Mar. 18, 2018 Jesus Condemned John 19:1-16a (Psalm 146) Liturgical color: Purple

PRAYER OF THE DAY **Holy God, In this season of contemplation, help us to recognize that you revealed yourself in Jesus, who walked among us and was handed over to be crucified. May we be strengthened by his presence among us today. Amen.** HYMNS I want Jesus to walk with me ELW 325, UMH 521, NCH 490 Praise the one who breaks the darkness ELW 843 CHORAL My song in the night, Paul Christiansen

Psalm 146:1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

 2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

 3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

 4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

 5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God,

 6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

 7 who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free;

 8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

 9 The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

 10 The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD!

**Announcements Prayers**

Thanks for Susquehanna Concert/hosting! Nancy Wolfskill, Gerry Zeiber, Roma Ulrich

SNOW look at WFMZ please! (TV/internet)

Jesus is severely beaten, then dressed-up in mock royal attire. A purple robe, only a wealthy noble could afford to dye a whole robe purple. A pointy, crown of thorns to pierce the royal skin revealing the blood of one who is fully human. Soldiers hurled repeated insults physically impacting the head of the body of Christ. And then come the 2nd and 3rd perfectly pitched strikes from Pilate “I find no case against him.” Fully divine, Jesus is fully innocent in the eyes of the law. Imagine how the guilty are treated… If this is how an innocent person is treated…. But Jesus is not treated as a human, remember how he was first identified in this gospel by John the Baptist… “behold the Lamb of God.” (John 1:29-36) He is treated as a sacrificial lamb, without spot or blemish, sacrificed to take away the **sin** (singular) of the world. The only other time in the Bible that God has provided a lamb/ram for sacrifice was to Abraham in place of Isaac. (Gen 22:8-14) Abraham named that location, ‘The LORD will provide’ which could also be translated, ‘the LORD shall be seen.’ Here in the headquarters of Pilate, right there even at the judge’s bench, the LORD is seen, even as the LORD God provides a sacrifice to take away the sin of the world, re-establishing the broken relationship between the Creat-or and the creat-ed.

Imagine how the guilty are treated? We do not have to imagine: remember last week we ended the reading with the release of Barabbas, the one who was found guilty of being a bandit. It is worth noting… here in 2018 we also are guilty of sins, and also released from our death sentence by the sentence of Jesus. Not only the death sentence, but also the first sentence Jesus utters to the disciples after his death and resurrection: “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19)

There are other sentences made right there before the resurrection, before the death, right there at the palace of judgement. These sentences are self-proclaimed in the riveting style of the movie “*A Few Good Men*”, where Jack Nicholson finally bursts-out to Tom Cruz “you can’t handle the truth! Then proceeds to lay-out his charge and judgement in full detail.

* Pilate identifies Jesus as the king of the Jews, then abdicates his authority by buckling to his fear of the emperor and fear of the Jews, those he oppresses… Pilate does not show any authority or power in this circumstance, he is seen as being dragged unwillingly through the steps he must take as a figure-head, and nothing more. Pilate cannot even follow the truth.
* The religious leaders insist “we have no king but the emperor”. One would expect the highest leaders of the Jewish community to profess their highest allegiance to God… but no, they reveal the ‘crystal-clear’ truth, God is not first in their daily lives.

How about us? What judgement can be drawn from our lives?

* Our fears drive us
* Our allegiances drive us
* Sometimes others make our decisions and we become the one dragged-along to outcomes against our better judgement

And here is the divine judgement response to us:

Yes, like Pilate and the soldiers and the Jewish leaders… An encounter with Jesus discloses our truth too. Yes our fears drive us to make decisions based on our fear rather than trust in God.

Yes our fears lead us to decide that maybe money, or control, or health or safety or fear of failure, or fear of success are the most important powers in our lives even before God.

An encounter with Jesus discloses the truth, our truth as individuals, as a congregation, as humanity… the truth is disclosed, but this is not the last truth… Jesus brings a new truth, a new response to the self-judgement…. Jesus enters fully into human fallibility and short-comings

Then Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, died for all this.

The sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sin of the world is nearly complete here in this portion of John’s gospel; as Jesus lays down his life for this broken fearful, truth wrestling world.

This is the world for whom Christ has come to die.

This is the world redeemed by the blood of the lamb.

We are part of the ones God so loved! We are powerless to be anyone else, or anything less than the redeemed children of God. Thanks be to God. May the Spirit enable us to live lives released from these powers of sin and death; in thanksgiving for all Christ laid-down and handed-over for us.

Pod-cast Themes:

1. Who is the king here? Royal imagery… flogging own punishment but also to prepare for crucifixion
2. What is done in mockery is a way of revealing truth
3. Lack of power and authority is not dominating and oppressive of Pilate or Caesar; but Jesus’ kingship is different…. Behold the MAN (fully human and fully divine) living-out royal authority
4. V 9 where are you from? Key theme of John … Nazareth yes but no… from God from the beginning 1:1
5. Pilate tries to release Jesus… knows that Jesus is innocent… does Pilate really have power? He knows the truth but is not willing to follow the truth… he wants job security
6. What is the role of judgement in this gospel? In a place of judging oneself… encounter with Jesus discloses your truth (Pilate truthful, powerful, no, no; we have no king but emperor. Really, not God?) discloses the truth but this is not the last truth… human fallibility and short-comings JC died for all this. JC self giving is complete (completed) as Jesus lays down his life.
7. This is the world for whom Christ has come to die