

The Passion of Lent – Mark 15 Bible Study by Rev. Dr. John C. Tittle

SCRIPTURE: Mark 15:1-15 (NRSV)

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." Then the chief priests accused him of many things.

Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead.

Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Jesus experienced extreme social distancing in his passion—can you think of examples?
2. What jumped out at you about this scene of Jesus before Pilate?
3. Pilate wanted to keep his position by placating the people and letting others make decisions so he would not get the blame. What are ways today that we avoid responsibility?
4. Why do you think Jesus was silent and didn't defend himself? Do you think Jesus thought he was King of the Jews?
5. If the Scriptures needed to be fulfilled for Jesus to suffer and die, was Pilate responsible for his decision to hand over Christ for execution?
6. Barabbas the guilty one was set free and Jesus the innocent one was convicted. In what ways are all of us Barabbas?
7. What kind of king would you say Jesus is?

*God came into our world in its utter unloveliness and frightfulness ...He entered into it all.
We are not left alone in this frightful and alien land. — Karl Barth*