

Guilt - John 19:1-16
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

How do you deal with feelings of guilt and shame? In Shakespear's tragedy *MacBeth*, the main character spends much of the story dealing with the depth of his guilt. At the evil request of three witches, MacBeth murdered King Duncan of Scotland. At one point in the story we find him trying to wash his hands, and although they are seemingly clean, he looks at them and continues to see blood, and even claims that all the water in Neptune's ocean cannot make them clean. Guilt is a reality of the human experience, and it runs deep. Some in the psychological world tell us that guilt is pathological and we need to rid ourselves of it rather than letting ourselves be defined by it. We find ways to divert guilt. We can blame shift, deny, or just cover over our guilt. But it still remains.

Our text today is wrought with irony. As John masterfully wrote this story, he intends for us to see deep themes about God, Christ, and ourselves. In the midst of the trial of Jesus, Pilate, who is the Roman Governor consistently tells the Jews that he cannot find guilt in Jesus (John 18:39, 19:4, 6). In a trial, when a person is found to have no guilt, the response should be to set the person free. Imagine a trial where the jury pronounces a prisoner "not guilty" but then the judge sentences him to spend the rest of life in prison. This is exactly what Pilate does. After the first pronouncement he hands him over to soldiers to be whipped and then beaten up and mocked. He hoped that would appease the angry crowd, but it did not, so eventually he announces the innocence of Jesus but sends Him away to be crucified in spite of the verdict.

The irony is that everyone in the story is guilty, so deeply guilty that they deserve the fate of Jesus. Furthermore, since Jesus is the divine Son of God, they deserve the full blown wrath of God. Pilate condemns an innocent man to keep peace and protect his power. Judas betrayed his leader and friend, selling him out for thirty pieces of silver. The Jewish leaders want Jesus dead because their own power and popularity are waning in the shadow of Jesus. Peter denied even knowing his best friend out of fear, going as far as cursing the name of Jesus. Barabbas is just flat out a terrorist, and the cross Jesus dies on was already standing in wait of this miserably excuse for humanity. And the soldiers take out their rage on the Jewish people by abusing Jesus, beating him senseless, and then putting a horrible crown of thorns on his head, and a purple robe on Jesus mangled back. They are all guilty! Shamefully guilty. Yet, John's purpose is not for us to look at them in disgust, but to realize that we are them, and to find ourselves in the story. Hymn writer Horatio Bonar wrote these words that capture John's message:

Twas I that shed the sacred blood;
I nailed him to the tree;
I crucified the Christ of God;
I joined the mockery
Of all that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude
I recognize my own
Around the cross the throng I see,
Mocking the Sufferer's groan;
Yet still my voice it seems to be
As if I mocked alone.

Maybe the reason we feel guilty is because we know down deep in our hearts that we are guilty. Maybe guilt is not an irrational response, but an honest assessment of ourselves and something God put in us that cries out about our need for redemption. If our guilt drives us to depression, low self-worth, anger, blame-shifting, or other self-focused forms of dealing with it, then our response to guilt just compounds the guilt. But when we see our guilt in light of God's holiness, and then look at the one person in this story that is not guilty, then we can find a remedy. The point of this story is that our guilt runs deep because our sin is worse than we believe. It has left us broken within, under the pronouncement of guilt from God, and our sin has destroyed the relationship between you and your Creator. We are both unwilling and unable to remedy our own guilt, and deep down we know it. In his classic work on the meaning of Christ's death titled *The*

Cross of Christ, John Stott said this, “Before we can see the cross as something done for us (leading to faith and worship), we have to see it as something done by us (leading to repentance).”

We need a remedy that runs as deep as our sin, guilt and shame. It must be something that deals with the darkness of the heart, the dirty evil of our sin, the broken relationship with God, and the legal verdict and sentence of our sin from the Eternal Judge. We are guilty! We stand with those in the story and share their blame, because we make the same types of decisions in opposition to God each day. But when our guilt drives us to Christ what we will find is the one who freely handed Himself over to this torture and death to bring grace and redemption. The cross of Christ is a remedy that runs as deep, and more so, than our guilt and shame. But that is next week’s sermon. Let us on this day give thanks that Christ has shed his blood and this is the remedy for our guilt.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Isaiah 54	Isaiah 55	Isaiah 56	Isaiah 57	Isaiah 58	Isaiah 59	Isaiah 60

Reading from this past week: John 19:1-16

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: John 19:16-27

Family Worship

Jesus - Chris Tomlin version here

<https://youtu.be/cEbQswNB6Wc>

Gospel Project

Story: Paul’s Third Journey

Main Point: God helped Paul preach with courage even when he was in danger.

Big Picture Question: How do people hear about Jesus?

Answer: God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so that they may repent and be saved.

Scripture: Acts 18:1-4, 24-28, 20:17-38

New City Catechism

Question 7: What is the Law of God stated in the 10 Commandments?

Answer: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

Verse: Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other Gods besides me.

Scripture

John 19:1-16

*Three different times Pilate said that he found no guilt in Jesus? Why is this important as we understand this story?

*Who are the truly guilty people in this story? What do they deserve?

*Are you guilty? Why is it important for us to know that we are sinners in need of grace?

Prayer

*Pray for your Elders, John Parke, Bob Lancaster, Eric Burnley, Mike Hubbard, and our Elder Candidate Darin Slater.

*Ask God to show you your need for Christ and that you would also see the depth of His redemption that gives grace for our guilt.