

THE FIRST 15

Monday, May 20, 2024

Today is Monday, May 20 and we are studying the Gospel of John chapter nineteen.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed Lord God, In the morning I come to this quiet place and draw near to your side. I calm my mind, slow my breathing and center myself completely on your holy presence. Open the scriptures to me and communicate the personal message you have for me today from the Gospel of John. Walk with me on this journey to the cross of Calvary and reveal your amazing grace and relentless love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. John 19:1-9a

REFLECTION

The Roman Governor Pontius Pilate sentences Jesus to death. He instructs the Roman soldiers to flog him. Jesus is beaten and mocked. Pilate sarcastically calls Jesus the "king of the Jews." The soldiers are determined to ridicule him for that title and dress him up in a purple robe and crown of thorns. You can almost hear their cruel laughter, "Ha ha ha, some 'king' you are!" They bow down in mockery and pretend to honor him with raucous laughter, "Oh, all hail, it's the king of the Jews, ha ha ha ha ha!" He is struck. He is spit upon. He is humiliated.

There is a mock coronation, a pretend royal robing, a harsh slap in the face and an ironic proclamation of the truth. Jesus really *is* King of the Jews. Despite the ridicule and rejection involved in the intimidating scene, Jesus is crowned, clothed and proclaimed a king.

Jesus is King. King of the Jews. King of the Gentiles. King of the world. King of the cosmos. King of the universe. He is God's beloved Son destined to reign on the throne of David forever. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. The Bible declares him King of kings and Lord of lords. All things are subject to him. All earthly powers pale in comparison to him. The angels and heavenly beings serve him. Every knee will someday bow and every tongue confess he is Christ and Lord. He is holy, mighty, high and lifted up. How does a heavenly,

eternal King get sent to hang on a cross? To willingly die for a hate-filled, violent, rebellious humanity.

Jesus is my King. King of my heart. Lord of my life. Emperor of my soul. He suffered for me. Was humiliated for me. Mocked for me. At the dawn of humanity, Adam and Eve chose disobedience and rebellion against God. They wanted to decide for themselves what was right and wrong, good and evil. They rejected God and were banished from their safe, garden paradise. They and their descendants are forever separated from a holy, loving Creator God. That includes me. God didn't want to leave me there. God didn't want to leave humanity there - cut off from him enduring eternal spiritual death. He made a way for humans to return to him. That way is Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. Believing in him is the key. King Jesus paid the price for my soul. He was pierced for my transgressions. He suffered for my iniquity. Hail, King Jesus!

Ask: Do I proclaim Jesus as King and Lord? How can I best be subject to King Jesus and allow him to be Lord over every part of my heart and life?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

King Jesus, all honor and glory is yours. I bow down and praise you. Thank you for your loving kindness and selfless sacrifice that paid the price for the redemption of my soul. The soldiers mocked you and beat you, they tortured and crucified you, yet in your loving sacrifice was the ultimate victory. You triumphed over evil and gained the salvation of the whole world. Including me. Thank you. Amen.