

What made the case unusual was that Berry was a former judge in Philadelphia.

For 16 years, Berry served as a judge in the court of common pleas...

And had presided over hundreds of criminal cases...

But last summer, he found himself on trial before another judge and jury.

The charges stem from the fact that Berry ran a small business out of the courthouse.

In fact, he used his secretary and even his staff to help him manage his real estate business while they were on the clock being paid by the city.

So, the judge became the accused, and he went to trial facing 7 years in prison and fines of up to \$100,000 or more...

What a strange thing it was to see a judge on trial...

To see a man who sat elevated in the court now sitting in the seat of someone being accused of a crime...

That is what makes the passage that we will look at today all the more interesting...

Today we are going to be in Mark 15: 1-15.

Jesus is on trial before Pilate...

Jesus' life hangs in the balance...

What will Pilate as judge decide to do?

What does he think about Jesus?

What will his verdict be?

If you have ever heard a sermon preached from these verses, the title is usually something like...

Jesus on Trial before Pilate...

or Jesus' Day in Court..

However, this morning, I want us to see this passage for what it is...

Jesus isn't on trial here...

Pilate is...

I have entitled this message....

When the Judge is Judged...

Because that is exactly what we will see this morning in the text before us...

Pilate may have been Roman judge for years, but on this day, he was the one on trial for his life...

And the same is true today for everyone in here...

When you come to church, you aren't trying to decide if you should believe the Bible or not...

When you listen to what Jesus says, you aren't trying to determine if he is real or not...

No one sits as judge over Jesus...

No one sits as judge over the truthfulness of God's word...

What is actually happening every time you hear the Bible taught and every time you read the words of Jesus is that you are put on trial...

Jesus IS real.

Jesus IS the truth...

The Bible IS God's word..

You don't sit in judgment on them; they sit in judgment on you..

Pilate may have been wearing a judge's robe and carrying a law book...

And Jesus may have been bloodied and beaten, but I assure you the one on trial was Pilate and not Jesus...

And you may have entered into here this morning with a PhD and the IQ of a genius....

But it isn't up to you this morning to decide if Jesus is real or not...

He is real; the only question is....Are you?

So, let's get into Mark 15 this morning...

We aren't going to read all 15 verses this morning...

This is a dramatic scene that we will let unfold in front of our eyes...

And we are going to take the vantage point of Pilate as we move through these verses...

So, let's begin in verse 1 of chapter 15...

I have entitled this first section....

## **I. Pilate Considered Christ (1-5)**

Let's look at verse 15...

***1 Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole [a]Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.***

Let's us get our minds back into the time frame and scene of what is happening..

In Mark 15 , we are in the final hours of Jesus' life early on Friday morning..

Thursday was a long day...

Jesus and the disciples made preparations for Passover Thursday morning and then ate the Passover Thursday after sunset...

The meal lasted until midnight or later...

After the meal, Jesus led the disciples (minus Judas) out to the Mount of Olives to an olive tree garden called Gethsemane.

It was in that garden that Judas led the authorities to arrest Jesus some time after midnight...

Jesus was then taken to the home of the high priest named Caiaphas to stand before a sham of a trial...

The trial ended with a guilty verdict and ended some time before 3 am...

Because we know that Peter denied Jesus before the cock crowed, which happened at 3 am...

So, some time after 3 am, we find ourselves coming to Mark 15...

Verse 1 says that it was early in the morning which fits with Jewish time...

They considered the morning as the time from 3-6 am...

So, Jesus leaves his trial before the Jewish leaders and they have a meeting in verse 1 and decide to take him to Pilate...

Pilate was the Roman governor for the area around Jerusalem....

Remember the Jews did not have their own nation...

They were under Roman authority, which led to a problem...

The Jewish religious had found Jesus guilty of a crime deserving death according to their laws...

But they did not have the authority to put Jesus to death...

Only the Romans could issue a death sentence...

So, the Jewish leaders take Jesus to Pilate...

They don't care about what he says...

As long as he allows them to put Jesus to death, they really don't care what else he does....

In fact, they hated Pilate and the Roman authority...

But they were willing to endure him as long as they got what they wanted, and they wanted Jesus dead...

He was threat to their religion, but more important to them, Jesus was threat to their pocketbooks and their popularity among the people...

They loved the attention of the people who saw them as men who were real close to God....

And all Jesus had done was expose the fact that they were as far from God as humanly possible..

And there is but one solution to someone who speaks the truth.....

Silence Him at all costs.

So they head to Pilate to get the death sentence they always wanted...

When they arrive, Pilate has some questions for Jesus...

Verses 2-5...

***2 Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He \*answered him, "It is as you say."  
3 The chief priests began to accuse Him [b]harshly. 4 Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, "Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!" 5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.***

Mark doesn't give us the entire conversation between Pilate and Jesus...

If you want to get all the details of this trial, you'll need to go to the other gospel writers...

But the point of this conversation is that Pilate was brought face to face with Jesus Christ...

HE questioned the identity of Jesus, and Jesus affirmed his thoughts on what Pilate had heard about him..

He is the King of the Jews....

While the trial was going on, the Jews stood around accusing Jesus of crimes...

But Jesus remained silent to their attacks...

To the point that he even amazed Pilate with his silence...

The question that comes to you out of these verses is this...

What do you think about Jesus Christ...

Do you see him as the King of the Jews and as the King of kings?

Or do you just see him as a king on Sunday, when you come to come see him for a few hours...

And then depart and go out to live your life the way you want to....

When you consider Jesus Christ, what do you see?

If he just someone that your mama and daddy believed in and you guess its a good idea to keep in contact with him just in case...

Or do you see Him as the Lord of everything you do every moment of your life?

Jesus is not just a thing to make part of your life...

Like you have a job....

A hobby....

A home....

A relationship...

And a Jesus...

You can't put Jesus in a corner of your life and got to Him when you need Him...

He is the Master of all of your life, or He is the master of none of it...

When Pilate considered Jesus, he heard the truth but other things were more important....

Let's find out what those other things were in verses 6-11...

## **II. Pilate Considered the Crowd (6-15a)**

Let's read verse 6...

***6 Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.***

Public relations is so important...

Companies spend millions of dollars each year to make the public think they are worthy of their business..

The Roman Empire was the king of public relations...

In order to keep the people in the empire happy, they often did outrageous things to keep the peace..

In Israel, it meant releasing a Jewish prisoner during the Passover....

Regardless of how bad the crime, the Romans wanted to be viewed as a generous government, so

they had a tradition of setting a Jewish prisoner free..

On this Passover, there were a couple candidates....

Jesus and a man named Barrabas...

Verse 7....

***7 The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.***

From what we know, Barrabas was a man who had led an uprising against Rome..

It was very common for Jews to gather some small groups and try to overthrow Rome...

Most of the insurrections were put down very easily by the Romans...

But people often died, and Rome quickly punished any Jew who was caught alive...

Barrabas and a couple others had been captured and imprisoned for the most recent uprising...

They had received the death sentence and were awaiting execution...

However, the Passover tradition of releasing one prisoner offered hope...

If only they could get out of it...

So, the crowd began to call for the release of one prisoner....

Verse 8....

***8 The crowd went up and began asking him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.***

So here we are, Pilate thinks he holds the life of two men in his hands...

So, he begins to play a little game in verse 9...

***9 Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.***

Pilate has no love for the Jewish religious leaders...

He knows that they are trying to kill an innocent man...

He knows that they are filled with jealousy toward Jesus...

Now, picture the scene...

Jesus is on a platform with Pilate in the middle and Barrabbas on the opposite side...

He has already been beaten and spit on...

I am sure he is bleeding and battered from his time in the care of the guards...

Jesus looked nothing like a king at this point, yet Pilate uses the phrase “the king of the Jews” to point out how awful their king looked....

He was simply mocking Jesus at this point...

So, the question is thrown to the crowd...

And to make sure that Jesus isn't the one released, the religious leaders go to working the crowd...

Verse 11...

***11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.***

The crowd that was so eager to see Jesus earlier in the week is now asking that he be put to death...

However, Pilate wants to make sure that they are not interested in having Jesus released, so he asks this in verse 12...

***12 Answering again, Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?”***

Their answer was clear...

Verse 13...

***13 They shouted [c]back, “Crucify Him!” 14 But Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him!”***

The crowd has no interest in saving Jesus' life

In their minds, Barabbas was acting more like their king than Jesus...

At least Barabbas was trying to overthrow Rome...

And let me make a comment here...

This shows how shallow people think...

Jesus had proved himself to be God in the flesh over and over...

He had healed people all the land to prove that HE was God...

He had performed miracles in nature to prove that he was God..

He has taught with authority and clarity and power...

Yet, people are so shallow in what they want...

Jesus was giving them eternal truth, but all they wanted was a way out of Roman rule...

How sad it is when government becomes more important to a people than God...

Jesus was offering eternal salvation, but the people wanted only temporary comfort...

So they called for the release of man who fought the government...

Rather than for the release of man on whose shoulders all governments will one day rest...

So, the crowd is calling for the release of Barabbas...

Verse 15...

***15 Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them ....***

Pilate had come face to face with Jesus....

Pilate had determined that Jesus was innocent...

But in the end, Pilate did what so many people do with Jesus...

They discard him for fear of the crowd...

Though Mark doesn't tell us, Pilate was on thin ice in Jerusalem....

The Roman government preserved peace at all costs...

And Pilate had a history of inciting violence in Israel...

In fact, the Jews had almost rioted on previous occasions because of Pilate...

He could not afford another slip up or he would be out of a job...

That is why he went with the crowd...

It was the easiest way to keep the peace and to keep his job...

And when you don't see Jesus for who He truly is,  
you can dump him off at the curb whenever you  
need to...

So many people refuse to embrace Jesus Christ  
because it will cause problems for them with the  
crowd...

For some, to embrace Christ means to lose all their  
friends who tempt them to sin...

For some, to embrace Christ means that they have to  
end unholy relationships they are in...

For some, to embrace Christ means that they have to  
give up jobs or family or even their own pride...

And for most, it is easier to go with the crowd than  
to stand alone with Jesus...

Don't be like most people today...

The crowd is on the broad road that leads to  
destruction..

Many find that road and they stay on it because they  
figure...

How can all these people be wrong?

But the truth is this...

They are all wrong...

And its not just a simple mistake, it a mistake that will lead the crowd straight to hell...

Today is the day to take the narrow way...

Though few find the narrow gate, it leads to life and life everlasting..

Pilate had met Jesus, heard form Jesus and determined that he was innocent...

But in the end, he joined the crowd on the road to destruction that so many are on...

Don't listen to the crowd today....

Listen to the Word of God...

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through Me."

Jesus said, "Repent and believe the gospel."

The world wants to crucify Christ.

You need to bow before Him as Lord and Savior.

There is but one half of a verse to look at...

Pilate Considered Christ, and then Pilate  
Considered the Crowd...

And here is all ended...

### **III. Pilate Crucified the King (15b)**

Look at the end of verse 15...

***“...and after having Jesus scourged, he handed  
Him over to be crucified.”***

There are but two choices of what to do with Jesus  
Christ...

You can repent and trust in Him to save you...

Or you can reject Him and trust in your own  
knowledge and understanding of the world...

Pilate did to Jesus what so many do to Jesus..

He used Him for his own benefit and then sent him  
to his own death....

In some ways, I admire Pilate...

At least he was clear in how he viewed Jesus...

He gave him a fair hearing but didn't think enough of him to protect Him from crucifixion...

It seems like so many today can't make up their minds about Christ....

They speak of their love for Him, but live in such a way that betrays his commands for their life...

They come near to Him, but walk away when HE asks for their obedience...

They want to be near to him but only on their terms and their conditions...

If that is you this morning, may i remind you that you can't serve two masters....

You can't serve both Jesus and your sinful nature...

Today is the day to settle your view of Jesus Christ....

If you believe he is truly God's Son who came to die for your sins, then trust in Him with your whole life...

Put your hand to the plow and don't look back...

Honor him, worship and obey him till you last breath...

But if you don't see him as Lord, stop using Christ to your advantage...

Stop throwing his name around like he's your best friend and then live like you are God's enemy.,..

Today is the day to come to Christ or to crucify Him...

There is no other choice..

Jesus is not on trial today.

You are.

You don't sit in judgment on Christ today...

He sits in judgment on you.

You are guilty.

The only hope of acquittal is found in your view of Jesus Christ...

You will either repent and trust in Christ as Lord and Savior....

Or you will reject Him as Lord and then face him as your judge...

Pilate rejected Jesus Christ.

One day, Jesus Christ will reject Pilate, and that decision will be final...

## **Conclusion**

Let me end the story of the Philadelphia judge who went on trial...

The trial began, and the prosecution laid out a clear case against the judge...

The facts were clear...

Several witnesses came forward who lived in houses owned by the judge...

They testified that they often drop off rent payments to the judges' secretary during working hours...

His own secretary testified that she often spent 10 hours a week doing administrative work for his real estate business from her office at the city courthouse.

Staff came forward and testified that he sent them to work on and repair plumbing and electrical problems at homes owned by the judge when they were on the clock being paid by the city...

The case was clear.

His guilt was clear..

When it came time to offer a defense...

The judge never denied the facts.

He just said that his staff and secretary were and at him and wanted him to get in trouble..

He bought forth plenty of character witnesses who testified how good of a person he was...

But he never contested the clear facts of the case...

The defense rested and the jury deliberated for only 90 minutes before finding the judge guilty.

After the verdict, Berry pointed to all the good he had done and claimed that all of his charitable work should be taken into account..

I may have been found guilty but I have done a lot for this city an the people who live here...

It was my hope that people would see that my goodness outweighs my crimes...

That will be the cries of many people on judgment day.

People who have rejected Christ will try to point out their good deeds to God in hopes of getting into heaven...

Pilate may try that...

He may say, "Well, I did believe that Jesus was innocent."

Doesn't that count for something?

The truth of the Scriptures is that nothing counts in your trial before God except what you did with His Son while you lived on this earth..

You will either be in the group with Pilate and the crowd calling for Jesus' crucifixion..

Or you will be in the group who repented and believed upon Jesus as Lord in this life...

You are on trial today.

What have you with Christ and is it evident in your life?

Let us pray.