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Sermon Notes

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The Trial of All Centuries: Jesus Christ Stands Before a Human Judge

Matthew 27:11-26

The “Trial of the Century”... many courtroom dramas have stood under that name

It’s a popular title for a trial so sensation and significant that it arrests the attention of the nation for a time

- The Scopes Monkey trial of 1925, in which evolution was pitted against the Bible in Dayton, Tennessee
- The Sacco-Vanzetti murder trial of 1927—two Italian immigrants executed many felt unjustly for their anarchist convictions
- The Lindbergh kidnapping trial of 1935
- The Nuremburg trials of Nazi war criminals of 1945-1946
- The O. J. Simpson murder trial of 1995
- The trial of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2005-2006

All of these have been sensational in their own way, riveting, significant

Yet of far more significance is the daily trial of Jesus Christ in the hearts of people around the world

Jesus Christ is the most significant man in human history... the central towering figure in the Bible; as such He is presented as the only Savior of the world; the light shining in the darkness

But just as He is presented in the Bible as the central figure in human history, He is also the most slandered and blasphemed...

HE IS ON TRIAL BEFORE A WATCHING WORLD... more than that, He is on trial by each individual person who has ever heard His name... this is the TRIAL OF THE CENTURY... no, the TRIAL OF THE MILENNIUM... no, even more... the trial of ALL AGES

Day after day, Jesus stands trial in the hearts of people... witnesses are brought in, testimony is given, evidence is weighed, a verdict is rendered

The Bible presents Jesus as God in the flesh

The prophets traced out His life plainly before He was born:

- He was called “Immanuel” (God with us) in Isaiah 7, the same chapter that predicted He would be born of a virgin
- His birthplace of Bethlehem was predicted in Micah 5:2
- His national origin as a Jew, the Son of Abraham predicted by Genesis 12:3
- His descent from the tribe of Judah predicted in Genesis 49:10
- His descent from King David predicted in 2 Samuel 7:13
- His sinlessness predicted in Isaiah 53:9
- His miracles predicted in Isaiah 35:5-6
- His parables predicted in Psalm 78:2
- His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey predicted in Zechariah 9:9
- His betrayal by a friend for thirty pieces of silver predicted by Psalm 41:9 and Zechariah 11:12
- His rejection by the leaders of the Jewish nation predicted by Psalm 118:22
- The plucking of His beard, the spitting in His face, His being smashed in the face with a rod, His flogging... all predicted by various Scriptures
- His condemnation by a Gentile ruler predicted by Psalm 2:1-2
- His death by crucifixion predicted by Psalm 22
- His burial in a rich man’s tomb predicted by Isaiah 53:9
- His body not experiencing decay predicted by Psalm 16:10
- His resurrection victory over death predicted in Isaiah 25:8

The Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—all wrote their accounts to give us the full story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection... John speaks for all of them when He gives the plain reason for why he wrote what he wrote:

John 20:31 these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

God then sends out witnesses all over the world to testify to these things:

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

These witnesses go in the power of the Holy Spirit and present Jesus Christ plainly to the hearts of people and wait for a verdict

People listen, weigh carefully, and render a verdict on the most significant issue of all human history:

Matthew 16:15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Picture the sinner, sitting on his judge's seat, stroking his chin, weighing the evidence, deciding WHAT TO DO WITH JESUS OF NAZARETH???

What's so amazing is how truly the situation is reversed... the sinner is actually sitting in judgment on himself... for truly, Jesus' fate is already sealed... HE IS THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS... He sits on a throne in glory in heaven... He is the JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH... some day all nations will be gathered before Him and He will judge the final outcome of every person

But for now, mysteriously, the roles are reversed... the TRIAL OF THE CENTURY is going on in the hearts of lost people around the world who are weighing the evidence and deciding what to do with Jesus...

The trial of Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate was a physical acting out of that spiritual trial... that's when it happened for the first time... we have the account of that in our text this morning... Matthew 27:11-26

Jesus is on trial before the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate... but actually, it was Pilate who was on trial before Jesus.

I. The Charge Against the Silent Jesus: "The King of the Jews" (vs. 11-14)

Matthew 27:11-14 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. ¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are

bringing against you?" ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge-- to the great amazement of the governor.

A. Jesus Arraigned Before Pilate

1. The religious trial is over and the Jewish leaders had come to their clear decision

Matthew 27:1-2 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. ² They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

2. They had to have Pilate's consent because the Romans had deprived them of the authority to put someone to death...
3. And they DEEPLY wanted Jesus put to death
4. Notice the HYPOCRISY of these people

Matthew 23:27-28 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

5. The maximum hypocrisy shown here:

John 18:28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

6. They maintain an outward appearance of legality, but their whole purpose is to MURDER AN INNOCENT MAN... and more than that, the GLORIOUS SON OF GOD

B. The Charge: "Are You the King of the Jews?"

1. Pilate asked him this question

Matthew 27:11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

2. This was the charge the Jews had figured would "work" with the Roman governor
3. They had tried to get Jesus on tax evasion, but He had clearly taught the need to pay taxes to Caesar:

Matthew 22:21 "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

4. This “King of the Jews” charge was weighty, because it implied a threat to the Roman interests in the area... Herod was the king of the Jews, but he was a puppet of Rome

5. Other Gospels speak of Jesus as a rabble-rouser who is stirring up the people...

Luke 23:5 they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

6. but ironically, Barabbas, the very one they chose instead of Jesus was accused of leading an insurrection

Luke 23:19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

7. so Pilate asks him this question: ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS??

C. Jesus' Enigmatic Answer

CSB Matthew 27:11 Jesus answered, "You have said it."

1. Strange statement!! Mysterious

2. “Yes it is as you say; but not what you mean!!”

3. You have said it, but you don't understand it!

4. John 18: “My Kingdom is not of this world...”

John 18:36-38 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." ³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." ³⁸ ¶ "What is truth?" Pilate asked.

5. Jesus' Kingdom is infinitely more powerful than Pilate can possibly imagine

D. Was Jesus “King of the Jews”?

1. Yes... that's the point of the whole genealogy in Matthew 1: Jesus, the Son of David

2. Yes, but not the way the disciples thought... or the way the chief priests thought... nor the way Pilate thought

3. Actually, Jesus is king of more than just the Jews

Isaiah 49:6 *"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

Zechariah 9:10 *He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

Revelation 19:16 **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

E. Was Jesus a Threat? No... and Yes... A THOUSAND TIMES YES!!

1. Jesus was no threat to lead an immediate insurrection against Pilate
2. But Jesus threatened Pilate with eternal damnation
3. Jesus' Kingdom has vastly more power than any earthly ruler could possibly imagine
4. When Christ returns, He will destroy all other kingdoms and set up His own

Daniel 2:44-45 *"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands-- a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.*

Revelation 19:15-16 *Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

F. Jesus' Silence: In Direct Fulfillment of Prophecy

Matthew 27:12-14 *When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge-- to the great amazement of the governor.*

Isaiah 53:7 *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

Jesus' silence is reasonable because of the INJUSTICE of this trial:

Luke 22:67-68 *"If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸ and if I asked you, you would not answer.*

So, He will not grace their insulting questions with any answers at all

G. Pilate's Amazement

1. He had never seen any prisoner behave so strangely
2. As Procurator with the power of life or death, he was used to seeing prisoners in many different states
 - a. Some might beg and plead for their lives
 - b. Some might be terrified and unable to speak because of horror
 - c. Some might be sullen and defiant; or loud and defiant
3. But Jesus had a supernatural calm to Himself... a reasonableness and peace and power... such as he had never seen in all his life as a government official

II. Pontius Pilate on Trial (vs. 15-24)

A. Pilate Really the One on Trial... Jesus "Fate" Was Sealed!

1. If you know what to look for, you see that it is really Pilate who's on trial here, not Jesus
2. This is especially clear in John's account of the trial... Pilate again and again declares to the Jews that Jesus is innocent and tries everything he can to set Jesus free
3. On the one hand, Pilate knows Jesus is innocent... in our text it says he knew it was out of ENVY that they had handed Jesus over to him
4. Secondly, Pilate has undoubtedly heard about Jesus miracles and the power that surrounded his ministry
5. Thirdly, Romans frequently believed that the gods came down to earth in human form and tested the humans
6. Fourthly, we have Pilate's wife's statement and the dream which we'll get to in a moment
7. John's Gospel makes it plain that Pilate was afraid of Jesus

John 19:7-9 The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." ⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

8. BUT he was even more afraid of what the Jews would do if he refused them

B. Lessons from Josephus: God Sovereignly Orchestrated Jewish Power Over Pilate

1. Josephus a Jewish historian who gives us valuable insights about the Jews' relationship with the Romans at that time
2. Pilate ruled the Roman province of Judea from AD 26-36.
3. Once he was established in his position, he quickly offended the Jews multiple times by his high-handed and arrogant treatment of the Jewish people
 - a. He set up his Roman eagle banners in the temple; they were looked on as idols by the Jews, who assembled to demand that he remove them; Pilate refused and threatened the Jewish mob with slaughter if they didn't disburse; undaunted, the Jews bared their necks and said "Go ahead and kill us, we're not leaving!" Pilate had to back down, because he didn't want to begin his rule with a slaughter
 - b. Soon after that, he offended the Jews again with his handling of a public aqueduct conflict; again, the Jews assembled to protest; Pilate had the crowd infiltrated with plainclothes Roman soldiers; when the Jews refused to disburse, Pilate gave the signal and the soldiers slaughtered many Jews that day; but Tiberius was disgusted with Pilate and threatened him with dismissal and disgrace (and probably death) if he failed again
 - c. Through these incidents, the Jews gained a powerful level of control over Pilate which they used directly in the trial of Jesus... the final word in the whole thing was this:

John 19:12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

C. Pilate's Conviction: Jesus Was Completely Innocent (vs. 18; John 18-19)

Matthew 27:18 he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

John 18:38 With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no fault in him.

John 19:4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no fault in him."

John 19:6 Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

D. Pilate's Deep Desire: To Release Jesus

E. The Desire Strengthened by His Wife's Dream and Testimony (vs. 19)

Matthew 27:19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

1. See the amazing providence of God!!
2. He sends some kind of dream that terrified Pilate's wife!!
3. She sends a message to Pilate to set Jesus free

F. The Clever Attempt: Pass the Decision Over to the Crowd (vs. 15-17)

Matthew 27:15-17 Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶ At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

G. The Clever Attempt Thwarted by the Jewish Leaders (vs. 20-21)

Matthew 27:20-21 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. ²¹ "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered.

H. The Maniacal Frenzy of the Crowd (vs. 22-24)

Matthew 27:22-24 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" ²³ "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" ²⁴ ¶ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting,

I. Satan's Seething Hatred Behind All This

1. We must see Satan's invisible hand in all this murderous hatred!
2. Satan had inhabited Judas to betray Jesus into all this frenzy
3. Now he, the original murderer, wants to kill the author of life

J. Pilate's Pathetic Attempt to Evade Responsibility (vs. 24)

Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

III. Jesus' Blood on the Jewish Nation (vs. 20-25)

A. The Sinlessness of Jesus Clearly Established

B. The Roots of the Chief Priests and Elders Wicked Hatred for Jesus

1. Envy
2. Greed
3. Power

C. The Vacillation of the Crowd... and the Jewish Nation as a Whole

1. A week earlier... they were chanting His name and honoring Him with Palm branches as the Son of David
2. Now, they were calling for His death by crucifixion

D. The Culmination of Jesus' Rejection (John 1:11)

CSB John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

E. The Stunning Statement Made (vs. 25)

Matthew 27:24-25 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" ²⁵ All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

F. The Stunning Statement Interpreted Throughout Redemptive History

1. Meaning #1: "Blood upon" = guilty for the death

- a. The phrase means to be guilty for, to be responsible for

Leviticus 20:9 "If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.

Acts 18:6 But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility."

- b. Jesus had warned this very thing: "And so upon this generation will come all the righteous blood..."

Matthew 23:34-36 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

- c. Here... they are willing to take responsibility for the blood of Jesus... even throughout the future generations!!!
- d. Later, they seem to shun that responsibility

The Sanhedrin to the Apostles:

Acts 5:28 you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

- 2. BUT Meaning #2: Cleansed by His blood!!
 - a. At present, through unbelief, the blood of Jesus is upon them and their children for CONDEMNATION... for WRATH... for JUDGMENT, not for salvation
 - b. But if any individual Jewish man, woman, or child turns in faith to Jesus and believes, then His blood is upon them for SALVATION and CLEANSING
 - c. And at the end of Redemptive History, God will work a vast revival among the Jewish nation

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

Romans 11:26-27 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

IV. The Final Verdict: Jesus Condemned to Die (vs. 26)

Matthew 27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

- A. Pilate Could Not Evade Responsibility: He Renders a Verdict... one that violates his conscience... GUILTY, DEATH ON A CROSS!!!
- B. But Who Really "HANDED JESUS OVER" to be crucified??
 - 1. He certainly did... the text say he did
 - 2. But the real actor here was God the Father

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

C. Barabbas Set Free: A Type of All of Us

1. Isn't it amazing that substitution is acted out at that very time??
2. The guilty is set free and does not die
3. The innocent dies in his place

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

Isaiah 53:5-6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Barabbas represents a disgusting, vile sinner who is set free from death by Jesus

I am not at all saying Barabbas is in heaven... I'm saying he's a PICTURE of OUR SALVATION!!

D. The Flogging

1. It happened earlier in the encounter in John's Gospel
2. It was one of the attempts Pilate made to avoid killing Jesus... it just underscored Pilate's cowardice and wickedness... and it did not work

John 19:1-4 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face. ⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

3. The flogging is BRUTAL... if it goes on long enough, it can be fatal
 - a. Straps of leather, embedded with pieces of bone or metal
 - b. The straps wrap around the victim's body and rip deep gashes in his back... blood flows freely
 - c. It is an almost inconceivable level of agony
 - d. Part of our atonement:

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Word sometimes means “stripes”... can also mean bruises, welts, sores, something running freely with blood

Healed = healed from sin

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

V. Applications

A. The Trial of Eternity Going on Right Now: Judge Jesus Properly by the Power of the Holy Spirit... and TRUST IN HIM!!

1. By faith see Jesus properly as the glorious Son of God
2. By faith see Jesus seated on His throne, judging all the earth, including YOU

John 5:22-23 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

Matthew 25:31-33 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

3. Understand that you will spend eternity in either heaven or hell... and it will all be based on the judgment of King Jesus
4. Salvation is based NOW on calling on the name of the Lord
5. Trust in Jesus... judge Him properly... understand who He is... see through all the Satanic deception and understand that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man who died on the cross for sins

B. Understand the Power of His Blood

Matthew 27:25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

1. The issue of Jesus' blood is forefront... amazingly, for Jesus' blood to be "upon us" spiritually is our only hope for salvation
2. The lesson of all the bloody animal sacrifices

Hebrews 9:22 without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

3. Through the blood of Jesus alone is forgiveness of sins available

Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

4. The blood was shed once for all by Jesus Christ
5. Then, like the Passover Lamb's blood... it had to be APPLIED

Exodus 12:22-23 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. ²³ When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

6. Let His blood be APPLIED to you by faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit
7. That is how His blood is UPON you for the cleansing of your guilt and your sins

Hebrews 9:13-14 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8. APPLICATION:

- a. If you have trusted in Christ, know that his blood has been applied to you for your cleansing
- b. You are seen to be clean in God's sight!! Purified from all sin!!
- c. Let that cleanse you from a guilty, accusing conscience
- d. Many of you walked in here today with a guilty conscience... that's almost certainly because you have sinned in some way

- e. If you are a Christian, you are already clear POSITIONALLY in God's sight
- f. Now, concerning your recent sins, confess your sins to God and allow the blood of Christ to cleanse your guilty conscience
- g. Walk as free children of God!!

C. Be Appalled at the Fickleness of Human Praise

- 1. A week earlier, the people of Jerusalem were shouting with loud voices

Matthew 21:9 "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

- 2. Now look at what they're shouting:

Matthew 27:22-23 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"²³ "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

It got so bad that a RIOT was starting!!

- 3. How fickle is the human heart!! Ask the Lord to watch over your own ever-wandering heart

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it!
 Prone to leave the God I love!
 Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it
 Seal it for thy courts above!

- 4. Notice how easily the mob was manipulated

Matthew 27:20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

- a. The chief priests and elders were PUPPET MASTERS... making the crowd dance to their tune

Matthew 11:17 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

- b. So in our day, we have PUPPET MASTERS who manipulate the crowd
- c. So clear on the issue of the gay agenda... the liberal media elite are playing a tune, and if we Christians don't dance to it, we are left out of society... attacked, mocked, persecuted

- d. The MEDIA masters are skillful at manipulating crowd reactions and convictions
- 5. Therefore, don't live for the praise of the crowd!!
- 6. Pontius Pilate lived in terror of the crowd... that's why he didn't set Jesus free, though he knew Jesus was innocent
- 7. Everything Pilate did was to placate the Jewish leaders and the Jewish mob
- 8. Satan uses fear of man as one of his greatest weapons:

Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- 9. Fear of man saps us of commitment to be holy... we're always worried what will happen if I don't give in?
 - a. Some men are on a business trip... one of them is as Christian
 - b. After work, they all want to go to a strip club... the Christian man is under pressure to make the group happy
- 10. Fear of man saps us of willingness to share the gospel
 - a. We want to evangelize, but Satan uses fear of man to sap our commitment to share
 - b. They want to make us ASHAMED of Christ and of the gospel
- 11. Fear of man causes people in the gay rights issue to muzzle themselves and not speak biblical truth because we will be shouted down and called BIGOT! IGNORANT! HATE-MONGER!!

D. Learn from Pilate: The Fear of Man Brings a Snare!

- 1. Have the courage of your convictions!
- 2. Now more than before... our nation needs Christians to speak the truth in love
- 3. IN LOVE... not as the hate mongers they say we are, but as tender, broken-hearted sinners
- 4. We have been saved by grace, so we should speak tenderly and lovingly... not angrily, to the sin issues of our day

5. BUT we must not lose our saltiness

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

E. Do Not Shirk Your Responsibility: Either for Decisions or for Your Sins

Matthew 27:24 [Pilate] took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

1. Pilate tried to shirk the responsibility for his decision
2. This is HUMAN NATURE!! "Not my fault!!" We all say
3. Face your responsibilities and make godly and courageous decisions
4. And when you've sinned, don't try to wash your hands of it and pass the buck like Pilate did
5. He blamed the crowd... but the crowd didn't make him sin! Pilate was responsible for his own sins
6. So, Christians should be consistently honest before God and men about our responsibilities and our sins
7. Husbands: take responsibility for the state of your marriage... don't blame your wife or your children for how your marriage is
8. Parents: take responsibility for your developing children and their training

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- a. Do not bring a curse on your children by your sins
- b. Note how nonchalant they were about this!!

Matthew 27:25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

- c. Parents take responsibility every day for blessing not cursing your children! Saturate them with the gospel and the word of God!