

Luke 23:1-49 - Accompanying Gospel hymn: "I know Whom I have believed"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZjsHp7qAlM>

In this passage, I would like to focus on Pontius Pilate. Specifically, I'd like to call attention to his attempts to make a decision about executing Jesus.

In the first few verses, he talks to Jesus and asks him if he is King of the Jews. Jesus - the Way, the Truth, and the Life - answers "Yes", in the manner of his day.

But Pilate does not recognize the Truth standing in front of him, so he confers with the Priests, and they rabidly scream: Kill him!

So, perhaps you can feel some empathy for Poor Pilate in this situation. I certainly can.

Unsure what to do, you know, he starts to try and think out-of-the-box and realizes that 'technically' Jesus falls under the local jurisdiction of Herod. Perhaps Herod will have an elegant answer that will save this disgraceful situation. So, he sends Jesus off to King Herod.

Now, Herod and Pilate don't like each other much, but like two blokes sharing a joke they find common ground in projecting their own insecurities onto Jesus and delight in their common mockery of him.

By this time in the chapter, Pilate has sought Truth and Wisdom from a number of sources: The Priests, Jesus himself, Herod... and now he calls together the Priests again, with the 'rulers', and even the People of Jerusalem. What could go wrong? He is desperately seeking Truth and Wisdom. In Matthew 27 he even consults his wife who was a devout follower of God; she gave him good advice, but in all the hub-bub and complexity of the situation, Pilate never found the clarity he needed even though the Physical Embodiment of Truth Himself was standing before him!

In the end, Pilate, overloaded with conflicting advice, was unable to separate 'the wheat from the chaff'; he abandoned his hesitation to execute an innocent man and 'went along with the crowd' - from a purely human perspective, it is hard to blame him. Perhaps I would have made a similar decision, too.

You and I are not Roman Governors deciding the life and death of Messiah, but we are people who need to make good decisions about life's most complex issues. How am I expected to behave toward my spouse? How do I know if I am within the will of God? What expectations should I have of my children, my friends, and neighbors and how should I treat *them*? You can probably think a many more difficult issues that demand we make wise choices.

Unlike Pilate - Jesus is not right in front of us, willing to share His wisdom... or is he? You know, the Bible is the ultimate source of God's Will for you and your life; the ultimate source of Wisdom and Truth, so we have an advantage over Pilate and all his advisors!

"Yes, but, isn't the Bible a 'book of its time'? I mean, it is old and we are dealing with much different issues than Pilate or the people of that time - it's not really relevant!", you might think.

Dear friend, Man's fundamental character flaws remain the same and if you need to know how to behave toward your neighbor, your boss - that old slave-driver - your spouse, your kids, LGBTQ issues, Feminism issues, or even end-of-life issues, the Bible is the source of all Wisdom and Truth. It gives you and me the blessed assurance that we need in order to know how to walk through life and - more importantly - how we can be saved through the sacrifice of 'the Person Who IS Wisdom': the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus, God Incarnate - Immanuel!

And, if you are wondering what Pilate may have done differently if he had had our Bible handy - or even listened to his wife! - read Luke 23:1-49 and then compare it to, say, Colossians 3:1-17. There we can see how different our focus and our behavior should be from those who are 'in' the World and 'of' the World. There you can find out how saved men and women should set the example and we can be confident that it is the Truth and Wisdom that will not let us down nor lead us astray.

Pilate had no idea what ultimate Truth was - but when we hold a Bible you and I have ultimate Truth in our hands; it is our duty and our pleasure to read it daily, let it inform our prayers, let it guide our life and allow it to be our coach and motivator as we run the race to Christ's ultimate praise and glory! Amen!