

Sunday, March 26, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Mark 15:1-20

It is clear from the biblical accounts that Jesus was rejected not only by the Jewish leaders—those who should have expected and recognized His coming—but also by the non-Jewish (or Gentile) leaders. Jesus' rejection by humanity was total. None could claim innocence. Jews and Gentiles may have different reasons for rejecting Jesus, but when all is said and done, no one can claim that they did not have a hand in rejecting Jesus. All have sinned.

Here in Mark 15, we have the narrative of the Gentile ruler, Pontius Pilate, rejecting Jesus. Pilate has been by some as a hero because he initially did not find any fault with Jesus, but upon further examination, it becomes abundantly clear that Pilate was not someone who feared God and did not want to punish Jesus out of any sense of piety. Pilate may have genuinely not found any charge on which to convict Jesus or sentence Him to death, but he certainly did not have faith that Jesus was the Son of God. Moreover, in the mystery of God's providence, it was necessary that Pilate sentence Jesus to death, so that by His death, He might atone for the sins of humanity.

Context

The cross is approaching ever-nearer. Mark 8:27 marked the beginning of a journey for Jesus and His disciples towards Jerusalem. He taught them plainly about what was going to happen (8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34), and yet it was not until the events unfolded that they understood. Let us understand. By now, Jesus' disciples have deserted Him. In chapter 14 we saw Peter's rejection and the trial and rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders. This chapter begins with the trial and rejection of the Gentile leaders. And this chapter will not end until Jesus has died on the cross and been buried. As we think about the context and the progression of the story as a whole, let us be reminded of why this had to happen.

Read and Reflect (*Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.*)

Read Mark 15:1-20

“Are you the King?”

Mark 14 Jewish Trial

Mark 15 Roman Trial

I. Prosecution *Jewish Leaders*

- 14.64 They all condemned Him
- 15.1 Ratified their decision

II. Judge *Pilate, Roman Prefect*

- 15.14 Verdict... Innocent
- 15.15 Vacillations

III. Defendant *Jesus*

- 15.2 Statement I am King
- 15.5 Silence

If He is Messiah... trust Him!

If He is King... obey Him!

Discuss

- 1) Issues surrounding Jesus' identity have been central to the entire book of Mark. This chapter is no different—only it is now Pilate who must sort out the question. And even today there are myriad opinions about who Jesus is. Why do you think He is such a controversial figure? What is it about Him (or about us) that makes it so difficult for us to figure Him out?

- 2) What do you think about Jesus' relative silence in this trial with Pilate? What does that reveal about how Jesus' approached His own reputation, safety, and security?

- 3) Pastor Don talked about Pilate being a “people pleaser.” He didn’t like the Jewish people, but he did value his own reputation with his superiors in Rome. So, he did whatever he could to please them and have a good reputation among them. Can you relate to that temptation? Have you ever sought to maintain your own reputation with other people that you have failed to do what is right? Why is that such a strong temptation?

- 4) Read John 18:33-38. John gives us a more detailed account of what went on in Pilate’s interrogation of Jesus. What does Jesus reveal about Himself/His kingdom in this passage?

- 5) Read Galatians 2:20. Mark frequently uses the term “delivered over” or “handed over.” What difference does it make for us to know that Jesus handed Himself over to be killed? And how does this verse help us understand how we should live in light of that?