

Why the Hate: *John 19:1-16a*

Sometimes. Sometimes, people are pretty awful. Sometimes people are just bad. There are times I can't watch the news because I physically and mentally can't stand to see what people have done to other people. There are times I just can't stand to read a history book because I can't believe what people have done to other people. I find myself avoiding the Norwalk, Iowa fb page bc it's just people complaining about other people, each in their own minds doing so with meaning and purpose. Each comment building on top of the last, people finding support and accusation at each stance. The voices heard the loudest in the stadium aren't always the voice of the whole group. Sometimes people are just mean, cruel, and ugly to one another.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. **2** And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. **3** They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

All I can envision here are these bullies that beat the person up, they dress him up, making fun of him and trying their best to humiliate and belittle the person.

There's something about a train wreck that we just can't help but watch. When someone that's been put on a pedestal falls off, you watch, you're glued. There's a sick part of you that wants visual affirmation that we are all in fact human and that we are all made of the same ingredients and that we are all after the same things. We want that affirmation however it comes. We watch. We wait.

Pilate is a governor of the Roman Empire, he serves as a judge would today. He listens to cases, asks questions and decides whether you live or die.

I don't quite know what to think of Pilate. He starts off mocking Jesus and pointing him out for embarrassment, referring to him as a man. Then he seems to really be trying here to give Jesus every way out possible.

<examples>

These people surrounding Pilate are mean. They're filled with anger and hate. None of us want to be on the wrong side of history. <personal examples> Sometimes people don't know they're on the wrong side of history until it's too late. Perhaps that's what Pilate is realizing in this moment about these Judeans. He begins referring to Jesus as King. And he's shaking in fear. He might not be comfortable with the power he has. Because he, who "holds the power" is shaking. He who isn't on trial is scared. I would love to know if this is a gut reaction, the work of the Holy Spirit or if Pilate himself was beginning to believe Jesus and couldn't risk siding with Jesus. Whatever his reasons, when faced with a possible threat to the emperor and to the roman empire he serves, he is left with no choice.

The roles of power are now at play. Throughout the gospel we've learned how Jesus changes things. How there is new meaning, to our usual way of thinking. This water is now living water. This bread is now the bread of life. So now we see death, knowing for us that

These are the texts we try to avoid. We joyfully come to the Maundy Thursday foot washing and last supper and then we begin looking forward to Easter, to resurrection, to new life, yet we haven't mourned, we haven't experienced death. It's time we face this text. It's time we face this reality.

When Jesus was born, a new kingdom on earth was born with him. This kingdom is unlike other kingdoms we're familiar with. He doesn't come with an army in tow. There is no force. There are no threats or attacks. Instead there's love, spread from one person to another. There's hope, spread from one person to another. There's the unfamiliar and the unknown. One of these kings is not like the other...

The irony of Jesus, our passover lamb, being sacrificed as other passover lambs are sacrificed is not the mental image we often cling to this time of year. We avoid Jesus' death, yet without death there could be no resurrection. And the resurrection we celebrate, we love, we cling to. It's the difference that matters. So we must accept this death and how it happened.

"They discovered they're on the wrong side of history." -Kenneth Carter