

Good Friday
Year of the Lord 2019
John

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
Thee!”**

33So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” 35Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” 36Jesus 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.” 37Then 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.” 38Pilate 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. 39But 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?” 40They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

1Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. 2And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. 3They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. 4Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” 5So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” 6When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” 7The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” 8When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. 9He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. 10So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you

and authority to crucify you?” 11 Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

12 From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” 13 So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” 15 They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” 16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

In the Name of Jesus:

‘The throne of grace!’ Happy name for the Gospel, as we fire and misfire, hit and miss with our prayers, our hopes, our repentance, our faith! The One Whose Kingdom is NOT of this world RULES those—even some still IN this world, not OF this world—takes ON the brutal task of RULING such as us—takes it on AS...GIFT! AS IF shepherding wandering sheep, laying down His Life for those HE CALLS ‘friends,’—THAT calling is all His ‘friends’ have for certain!—as if the Cross Itself is nothing but GIFT from His Father in Heaven.

And so, we are complete: you, I, the world. “It has been completed!” Despised, the prophet calls Him; shown in Pilate, despised means, when the day is done, the Man simply IS...NOT...WORTH...THE...BOTHER! (Think your Baptism at His authority; and His feeding of us with His Body and His Blood. Who has received our report?! Who cares about such things? Do we?)

“I find no guilt in Him!”

“Away with him, away with him, crucify him!”

What ‘amazed’ Pilate was NOT their democratic vote that day: save the murderer; murder the Savior. Pilate KNEW people fully!

What ‘amazed’ Pilate was that Jesus is not like us at all! Not a word of defense! Why would He? ‘What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? For this very hour I was sent into the world!’

Your poor, miserable pastor-sinner wants the Crucifixion of Christ to be your joy! So, I am going to risk making half of y’all angry; maybe all y’all!

That saddest part of canceling our activities last night because of weather, is that I turned on the TV. And what did TV say to me? The Trial of Jesus!

The top-cop of the land came out and declared, ‘I find no charge against this man; he has done nothing wrong!’ But then—and I suppose you and I will hear this for ANOTHER two years: ‘Away with him! Crucify Him!’

After three decades, I figured out how to read those lines with feeling! Just turn on any news station, read the paper, go online: Crucify him! Why? What has he done wrong? Crucify him!

Saint Paul urges that, first of all, prayers and petitions be offered for kings and all in authority, so that we children of God may live quiet lives, as Ecclesiastes bids us live: eat, drink, love your family, complete your work with joy—Jesus hit just about every line in the John Passion reading: Behold your mother! I thirst! It is finished!

It is worship and a true, good work to pray for our president; and for our betters, our lords and masters, who are howling for his crucifixion.

But, my dear ones, PRAY! Meaning, approach the throne on which sits the One Who considers you, me, the world—with ALL our sins and ALL our idolatry and ALL our easy disposing of Him and His Will and His Love—Who counts ruling over people like us AS...A...GIFT!

Y'all must be praying for your pastor. Keep it up!

It finally came clear! That great song of Paul in Philippians, about Christ Who was obedient as a servant, to death on a cross, NOT grasping at His Godhead—and, so, now HE is exalted, so that every knee should bow and confess Him the Redeemer, the Savior, the Lord.

HE...IS...NOT...LIKE...US! Or Pilate! Or Trump! Or Obama!
Or Congress! Or Supremes! Or TV!

HE...has NO with to FORCE us down on our knees, to knuckle under to Him, as if we were Muslims, or political pawns.

Instead, the bowed knee is the knee of service to those whose feet need careful washing, whose OBVIOUS problems in life are sign of heaven's disfavor to some; but to disciples of the Crucified, they are OUR WORK, begun in us by Christ; which HE will bring to fulfillment, when He comes to pardon us forever, for our firing and misfiring, our hits and misses, our prayers and deeds and repentance and faith.

My dear ones! HE...considers it PURE GIFT...To rule by pardon and forbearance and suffering and death and eternal pleading before ALL the voices that would doom....

You, me, those who won't stop hurting you; the world.

'Why? What has He done wrong?' He does not breathe the spirit of this world, but the Spirit of the Living God. Rejoice on Good Friday in the Name of Jesus! Amen!