



It is Finished!

John 19

19:1-16 – How can standing up for truth and justice give us more control?

In John 19:1-16 Pilate tried to defuse the conflict over executing Jesus, but his procrastination allowed a mob mentality to form making the course of events harder to control. Pilate's indecisiveness forced him to yield to the position of the Jewish leaders. When we delay doing what is right, we risk falling so deeply into sin that we cannot extricate ourselves. God has placed us where we are to stand for truth and justice. If we don't insist on God's will during the early stages of a developing situation, we risk being controlled by the course of events. Life is always better when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than circumstances.

19:4, 6 – What was Pilate's error that we need to avoid?

Our ability to stand up for righteousness is directly related to our spiritual growth. The Roman governor Pilate pronounced Jesus "not guilty" three times in John 18:38, 19:4, and 19:6 but he chose to preserve his position at the expense of doing what was right. Under pressure, we too may feel our power or security threatened. But unlike Pilate, we must stand for what is right even if the consequences mean personal loss. If we don't, we will lose something even more valuable, our integrity. When we face tough choices, we can take the easy way out or with God's help speak up for what is right. The best way to prepare for these times of testing is to be active in our relationship with Jesus. We shouldn't neglect our prayer time!

19:15 – What was the error of the crowd by declaring that there was no king but Caesar?

Most of our associates expect human institutions such as their employer or the government to meet all their needs. We may help those who are open to recognizing God as their ultimate deliverer by telling them about Jesus being rejected as the Messiah. In denying Christ's rightful control over their lives, Jewish religious leaders claimed Caesar as king in John 19:15. They allied themselves with a human power they thought would maintain their authority. Instead, that power destroyed Jerusalem and killed 500,000 Jews. The next generation paid for the sins of their leaders. Today people still refuse to let God influence their decisions. They grasp present "benefits" without regard for the long-term costs. So help your associates see the danger of trusting in human institutions with no regard for God's authority.

19:16-37 – How does the crucifixion of Jesus show that the Bible is relevant for us today?

Most people consider the Bible to be bygone history with little relevance for today. So we should be ready to dispute that prevailing view with our associates whenever the Lord gives us the opportunity. The Bible's track record does authenticate that it is from God. There are over a hundred prophecies about the Messiah that were all fulfilled in Jesus. For example, John 19:16-37 describes the crucifixion of Jesus. This manner of death for the Messiah was foretold in Psalm 22:14-18 a thousand years before it happened and 500 years before crucifixion was ever used as a form of execution. Since the Bible's prophecies of the Messiah were literally fulfilled, we should expect the prophecies of His return to also be literally fulfilled. Encourage your associates to check this out for themselves. Some will be eternally grateful.

19:38-40 – What did Joseph and Nicodemus do that should encourage us to go public with our faith when people are disrespectful of Jesus?

John 19:38-40 describes Joseph and Nicodemus burying Jesus after having been secret believers. The unjust treatment of Jesus had finally reached a point where they decided it was time to show their loyalty by properly preparing Jesus' body for burial. Today, people are still treating Jesus with disrespect and this is commonly seen by their using His name in vain. When this happens, it often represents an opening to go public with our faith and share what Jesus has done for us. It might even help our associates to start considering spiritual matters when they curse. So if your associate's swearing is grating on you, it is time to speak up for Jesus.