

The Peaceful King of the Jews – Mark 15:1-15

At a time of such division and unrest, this is a perfect passage to be looking at. Following the events of last week, it is important we think about Jesus, how He behaved and what He said; we should become more Christ-like. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 reminds us that we are reconciled to God and are called to be ambassadors for Christ, sharing that message of reconciliation.

Read Colossians 1:16-17

This is the Jesus that we are talking about in this passage. Jesus is the one who has the power and authority over all creation. This city, this nation, this planet, this universe exist for Jesus and because of Him, He is both the Creator and the Sustainer. Quite a contrast from Colossians to the passage in Mark. We need to find out the answer to the same question Pilate was asking: 'What kind of King is Jesus?'

1) Amazing Peace with the Religious Authorities.

As soon as it was morning, the Elders, Scribes, Priests – anyone who was anyone in the Jewish establishment – all gathered. Those who made a living from 'knowing about God' failed to acknowledge that God stood before them. Jesus stood there bound. No protest; no struggle; under their power and their control. The Jewish leaders believed Jesus was utterly at their mercy. But this Jesus, bound and tied, holds all things together. All things including the rope. The only reason Jesus is bound is because He is submitted to it. Willingly, Jesus is led as a criminal. He knew what they were planning, but He also knew something they didn't.

Many people today have 'Jesus' bound. Believing to have the ropes that can tie up Jesus: 'A good god could not allow suffering'; 'Science has disproved God'; 'God hates gay people'; 'There are so many options, it's impossible to know the truth.' All these objections that seem to tie Jesus up. Our Autumn Evening Service series will be looking at these objections, how they too fail to bind Jesus completely. However, Jesus' mission was not to destroy the ropes, but to bring reconciliation.

Q. How can we be tempted to bind Jesus? What about our friends and family?

(if there are particular objections people have, we would love to know them, to help our plans for the Autumn Term Evening Service Series)

Q. How do we react when people have opposing views? What challenges and temptations do we face to panic or react aggressively when our views are opposed?

2) Amazing Peace with Pilate

Pilate asks: 'Are you the King of the Jews?'; are you leading a political revolution. Jesus responds: 'You say so'; in a sense, saying yes and no. Jesus was the Messiah – King of the Jews. However His purpose was far greater than what Pilate imagined. Jesus did not need to justify His answer, or respond to any other challenge put before Him. He stood bound and silent and Pilate was amazed at His peace. Pilate marvelled because Jesus remained calm, on a mission. This isn't out of His control, despite being bound, despite the harsh accusations and the terrible death that awaited Him.

We can have this same peace, even when everything seems to be against us. As Christians we follow the Prince of peace and like Him we are called to be peacemakers as we pursue a ministry of reconciliation. He is working sovereignly through all things, including thrones, rulers and authorities.

Q. Have you ever been wrongfully accused? How did you feel? How can we respond peacefully like Jesus?

Q. How do we show this message of peace and reconciliation? Where have we failed to show this?

1) Amazing Grace with Barabbas

Barabbas had been judged. He knew his fate to be executed. He was actually guilty. On the morning of his execution, no doubt fearful and resigned to his fate. At this point, Barabbas is told he is pardoned, free, released. Pilate did not expect it. Barabbas wouldn't have expected it. What a relief! He escaped crucifixion because Jesus was punished in his place.

This is such a similar story to ours, only the pardon we have received is so much greater. All have sinned; all fall short; all deserve death. Yet we have been reconciled to God through the Cross. Now there is nothing to stop us from knowing peace. Nothing can separate us from God. We don't need to be fearful. We don't need to panic. Instead, we are called as Ambassadors for this grace, to walk in it and to invite others to know it.

Q. What challenges are we tempted to fear? Personally? Nationally? Globally? How is our response changed by the pardon and grace that we have received through Jesus?

Q. How can we be Ambassadors of Grace and Peace? At home? In the Workplace? Online?