

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, January 11th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Behold the Man
John 19:1-16

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Beloved in Christ, we gather not because we are strong,
but because Christ was faithful.

We come to behold the Man—
**not crowned with gold,
but with thorns;
not enthroned in power,
but lifted up in obedience.**

Come, all who would see the truth that costs something.
Come, all who would worship the King the world rejected.
Come, and behold the Man.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Holy and Sovereign God,
we adore You as the One who reigns not by force,
but by faithfulness;
not by fear,
but by love that endures to the end.

We praise You for Jesus Christ,
the true King,
the obedient Son,
the faithful Man,
who stood silent before accusation
and steadfast before suffering.

We marvel that power from heaven

was revealed in humility,
that glory was made known through the cross,
and that Your victory was accomplished
not by taking life,
but by laying it down.

Now, O God, we ask that You would draw near to us
as we draw near to You.
By Your Holy Spirit, open our eyes to behold Christ clearly,
soften our hearts to receive Him truthfully,
and order our lives under His gracious rule.

Let every competing loyalty be exposed,
every false king be unseated,
and every fearful silence be replaced
with faithful obedience.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
the One who was mocked and crowned,
rejected and enthroned,
crucified and victorious.

Amen.

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against You
in thought, word, and deed.
We have not loved You with our whole hearts
or lived faithfully according to Your will.

We have chosen what is safe instead of what is right
and trusted ourselves more than Your grace.
Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ,
who bore our sin and remained faithful to the end.

Renew us by Your Spirit,
restore us by Your mercy,

and lead us in newness of life,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
 Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 Give us this day our daily bread
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever, **Amen.**

Hymn #172: "As With Gladness Men of Old" (V 1,4,5)

As with gladness men of old
 did the guiding star behold;
 as with joy they hailed its light,
 leading onward, beaming bright:
 so, most gracious Lord, may we
 ever more be led to thee.

Holy Jesus, every day
 keep us in the narrow way,
 and when earthly things are past,
 bring our ransomed souls at last
 where they need no star to guide,
 where no clouds of glory hide.

In that heavenly country bright
 need they no created light:
 thou its light, its joy, its crown,
 thou its sun which goes not down;
 there forever may we sing
 hallelujahs to our King.

Responsive Reading

Isaiah 53:3-7

3 He was despised and rejected by men,

a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
 and as one from whom men hide their faces
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

**4 Surely he has borne our griefs
 and carried our sorrows;
 yet we esteemed him stricken,
 smitten by God, and afflicted.**

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
 and with his wounds we are healed.

**6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
 we have turned—every one—to his own way;
 and the LORD has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.**

**7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
 yet he opened not his mouth;
 like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
 and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
 so he opened not his mouth.**

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2025), Is 53:3–7.

Anthem (Music Ministry): “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 19:1-16

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. ² And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. ³ They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. ⁴ Pilate 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.” ⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” ⁶ When 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.”⁷ The 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.”⁸ When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.⁹ He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.¹⁰ So 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.

Sermon

Today as we start into chapter 19, I need to say something that matters deeply for how we hear this passage. We have been moving steadily through the Gospel of John for over a year now, and while that kind of careful, verse-by-verse work is necessary, it comes with a danger. Sometimes, in working through the details, we lose track of the bigger picture. We forget what John has been doing all along.

From the very first verse

John 1:1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John has been unmistakably clear. He is presenting Jesus to us as the one and only living God. Not as a prophet. Not as merely a good and moral teacher. Not as a tragic martyr.

He is God.

Every sign, every discourse, every confrontation has been moving us toward this moment. So when we arrive at chapter 19 and see Jesus standing before Pontius Pilate, we must keep that truth firmly in mind. This is not simply a man on trial. This is the Creator of heaven and earth standing before a Roman governor.

Yes, we will see Jesus in humility. We will see Him suffering. We will see Him silent and beaten and mocked. But do not confuse humility with weakness. Do not confuse silence with helplessness. This is God the Son, willingly submitting Himself to the will of the Father. This is divine sovereignty wrapped up in human flesh, standing still while sinful men believe they are in control.

This is not merely about what happened to Jesus.

It is about what happens around Jesus—and what happens within us when Christ refuses to be convenient.

Pilate knows the man before him is innocent. He knows it. He says it again and again. There is no confusion here, no doubt. Yet Pilate is trapped—not by truth, but by fear. Fear of the crowd. Fear of Rome. Fear of losing his position. And so he tries to find a way out that does not require courage.

John opens with words that should unsettle us

John 19:1

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

That sentence should both shock and disgust us. Pilate has already declared Jesus innocent, and yet he orders Him to be flogged. This is not justice. This is compromise. Pilate is trying to keep everyone happy, so he does not lose anything socially, or politically, he is trying to punish Jesus enough to satisfy the crowd, but not enough to lose control of the situation. He thinks, maybe if Jesus is beaten badly enough, maybe if He is humiliated enough, maybe the crowd will say, ‘That’s enough.’

This is the anatomy of compromise. Pilate knows the truth. He even says the truth aloud. But truth acknowledged is not the same as truth obeyed. Pilate is a man who believes he can manage righteousness rather than submit to it. He imagines that he can do just enough wrong to avoid doing what is fully right.

So, he orders the flogging.

The verb John uses—ἐμαστίγωσεν (emastígōsen)—points to formal Roman flogging, not a spontaneous beating. Roman flogging was not a mild punishment. It was designed to break a person in both body and mind. The victim was tied to a post, his back exposed, while a whip embedded with bone or metal tore flesh from his body, sometimes right down to the bone. William Barclay tells us that some men died under the scourge; while

others lost their sanity. This was regulated brutality, administered by professionals. Isaiah foresaw this moment centuries earlier:

Isaiah 50:6

**⁶I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face
from disgrace and spitting.**

Peter would later interpret this event and its meaning for the Church;

1 Peter 2:24

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

But we must hear that carefully. Healing comes through wounds, not around them. Redemption is not achieved by minimizing suffering, but by passing fully through it. There is no salvation that bypasses the cost of obedience.

Pilate hopes this suffering will satisfy the crowd. He believes pain can be used as currency. He imagines that injustice can be portioned out carefully—enough to quiet outrage, not enough to destroy him politically. But sin does not accept partial payment. It demands total surrender. Pilate has stepped onto a slope that does not level out.

Then the soldiers take Jesus.

And here the text becomes even more revealing—not because of what they do, but because of why they do it. They twist together a crown of thorns and press it onto His head. The crown is meant to signify honor, victory, celebration. But this crown is made from thorns, the visible symbol of the curse from Genesis 3: ‘Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.’

Do not miss what is happening here. The curse pronounced because of Adam’s sin is now borne by Adam’s Redeemer. The ground was cursed for our sake; now the curse is pressed into Christ’s flesh. This is substitution enacted before the cross ever comes into view.

They drape Him in purple, the color of royalty, and mock Him with the words, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’

Earlier, the Jewish leaders mocked Him as Messiah. Now the Roman soldiers mock Him as King. They strike Him. They spit on Him. They bow in false worship. They laugh. Humanity is venting its hatred toward God.

And here is something deeply sobering: human beings are made in the image of God. God is a Creator, and we reflect that creative power, even in the depths of our sin. Here, that creativity is twisted into something horrific, as fallen humanity invents new ways to degrade the Son of God.

Yet John wants us to see the irony: everything they mock is true. Jesus is King. The crown does belong on His head. The knee will bow before Him. What they intend as blasphemy becomes prophecy. What they mean as ridicule becomes revelation.

Pilate returns and says,

John 19:4

4 Pilate 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.”

This is now the second formal declaration of innocence. Roman law demanded release. Instead, Pilate offers spectacle. He presents a beaten Christ as an argument.

Then Jesus comes out.

John does not dwell on physical description, but we know the scene. Blood. Sweat. Spit. A crown cutting into His scalp. A robe sticking to torn flesh. And Pilate says words heavier than he understands:

John 19:5

⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”

Ἴδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος. (Idoû ho ánthrōpos) Pilate is saying look carefully. Consider deeply.

Pilate believes he is saying, ‘Look how pitiful He is.’

God is saying, ‘Look how faithful He is.’

For a moment, you can almost imagine the crowd stunned into silence. Jesus is not weeping. He is not pleading. He stands in quiet dignity, fully resolved to drink the cup the Father has given Him. There is strength in His stillness. There is majesty in His suffering.

This is the Man. The true Man. Humanity as God intended it to be. The first Adam grasped at equality with God and fell. The last Adam refuses to grasp, and through obedience, redeems mankind.

Everyone else in the courtyard is enslaved.

Pilate is enslaved to fear. The fear of Caesar's power, the fear of losing his position, the fear of unrest in his region.

The priests are enslaved to envy and control.

The soldiers are enslaved to cruelty.

The crowd is enslaved to manipulation.

Jesus alone stands free. Bound physically, but spiritually free. Governed not by fear, but by obedience to the Father's will.

Pilate thinks humiliation, by lessening Christ he can make the crowd accept him. This is a mistake we still make in the world today.

We imagine that if we soften Christ, reduce Him, make Him less demanding, He will be more acceptable to non-believers and false believers. But you cannot make Jesus more acceptable by shrinking Him. Pilate tried. It failed.

When the chief priests and officers see Him, they erupt: '**Crucify Him! Crucify Him!**'. It is in the imperfect tense suggests they keep shouting. What was happening there still happened in the world today, hatred does not reason; instead, it just repeats its cry. Pilate snaps back, 'You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.' This is the third declaration of innocence from the man who had all the power to release Jesus.

So you see that:

Truth is no longer the issue.

The issue is will.

Then the leaders reveal the true charge

John 19:7-8

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."⁸ When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.

Fear grips Pilate. This is no longer just political pressure. This is existential dread. Pilate has judged many criminals, many rebels, many self-proclaimed kings, but he has never had one like this stand before him.

There is something different about Jesus. His calm. His authority. His eyes. The Greek intensifies the situation that word we see translated as fear means to be exceedingly afraid. To better understand what is happening we need to know that Roman mythology is filled with stories of gods appearing among men. Pilate senses that Jesus does not fit any category he understands. And when Pilate hears the words 'Son of God,' it sends a chill down his spine, because to Him Jesus just might be a God.

So, he asks the most important question a human can ask:

John 19:9

**⁹ He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?"
But Jesus gave him no answer.**

'Where are you from?'

Jesus does not answer.

This silence is not defiance. It is trust. Jesus has already spoken truth, he has already told Pilate all he needs to know. He has nothing left to prove.

As Isaiah foretold,

Isaiah 53:7

**⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.**

Jesus's silence here is obedience.

Pilate explodes:

John 19:10-11

¹⁰ So 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.”

The Greek word here ἐξουσία (exousia) means both authority and jurisdiction. Pilate believes power is the ability to control outcomes.

Jesus responds calmly: **‘You would have no power at all unless it were given you from above’**

This is one of the most important sentences in Scripture for us to help us understand true authority. All human power in this world is delegated. All thrones are provisional. All authority answers to heaven. Rome reigns only by permission. Caesar breathes only by God’s grace.

It is absolutely true that Pilate has the power to crucify, but he does not have the power to justify. He can end a life but cannot secure his own soul or anyone else’s. He possesses authority without freedom, position without peace.

And that is where this passage stops being just about Pilate and starts being about us.

We like to think we are strong. In control. Capable. But when obedience to Christ begins to cost us something like social status, approval, or comfort, our strength and obedience often begin to fade away. Real power is not the ability to dominate. Real power is the ability to do what is right even when it might cost you everything. Pilate did not have that power.

From that moment, Pilate tries harder to release Jesus. But the leaders strike the final blow: **‘If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend.’** This is the pressure point, the one thing that they know they can say that will strike to the core of Pilate’s being. Pilate’s identity is bound to approval, so fear tightens its grip on him.

Things have not changed, so many people in the world today abandon Jesus and his teachings the minute they fear being cancelled or are hit with the whatever-phobe. So many Christians today still have their identity tied up in worldly approval instead of Christian obedience.

Pilate sits on the judgment seat, and this time declares to the gathered Jews, ‘Behold your King.’

He means it ironically. Heaven hears coronation.

The crowd responds with cries of, **'Away with Him!'**, remove Him from our sight. This is humanity's preferred rejection of God. Society does not want God dead, just nowhere near them and their lives. It has not changed, modern society wants a God that does not reign over them, does not confront them about their sin, does not demand obedience, but still freely offers love and salvation.

And then the most devastating confession in the passage:

'We have no king but Caesar!'

In rejecting Christ, they embrace tyranny. In rejecting God, they embrace the world. This is always the exchange. When Christ is removed as the ruler over your life, something else rules in his place and it is never something kinder or better.

So, Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified.

History will remember this moment with brutal clarity.

We repeat these words often in the Apostles creed 'Crucified under Pontius Pilate.'

Jesus was not crucified under the power and authority of the crowd. He was not crucified under the power and authority of the priests.

He was crucified under a governor who knew the truth, but feared the cost of acting upon that truth.

Pilate thought he was judging Jesus.
In reality, Jesus was revealing Pilate to us.

And now the text turns back to us once again.
We stand in the courtyard that day too.

Will we behold the Man, and worship?
Or will we push Him away to preserve our comforts in this world?

Will we be willing to compromise God's truth to protect our social position, our power, our relationships in this world?
Will we allow fear of losing out here on earth make our decisions for us?

Because the truth is that we have to make a choice, neutrality is not possible. We stand with God or we do not.

Silence is a verdict.
Delay is a decision.

So today behold the Man.
Crowned with thorns.
Clothed in mockery.
Silent in obedience.
Free while others are enslaved.

This is your King.

And the question is no longer who He is, John has made that abundantly clear, He is
GOD.

So the question becomes: Who you will be in His presence?

And if the Holy Spirit is convicting you, reminding you of all the times you have said,
'Away with Him,' in your life, let that conviction lead you to repentance. Let your prayer
be simple and sincere:

'Jesus, I am sorry. Come close. I need You.'

And May God do his work among us, for His glory and our salvation, as we walk as the
Salt and Light of His Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us Pray,

Enlighten Our Darkened Hearts
Lord God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously opened the eyes of the blind
through your Son Christ Jesus,
and have let us poor sinners see your light.
Enlighten our darkened hearts
so that we may rightly learn and know Christ your Son,
who died on the cross for us,
and was counted guilty of our sins.
May we see your gracious help and mercy
in all our needs and afflictions,
and may we seek that help
through faithful prayer
and find our comfort and defense against the devil,

and finally be delivered in death.

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Quinquagesima

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #181: "All Praise to You, O Lord"

All praise to you, O Lord,
 who by your mighty power
 did manifest your glory forth
 in Cana's marriage hour.

Oh, may this grace be ours,
 in you always to live
 and drink of those refreshing streams
 which you alone can give.

So, led from strength to strength,
 grant us, O Lord, to see
 the marriage supper of the Lamb,
 the great epiphany.

Pastoral Prayer

Faithful God,
 we thank You for meeting us in this holy moment—
 for speaking not only to our ears,
 but to our consciences and our hearts.

You know how easily we resemble the crowd,
 how quickly fear can shape our choices,
 and how often silence feels safer than faithfulness.

Forgive us where we have pushed Christ away
to preserve comfort,
where we have compromised truth
to protect ourselves,
and where we have bowed to lesser kings.

Strengthen Your people, O Lord.
Give us courage where we are tempted to retreat,
clarity where we are confused,
and obedience where the cost feels heavy.

For those who suffer unjustly,
be their defender.
For those burdened by guilt,
be their assurance.
For those struggling to follow You faithfully,
be their strength and their peace.

As we go from this place,
keep before us the image of Christ—
crowned with thorns,
silent in trust,
faithful unto death—
that we might live not in fear,
but in faithful allegiance to Him.

We pray all this in the strong and saving name of Jesus Christ,
our King and our Redeemer.

Amen.

Benediction

Go now,
beholding Jesus Christ,
the faithful Man and rightful King.

May you walk in courage where fear once ruled,
in truth where compromise once lingered,
and in obedience shaped by grace.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God the Father,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and always.
Amen.