

Message: You Say I Am a King

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Sermon Series: Helping Others Follow Jesus

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John 18:28-40

While the Palm Sunday story is in our readings this week, we will focus on something else that happened during “Holy Week.” After His arrest in Gethsemane, Jesus was brought into Pontius Pilate’s courtroom. Pilate clearly wanted to have nothing to do with this silly Jewish dispute. The Jews exasperated Pilate. He preferred being in Caesarea by the Sea rather than in contentious Jerusalem. His wife had even warned him about not messing with Jesus because she had a dream about Jesus being a righteous man (Matthew 27:19). Jesus has so many virtues, but we must not overlook the fact that while He is humble, He exudes confidence. The last paragraph of the “Sermon on the Mount” ends with the observation that Jesus didn’t teach like the scribes; He taught with authority (Matthew 7:28-29). He was confident enough to be a king who rode a donkey; to stoop to wash the feet of His disciples; to deal with the emotions of Mary; to speak to crowds of thousands of people; to deal with His critics; and to offer grace to those who left or betrayed Him. He never changed Himself to please people. He didn’t have to impress, brag or show off.

It is interesting that the word “confidence,” which appears in the New Testament 22 times, never appears in the Gospels. “Confidence” is always linked to something we have as Christians because of the Lord. But when I read Jesus’ confrontation with Pilate, I see an enormously confident man. I’m not talking about Pilate. Ironically, Jesus was the calm one in the interaction. Unlike Pilate, Jesus knew who He was and could self-differentiate from the hostile environment and the threats. His followers had abandoned Him and left Him alone. But make no mistake—Jesus, in chains, was still the boss. Jesus had emotions and feelings, but His decisions were based on logic (truth). While we are not Jesus, Jesus is in us through His Spirit. APPLICATION: Confidence is enormously attractive. Jesus gives us great confidence (2 Corinthians 3:4-6). Do a word study on “confidence.” The New Testament emphasizes that our confidence is in the Lord, not in ourselves. It’s an obvious question: “How confident are you?” The follow-up question is: “Is your confidence in the Lord?” We gain confidence in the Lord by daily putting our trust in Him.

After the miracle of the raising of **Lazarus**, the jealous religious leaders made plans to kill Jesus. ***“If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”*** (John 11:48-50)

On Sunday, Jesus descended the Mount of Olives and entered Jerusalem as the adoring crowds cheered. This “**Triumphal Entry**” is called “Palm Sunday” as the people shouted “Hosanna” (“Save us!”).

We fast forward to Thursday of Holy Week. **Jesus** = amazingly calm at **The Last Supper**. Note his **confidence** with 3 things:

- 1.) He knew **Judas** would betray Him, but He still offered the sop.
- 2.) Some **disciples** got into an argument during the Last Supper about who among them would be considered the greatest.
- 3.) **Peter** claimed he would remain loyal and faithful. To his credit, he does offer a fight in the Garden, but he’s a fisherman, not a swordsman. He somehow manages to lop off the right ear of Malchus, the High Priest’s servant. After 3 years of training His disciples knowing He’s about to be crucified and He will hand this off to them He must have thought: “THIS is my Team?” Jesus is always confident throughout the gospels. There is only one occasion when Jesus seems to lose confidence - while praying in **Gethsemane**. Knowing what was coming, He asks the Father if there is another way. His “agony” in the garden was so intense that when He prayed, His sweat was like drops of blood. He gave the Father His fears in **prayer**. When it was time to do the hard thing, He was confident and resolute.

Then we have **Peter’s Denial**.

2 characters.

1.) After raising Lazarus, Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Rome infuriated the Jewish leaders. **Caiaphas** was the High Priest, the most powerful Jewish leader. At the end of the Lazarus story: The Romans occupied Israel - the Jews hated them. Caiaphas also feared the Romans would get involved. The Jewish court did not have the power to convict for the death penalty. Also, the Jewish tradition had such a great respect for human life that it made it virtually impossible to convict someone to death. If Caiaphas is going to get rid of Jesus he’s going to have to get the Romans to do it. He turns to the Roman Governor of Judea.

2.) **Pontius Pilate**, originally from Seville, Spain, joined the Roman legion & went to Rome where he met/married Augustus Caesar’s granddaughter, **Claudia**. Through her influence he became Governor of Judea in 26 A.D. His predecessors had governed Judea wisely. Not Pilate. He was not a savvy political leader.

The **gospels** portray him as sensitive to justice & not wanting Jesus crucified not stubborn, cruel, proud & violent. They Why?

- 1.) Maybe he **wasn’t as bad** as secular history presents him. Maybe Jesus impressed him.
- 2.) Pilate’s wife, **Claudia**, had a dream about Jesus. She told Pilate not to have anything to do with “**that innocent man.**” Dreams were taken with much seriousness back then. Pilate was on the horns of a dilemma. He knew the right thing to do but couldn’t do it. He asked if Jesus is **King of the Jews**. Jesus was NOT a political/secular messiah coming to overthrow Rome. He was no threat to Rome. But He was a spiritual messiah who came to introduce the Kingdom of God. His kingdom was not from this world. He WAS a threat to the RELIGIOUS establishment. His verdict: Jesus is not guilty. He has 2 ways to keep Jesus from being executed. He offers to pardon a prisoner. The crowd chooses **Barabbas**. He has Jesus

scourged, hoping to avoid crucifixion. That didn't work, either. Caiaphas wanted Jesus dead. He eventually gave in to the voices and let Jesus be crucified. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus. Jesus has **2 trials: Religious/Civil; Jewish/Roman**. These are 2 different jurisdictions, charges and judges. The Nazarene was accused of blasphemy against God by the Jews and of treason against Caesar by the Romans. So, he stands before these 2 men, Caiaphas the High Priest and Pilate the governor of Judea.

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Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"³⁰ They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you."³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?"³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him.³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"⁴⁰ They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Application:

What is the SOURCE of our confidence?

1. Self-confidence. With the cast of Holy Week, who had self-confidence? Judas confidently betrayed Jesus, the disciples confidently argued who among them was the greatest, Peter confidently wielding the sword slashing off Malchus' ear, Caiaphas confidently stating Jesus should die. Ironically Pilate, of all people, seems to be the only one who doesn't have confidence. Self-confidence has severe limitations: our own agendas are often wrong. Self-confidence has a more serious limitation: morality = 100%. If our confidence is in ourselves, what is our ultimate end?

2. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. Psalm 20:7

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God 2 Corinthians

3:4-5

When our confidence is in the Lord, we have great strength and can do great things. **Job** (*"though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"*); **Noah** building the ark; **Abraham** leaving Ur and going by faith to the Promised Land; **Joseph** speaking to his brothers (*"what you meant for evil, God meant for good"*); **Moses** telling Pharaoh *"let my people go,"* **Joshua** leading the people into the Promised Land; **Ruth** (*"where you go, I will go; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God"*); Ruth's descendant, **David**, telling the Philistine giant (*You've got a big problem now, buddy*) **Elijah** taunting the prophets of the false god, Baal; **Nehemiah** overcoming the obstacles to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, **Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego** telling King Nebuchadnezzar *"our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up";* **Daniel** confident in the lion's den, **Elizabeth & Mary** rejoicing they would conceive John & Jesus; **Peter's** flip from cowardly to a courageous preacher on Pentecost; **Stephen** quoting Jesus as he was stoned to death – *"Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing;"* **Ananias** saying, "BROTHER Saul, receive your sight;" Saul, now **Paul**, standing before King Agrippa holding up his chains and saying, *"King Agrippa, I wish you were just like me, except for these chains,"* **Martin Luther** nailing his 95 theses to the Wittenberg door and saying, *"Here I stand. I can do no others;"* **John Wesley** finding confidence in Jesus Christ, *"I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation and an assurance was given me that he had saved me from the law of sin and death;"* **Billy Graham** coming to Christ at a revival and becoming an evangelist who led our pastor emeritus, **Bill Mason**, to Christ in OKC, who has been like a 2nd dad to me and a beloved pastor and friend to so many of us. We have a wonderful story of people who have been filled with confidence to do things for the KOG. But our confidence is not in any of these or in ourselves- our confidence is in the Lord. We're not the message we are the messengers. That's why we want to HOFJ. He is THE message. The Word became flesh and moved into our neighborhood.

How's your confidence? It may be struggling right now for a variety of reasons. Put your trust in Jesus. He is the way, truth and life. Caiaphas, the religious one, and Pilate, the secular one, had confidence that was limited. They can't help us now. "Behold the man" can! Confidence in God doesn't mean we'll not fail or even mean you'll be afraid of failure, but you will still take the risk.

When we have confidence in the Lord, we can have a calm, non-anxious presence. The end will be good.

I remember the story about a little boy who was reading a western novel and the hero got into trouble. It looked like the bad guys were going to finish the hero off. The tension got to be so great that the little boy turned to the back of the book and read the end of the book. It turned out that the hero lived. Knowing that, the little boy could turn back into the novel and continue to read, not out of fear, but with confidence that everything would turn out all right. As is said, "Begin with the end in mind."

Think of Good Friday – Jesus is crucified. Think of Easter Sunday. When we're in-between, on Saturday, we can still have confidence because of Jesus. We will win. We will have victory. The Lamb wins. I've read the end of the book – we win! Jesus is Lord. There's no reason to be

fear. *“Trust in the Lord. Turn your eyes upon Jesus – look full in His wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his face.”*