

John 19:1-16
Rome, Georgia
July 31, 2016

I was talking to one of my cousins the other day. She commented **that you can choose your friends but that you can't choose your relatives**. We get who we get as kinfolks and we love them the best we can.

The **friends** you choose in life definitely affect the direction of your life.

Dr. Howard Hendricks, a professor at Dallas Seminary used to tell his students

For more than sixty years Prof served on the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), where he taught more than ten thousand students. He also ministered in person in more than eighty countries. Through speaking engagements, radio, tapes, films, the sixteen books he authored and coauthored, countless journal and popular-market articles, his service on numerous boards, and his work as a chaplain to the Dallas Cowboys (1976–1984), his reach was and is worldwide.

“Two things will determine where you're at ten years from now—the books you read and the friends you make.” After a pause to let that sink in, he added, “Choose them both very carefully!”

The choices we make in life concerning who we keep company with will determine in large part how we live our lives. I remember hanging out at the bowling alley in the late 60's and realizing that almost everyone I knew had either been in jail – or had the expectation of spending time in jail. Numbered among my friends I could count thieves, dope dealers, murderers and worse. But to those of us in **our crowd** – this was just normal. Only a few in that crowd were actual friends.

I thank God that **one who had been numbered among that crowd found a Friend in Jesus**, and mustered the spiritual fortitude to present the Gospel message to me before I ended up on a road from which there would have been no return.

Pilate was among the Politically Elite in his day. The crowd he ran with, were those who were in positions of power. He was part of the **“in crowd”** of the political intrigue of his day. His **MENTOR** was a man named **Sejanus**. Sejanus along with his supporters including **Pilate** had been inducted into an **elite group known as “friends of Caesar”**. The semi-official title connoted **power, privilege, and Prestige** and Pilate thrilled every time someone called him **Caesar's friend**.

We have previously discussed how Sejanus plotted to overthrow Caesar Tiberius, and ended up being himself being **executed**. Prior to his execution, Sejanus had also **plotted to destroy all the Jews** in Italy, a plot that **Pilate wholeheartedly endorsed**. Sejanus' treachery resulted in **conciliatory overtures to the Jews by Tiberius** which Pilate was bound to adhere to lest he likewise be executed. So **Pilate the Political Player** finds himself in a strange position as he stands before the leaders of Judaism that early morning. **He loaths them with every ounce of his being, but as a politician, he must please them and remain obedient to his master, Caesar**.

Pilate chose his friends long before the fateful day that he stood in judgement over Jesus Christ. The life of a politician is a life that demands the **compromise of your integrity and the quieting of your**

conscience in order to remain a “**Friend of Caesar.**” Pilate did not want to condemn Jesus to death. **3 times he professes the innocence of the prisoner before him.** Yet, ultimately Pilate had to make a choice between friends and doing the right thing. **Pilate chose the friendship of the world over his own conscience, and over THE TRUTH that gazed into his eyes that morning.**

In **John 19:12**, The Jewish leaders who had brought Jesus to Pilate for judgment said,

“If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.”

That day, **Pilate chose friendship with Caesar over friendship with Christ.** In going for that short-term gain, he lost his eternal soul. **For Pilate – Caesar was the THE WORLD.**

If you choose to be the friend of the world, at the expense of being the friend of God, you’ll lose your soul; but if you choose Christ over World, you’ll gain your soul.

Caesar, for our purposes here this morning, **represents, this present world system** and all that it dangles in front of us to tempt us.

1 John 2:15-17 warns,

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Or, as **James 4:4** bluntly draws the line,

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

“Kosmos,” which means literally **“an ordered system.”** in the context of the New Testament it is often used to refer to the **“ the sum total of human life in the ordered world, considered ... alienated from, and hostile to God.”** Or to **“the earthly things which seduce from God.”** **It is not only the physical world but also the “ordered system over which Satan is the head.”**

When **John tells us not to love the world,** he is in fact seeking to direct our attention away from the **pervasive influence which seeks to exert itself over mankind.** John is warning us against allowing our thoughts and actions to be influenced and ultimately controlled by the **“spirit of the age.”**

In his book **“SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT”** **Richard C. Trench** gives us **this meaning for the term “world.”** He says that it is....

“All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, inevitably to exhale.”

Jesus has made it clear that:

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16:13), *where “Mammon” represents the heart of the world system.* The choice that every believer must make is *between the love of the world or the love of God.*

In order to save his career and his neck, Pilate compromised his integrity. For Pilate, as with all those who are friends with the world – **the end justifies the means.**

The basic interpretation of "the end justifies the means" is:

"At the beginning of an action I might not be able to determine whether that action is morally right or wrong, but when the morally right goal is successfully achieved, then the steps which led to it must be morally right too."

When a little twist is introduced to this interpretation, it becomes:

"I shall do a minor evil to achieve a greater good." or
"My aim for greater good makes all the evils I have done right."

From such **worldly rationalizations** springs the likes of **Margret Sanger**, her hero **Adolf Hitler**, and other Eugenic and Euthanasia promoters.

Rather than doing the right thing, (which would have been to let Jesus go), Pilate offered the Jews the choice of releasing the notoriously violent prisoner Barabbas or Jesus. Jn. 18:39

In so doing, Pilate presents Jesus as a prisoner on par with a murderer. And then, in a last ditch effort to appease the Jews, without giving them what they really wanted, he ordered that Jesus be horribly scourged, a fate which in and of itself is worse than a death sentence – this he did **in spite of the fact that he had judged Jesus innocent** – and **will so judge two more times** (John 19:4 "I find no fault in him." , 6 "I find no fault in him.") before finally turning Jesus over for Crucifixion.

Next, the Jews accuse Jesus of **making Himself out to be the Son of God**, which bothers Pilate greatly (John 19:7-8). In Roman mythology ,sometimes the gods came to earth.

Pilate is now worrying that he may have scourged a “god” which is definitely bad for your karma. !

On top of all his personal reservations about killing Jesus, **Pilate’s wife** sent word about her dream, warning Pilate to **have nothing to do with “that righteous Man”**

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. ” (Matt. 27:19).

So Pilate once again attempts to get Jesus released, which leads the **Jews to cry out**

John 19:12 “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.”

At this point, Pilate no doubt feels trapped. **He suppresses his conscience and condemns an innocent man to a cruel death.**

19:13 NOTE: **Pilate** could not afford to have the Jews accuse him of disloyalty to Caesar, and so he weakly submitted to the mob. He now **brought Jesus out** to a public area **called the Pavement**, where such matters were often handled. bbc

John 19:14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: (6:00 am) and he saith unto the Jews, **Behold your King!**

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? **The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.**

By choosing **Caesar’s approval over God’s favor**, Pilate turned away from the light that he had before him to the darkness of the world as it stands in opposition to God. **This could be expected of a heathen.**

BUT the leadership of the Chosen people of God – the nation of Israel – **likewise profess their allegiance to the World and prefer darkness over light.**

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Mat 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, **he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.**

John 19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

Pilate had been given the opportunity to respond to Christ’s invitation when Jesus told him

(**John 18:37**), “**Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice,**

Pilate could have experienced forgiveness and a clean conscience. **BUT HE CHOSE POLITICAL CORRECTNESS.** Knowing that Jesus was innocent – he sent Him to His death.

The Leadership of Israel, repeatedly ignored the pleading of the Lord to respond to their Messiah, **but they would not.**

Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, **how often would I have gathered thy children together**, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, **and ye would not!**

Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Mat 23:13 **But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**

By the way, even though **Acts 4:27-28** says that **Pilate, Herod, the Gentiles, and the Jews crucified Jesus** because God **predestined** it to occur, **they were not pre-programmed robots who had no choice in their sin. They were slaves of sin, as all unbelievers are, but being in bondage to sin does not exempt anyone from being accountable to God for their sin. Although we can't totally understand it, God is sovereign but people are responsible for their sin.** *Stephen Cole.*

Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, **both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,**

Act 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Pilate viewed the Jews as thwarting his career goals. AND The Jews viewed Jesus as thwarting their career goals. THEY BOTH HAD AN END GAME IN MIND – AND THE DEATH OF JESUS WAS THE “MEANS” TO THEIR “END”.

The servants of this world are always callous in their calculations regarding what place they will allow God room to operate in their lives.

But whereas those who are versed in the ways of the world are callous – those who know the LORD are full of compassion.

Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Mat 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

His **compassion** extended an invitation to **Judas** to repent right to the end.

- Although He knew that the cross loomed ahead, He **thought of His disciples' needs and addressed those needs in the Upper Room discourse.**
- He prayed for them in His **high priestly prayer.**
- He extended the invitation **to Pilate** to listen to the truth. As He hung on the cross,
- **He granted mercy to the repentant thief and prayed for forgiveness for His persecutors.**
- And He thought about His **mother's needs** and entrusted her to **John.**

Our Lord was always full of compassion for people. Those who are growing to be like Him will also look for the needs of others and seek to show them God's compassion.

Pilate and the Jewish leadership were both motivated by fear. Love of the world breeds fear – but those who come to the lord – are free from fear and free from the bondage of the fear of death.

David, who had many enemies seeking his life, sang

(Ps. 56:11), “**In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?**”

Psalm 118:6 echoes this: “**The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?**”

For many people however, there is always the **lingering fear of God and judgment.**

Most unbelievers hope that they’re going to heaven, but there is that nagging fear that they may be wrong. They base their hope on the fact that they’re **not as bad as terrorists, murderers, and child molesters.**

But what if God’s standard is straight A’s and they’re only B+? It’s like one guy said (Reader’s Digest, 9/89, p. 67), “My greatest fear is that I will be standing behind Mother Teresa in the final judgment line and I’ll hear God tell her, ‘You know, you should have done more.’”

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. **John 19:30**

Joh 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**

John 17:4 **I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.**

Rom 10:4 For **Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**

Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

Heb 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but **a body hast thou prepared me:**

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure *therein;* which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. **He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.**

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*