



Pilate

“Lenten Series of Monologues”

“Pilate went back out again and said to them, ‘I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime.’ Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe.”

John 19:4-5 THE MESSAGE

“As Governor, I, Pilate, had a lot of authority and yet I was helpless when it came to releasing Jesus Christ from the men who wanted to kill him. I had been following the speeches and actions of this man as much as one could in my position, and my wife felt that he was telling the truth. When the high priests and religious leaders sent him to me, I was in an awkward situation.

“First they took him to Herod for questioning. Herod did not want to make the decisions. He was brought to me. I asked him if he was King of the Jews. He did not answer me directly; he said “If you say so.” He put the whole thing on my shoulders. I wanted him to deny it. Then I could set him free and tell the religious leaders they didn’t have enough evidence to call for his crucifixion.

“Again I asked him as we both heard the cry of accusations from the high priests and leaders, ‘Do you hear that long list of accusations? Aren’t you going to say something?’ If he would only defend himself. He said nothing. The more I tried to escape the situation, the deeper I was involved.

“My wife had sent me a message that she had a dream. She recommended that I get out of this somehow. She felt he was telling the truth, and that he was a noble man. I only saw one chance to set him free. It was the custom to release one prisoner at the time of the Passover Feast. I asked them if they wanted to release Jesus or a prisoner named Barabbas, who everyone knew was guilty. I realized that I had been set up; I was stuck in a very bad situation. The crowd had been coached by the high priests and religious scholars. They called out that they wanted me to release Barabbas. I asked what they wanted me to do with Jesus. They all wanted him crucified on the cross. I asked for what crime, but they only shouted louder. They had no cause, no reason. I was afraid. I knew now that he was really the one he claimed to be. He didn’t claim to be an earthly king. He was not a threat to us.

“I saw that I could not win; I washed my hands of the entire matter and told the crowd my decision. I did as much as I could to make them the judge for Jesus’ death. They weren’t concerned about the responsibility. They were willing to take the blame. I had only one choice – to release Barabbas and send Jesus to the cross.

“When they took him to Goliath, I made a sign saying ‘Jesus, the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.’ It was written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The people would see it because many thronged to the hill to see the crucifixions. They tried to get me to change it to read that Jesus said he was King of the Jews. Then I was strong. I said ‘I have written what I have written.’ I would not change it. I tried to do one thing right, but I did so many things wrong. Then they wanted to guard the tomb. I knew that he was safe, so I told them to do what they needed to do. Through His amazing grace I was forgiven.”

There is an old song that Pilate may have felt. Many Bible authorities feel that Pilate did know who Jesus was, but his fear of the government kept him from taking the proper stand he felt in his heart.

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;
lift high his royal banner;
it must not suffer loss.*

*From victory unto victory his army shall he lead,
till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.”*

Text: George Duffield, Jr., 1818-1888

Music: George J. Webb, 1803-1887

1. Have you ever been challenged to stand up for your belief when it was not popular?
2. Can the leader of a country stand on his own personal belief? What if he is governed by a higher authority in another country?
3. What position do you have that puts you in a place comparable to that of Pilate?

Pilate: Pilate's involvement in the crucifixion is chronicled in Matt 27:2-65; Mark 15: 1-44; Luke 23: 1-52; and John 18:29-38 and John 19:1-38. Paul makes reference to him in Acts 13:28 and I Timothy 6:13.

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