

I. My Notes ... WWC message 6/28

II. Series: That You Might Believe

- Title: Justice and Love Meet
- Text: John 19
- Quote: We must not forget that it wasn't the Jews that put him on the cross, and it wasn't the Romans. It was my sins, it was your sins, the sins of this world. Franklin Graham (Speaker, Author)

III. Introduction

- We are currently examining a portion of John's letter that references the well-known narrative of the trial, punishment, and crucifixion of Jesus. This account of grace is recounted each year around Easter and signifies the purpose of Jesus' arrival. John's perspective differs slightly from other Gospel writers, helping those of us who were not there understand the significance of this historical event. It is crucial to our faith journey.
- Let me start with an illustration, it's a story that has been told before. Imagine a courtroom. A young man stands before the judge, guilty of a serious crime. The evidence is undeniable. The judge, bound by justice, pronounces the sentence—a heavy fine or prison time. But then something unexpected happens. The judge steps down from the bench, removes his robe, and walks to the defendant. He pulls out his checkbook and pays the fine himself.

Why? Because the guilty man is his son.

In that moment, justice is upheld—the penalty is paid. But love is also revealed—the judge bore the cost himself.

- This story deals with the message that John is pointing us to in his Gospel. At the cross, God does not ignore sin—He deals with it. But He does so by stepping into our place. Justice is not compromised. Love is not withheld. They meet in the person of Jesus, who wears the crown of thorns and declares, “It is finished.”
- That story is compelling because it forces us to wrestle with something our hearts long for: justice that isn’t cold, and love that isn’t blind. We want wrongs to be made right, but not at the expense of mercy. We want compassion, but not at the cost of truth. In that courtroom, we saw a glimpse of what happens when justice pays the price and love bears the cost.
- Now, look up ... from the bench to the cross.
- Look at this moment in our journey ... the greatest Judge doesn’t just step down from heaven’s throne—He steps into our sentence. He doesn’t just pay our debt—He wears our shame, carries our cross, and suffers our penalty. And with a crown of thorns pressed into His brow, He shows us the true meaning of when justice meets love.
- Remember where we were last week. Jesus had been arrested, accused of crimes where there was no basis, and handed over to the Roman authorities for punishment. Through all this Jesus was found to be without fault or flaw. And yet public pressure inhibited His release. The religious leaders chose self over the love of God.
- Let’s walk through this portion of John’s Gospel and see how Christ’s path to the cross reveals a justice that doesn’t crush us, and a love that won’t let us go. I don’t intend to read it all – I am going to focus on some specific points.

IV. The Crown of Thorns: Justice Mocked, Love Revealed (vs. 1–5)

- Pilate was trying to find a way to appease the crowds (Luke 23:16). He thought that seeing some blood would give him a way out. Jesus was publicly whipped (flogged), beaten up, and a crown of thorns was pressed into His head. All to humiliate the One who was “King” ... This was both a fulfillment of prophecy and a revelation of man’s selfishness.

- **Genesis 3:18 NLT**

It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

- Thorns and thistles are introduced because of sin. Sin is man choosing his way over God’s. This Crown of Thorns was mocking the choice of Jesus as Messiah, as Lord. The Crown of Thorns was sin being forced onto the head of the One who had not sinned. Jesus bore the punishment of the curse that we chose.
- Man’s sin – let’s not make this impersonal ... your sin, my sin, requires justice so that we may have a right relationship with the Lord God. Jesus words back early in our journey through John’s Gospel bear this out. *“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him.” (John 3:36 CSB).*
- It was sin that brought Jesus to the Cross. Shame and suffering accompanied it. This is seen in the attitudes and actions of all those surrounding this moment. Jesus chose to wear our shame as a demonstration of love, as a revelation of real mercy. He took the punishment, He received the beating, He shed His blood to pay the cost of my sin. His love for you and me absorbed (willingly took) the judgment that was destined for us. He put on the robe of

our guilt and shame, so that we could wear the garments of righteousness (right standing with God).

- “Behold the man!” (v. 5) - Pilate’s words are more prophetic than he knows. This is the Man who carries the weight of all injustice. This statement refutes the arguments and ideas that Jesus wasn’t real or that He was only a spirit. Pilate saw flesh and blood standing before Him. He was unable to recognize grace and truth. He saw what most saw, a man they didn’t want to deal with – an inconvenience.

V. Authority from Above: Justice Directed, Love Submitted (vs. 6–11)

- **John 19:10-11 CSB**

So Pilate said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Don’t you know that I have the authority to release you and the authority to crucify you?”

“You would have no authority over me at all,” Jesus answered him, “if it hadn’t been given you from above. This is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

- Listen to what Jesus has said ... power and authority are given from above. Today, people disagree with the idea that God is sovereign (absolute truth, authority). Even if they will admit that there is a God” – they don’t believe that He engages in our daily lives. The life and ministry of Jesus show us differently. Truth was standing in front of Pilate, and he thought he could do anything he wanted with it (Truth). That is the illusion many live under today. They are confronted with the truth of God’s love, they even recognize that they have a need, but they are unwilling to receive the grace that is offered to them.

- Pilate fooled himself into believing that he had authority (power, control). In fact, Jesus demonstrated genuine authority by choosing to remain on the path that God had determined from the beginning. It was a path that revealed love – it was a path that chose grace over self. Jesus submitted to God’s redemptive plan, not Rome’s political pressure and manipulation.
- While many people see the torture and crucifixion of Jesus as a loss of control, a giving up. It is a mistake to view it this way. There is no loss in the Cross ... it is a full and complete demonstration of love in action,

VI. The Cross at Golgotha: Justice Fulfilled, Love Poured Out (vs. 16–30)

- John focuses on some different details than the other Gospel writers did when telling the path that Jesus walked to be hung on Golgotha. When John points out that Jesus carried His own cross (v. 17), he is pointing to the burden that was placed on the condemned prior to their execution. The fact that Jesus had help (recorded in the other Gospels) is important. It is a lesson in unity, a lesson in humility, a demonstration of acceptance. Even in this moment, Jesus chose to show love and grace.
- Even John took the time to point out what Pilate wrote and the controversy this caused with the religious leaders. The Religious Elite didn’t want to acknowledge the deity of Jesus, the truth that He was Messiah. They couldn’t accept any authority but their own. This is why Jesus called them a “brood of vipers” (Matthew 12:34) and “whitewashed tombs” (Matthew 23:27). Pilate could not accept any truth or correction except his own.
- On the cross, Jesus paid the price for your sin, mine too. *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died*

to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:24 CSB). This fulfilled the prophecy recorded in Isaiah ... *“But it was our sins that caused his wounds. The bad things that we had done crushed him. The punishment that he received has brought peace to us. The wounds that he received have made us well.” (Isaiah 53:5 EASY).*

- He paid a debt that He in no way owed because I owed a debt that I could never pay. On the Cross, my debt was paid – my account was settled – grace won. Jesus willingly died (He chose the time to “give up” His spirit) and that fulfilled God’s plan. Even in this Jesus revealed His authority ... He showed God’s sovereignty. *“No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.” (John 10:18 NLT).*
- The Cross wasn’t the end. It wasn’t where justice was finally claimed. It is where justice and love come face to face. Love wins.

VII. His Pierced Side: Justice Witnessed, Love Flowing (vs. 31–37)

- And to put an exclamation point on this, another prophecy is fulfilled. “Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, did not have any of His bones ... broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20) and people in the future will look on the pierced One (Zech. 12:10; cf. Rev. 1:7).” (taken from The Bible Knowledge Commentary).
- It was obvious that Jesus had died. This was recorded to refute the false teachings of the day. It goes against the false teachings today too. There are teachings today that Jesus didn’t fully die. One thing they try to tell us is that He (Jesus) was drugged and resuscitated. The pierced side refutes this. The sacrifice was real,

there were witnesses. His death was final. In death, Jesus gave life to all who choose to believe.

VIII. Burial: Justice Sealed, Love Still Working (vs. 38–42)

- Jesus has died. His body needs to be buried before sundown to meet the Jewish and Roman requirements. In a bold move, Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, asks Pilate for Jesus' body after the crucifixion. With Pilate's permission, he takes the body and, along with Nicodemus, prepares it for burial using a mixture of myrrh and aloes. They wrap Jesus' body in linen and place it in a new tomb in a garden near the crucifixion site.
- Both Joseph and Nicodemus (remember him? Look back to John 3) had hidden their faith in Jesus as Messiah due to fear of the Religious Leaders. Now that Jesus had died, they stepped out and demonstrated love, the sacrificial love that Jesus spoke of, by this act of compassion.
- **1 John 4:18 CSB** - *There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love.*

IX. Wrapping Up

- It would be easy to see the Cross as an end, as defeat. But we know differently. The Cross is the beginning of our understanding of justice and love.
- The cross is one of the most profound symbols where love and justice meet—and not in contradiction, but in complete harmony. Justice is seen at the cross in that it acknowledges the weight of wrongdoing. Our faith tells us that God's justice demands a response to sin—a way to reckon with the brokenness and injustice

in the world. The cross isn't a denial of guilt or a sweeping under the rug; it's a declaration that the moral order of the universe matters.

Love, on the other hand, is seen in the willingness to bear the cost. Rather than requiring people to pay that debt themselves, Jesus voluntarily took on that burden that you and I owed. This choice that Jesus made was the ultimate expression of God's perfect love: sacrificial, undeserved, and deeply personal.

At the cross, justice isn't abandoned, and love isn't weakened. Instead, love fulfills justice. The penalty is paid—not by the guilty, but by the innocent on behalf of the guilty. It's a paradox: judgment and mercy at the same moment.

- Justice is not abandoned for love. Love is not diluted by justice. At the cross, they meet—and neither walks away diminished.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always