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#102

“Consider the Man” John 19:1-7

Introduction

I never saw it coming. That's an expression that I'm sure you've used on different occasions in your life. We use it literally and figuratively. Often it means that we weren't paying attention or were blinded to the reality of something approaching us. When I got hit by a softball this summer, I never saw it coming because I was looking the other way. Someone in an automobile accident might claim that they never saw the other car coming. But many times we use it figuratively to indicate that some circumstance caught us off guard and we never dream or considered that such a thing might happen to us. It is true that the things that surprise us in life are often the result of our not paying attention. We are easily blinded by distractions, disinterest or bad information.

The same is true about our relationship with Christ. Too often we don't understand or see or know Christ the way we ought, because we are too busy with other things. Rather than looking at Him with eyes of knowledge, we allow other interests or the lies of the world to shape our view of Him. At times like that we can be surprised by Him.

Today we are going to see that our lifetime goal should be to pursue Christ. Never should we stop considering Him; looking at Him; and knowing Him. That message was delivered by the most unlikely of sources nearly 2000 years ago as Pilate

displayed Jesus to the crowds of people and commanded them to look at Christ.

[John 19:1-7]

Pilate was no friend of Jesus. As we know, he handed Jesus over to be crucified. And yet in one of many unintended actions by the enemies of Christ, Pilate did the very thing that every Christian longs for – He brought Jesus before men and challenged them to consider Him. His intentions were not evangelistic. His motives were selfish. But what we have just read gives us the opportunity to fulfill the command of Hebrews 12:3 – *consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* That's what we want to do today – we want to consider Christ as He was presented on the day of His trial.

I. Consider His Humility

As chapter 19 opens, the official Roman trial of Jesus is over. Christ has been found not guilty. But the unofficial trial before the court of popular opinion is just beginning. When Pilate went out to the people in verse 38 of the last chapter, he proclaimed these words – *I find no guilt in Him.* And as he prepared to release Jesus the backlash began. They wanted Christ's blood. Pilate offered to release Jesus under the custom of letting on criminal go each year. That would insure that the stigma of moral corruption would be upon Christ forever. But they asked for Barabbas instead. He was a thief and a murder – but that was better than what they thought of Christ

What Pilate did next can only be explained by selfish politics. In an attempt to gain control of the

crowd and manipulate them to accept his verdict, he had Jesus scourged.

A scourge was a whip or lash made of leather thongs attached to a handle. Often the leather would have bone or lead imbedded into it. Scourgings were administered for a variety of circumstances and purposes. Often they preceded crucifixion – although this moment, Pilate was still intent on setting Jesus free. A scourging could also be given to “loosen up” a prisoner for questioning, or to warn them to change their ways. Scourgings were brutal. The scourge was designed to rip the flesh off of the back of the victim. History records the death of some simply from the flogging of a scourge.

Pilate’s motive could well have been to create some amount of pity in the eyes of the crowd so that they would passively agree to His release.

After the whipping, Pilate gave Jesus into the hands of the soldiers so that they could make sport of Him. They mocked Him and tortured Him.

These horrendous acts are recorded for us in 3 short verses – and yet the pain and suffering they produced was enormous. And what do we learn from these acts? They only illustrate for us the teachings of the Scripture. *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. . . There is no one who does good; no not one. We are at enmity with God. . .* Man is depraved in his mind and heart. Even when there is no reason, no cause, no purpose, man, if left alone, will follow the course of darkness. Seeing the actions of Pilate and the soldiers teaches us again the great need men have of salvation.

And so after this intentional and brutal abuse of Christ, he brought Him out in front of the people. Beaten. Dressed up in a silly robe with a crown of thorns. What was there to see? When you looked

at His humiliation, what are the possible conclusions you could come to? There are really only two possibilities:

1. A loser. A man who had been beaten – both literally and figurative. A man without a future. A fraud. A fake. A liar and a deceiver. Someone disgraced; without power or influence. A man to be despised. This was the picture in the minds and eyes of the Pharisees and the Jews and the Gentiles in that moment. There was no one who saw Christ differently. This was the judgment of the court of popular opinion. Just as today, while there may be a wide variety of opinions about Jesus, most will not acknowledge Him as Lord.

And yet, still it possible to consider Him differently.

2. You could look at this man - you could consider Him - and see love. What else would explain the patience, the endurance, the suffering and the shame? All that Jesus was enduring was a picture of what we deserve. His humiliation was driven by only one thing – *God **so loved** the world.*

So when you consider His humility – when you see Him here broken and beaten and humiliated, won't you consider the depth of His personal love for you? This is only of part of the extent to which Jesus would go because He loves you.

II. Behold the Man

After inflicting such great damage to Jesus' body, Pilate brought Him out before the people and said, *Behold the Man!*

Many have speculated on the thoughts and emotions in Pilate's heart when he spoke these words. Was there a hint of admiration? Of wonder? Was he mocking Him? Or was He seeking to

arouse some sympathy from the crowd so they might take pity on Christ and acquiesce to Pilate's desire to release Him? The truth is we don't know.

But we can nonetheless, consider the challenge. The word *behold* is one of many words in the Greek language that means to look at. But unlike *blepo* which means to see something with your eyes, or *eido* which mean to see in order to know something, this word carries with it a sense of warning. It means to pay attention. *Heads up! Hey, look at this!* It's written in the imperative – it's a command. The idea is that we are to look in such a way as to perceive and contemplate in our hearts and minds.

This is exactly the call of the gospel. This is what every non-Christian needs to do. And this is exactly the ongoing challenge for every believer. The more we look at Jesus, the more there is to see. On the outside, Jesus looked like a broken reed – a man who had reached the end of the rope. But for those who would take up Pilate's unintended challenge there is so much more than meets the eye. .

There is an interesting parallel between this event and something Jesus said much earlier in His earthly ministry. Do you remember the day when John the Baptist sent word to Jesus from prison, struggling with some doubts – a kind of crisis of faith? He wanted to be sure about the identity of Christ. Now here is the one who had spent his earthly ministry preaching the gospel, pointing people to Jesus and preparing the way for Christ.

After sending an answer to reassure John, Jesus turned to the crowd and asked them a question. *What did you go out to see?* He knew that lots of people used to go see John in the wilderness because He was a bit of a show. Here

was a man who dressed in camel's hair. He wore a leather belt and ate locusts and wild honey. And so Jesus wanted to know, *what did you see when you looked at him?* And then He answered His own question. *But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. "This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.'*

How do you behold someone? Jesus' answer is that you look at what he's like (what he does) and you listen to what He says. Here's the answer Jesus sent to John in prison. *Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

Our challenge is to behold Jesus. It is to look at Him. It is to pay attention and see Him and know Him. If you are not a Christian then your greatest need and opportunity is to consider the life and teachings of Jesus. His life testifies of His love for people and His ability to forgive you and to set you free from sin. And His teachings demonstrate that He knows you; He knows what you are like and what you need. And He has come to give you life and give it to you abundantly. So *behold Him. Behold the Man!*

If you belong to Christ, can you ever tire of beholding Christ? How much more is there for you to consider? How well do you see and understand His grace? His faithfulness? His promises? Do you know why He would allow you to suffer? Or prosper? *Behold the Man! Behold Jesus Christ!*

When we consider His humility, we see His love.

When we Behold the Man, we see what He's like.

III. Understand His Identity.

In the end it finally comes out. When it's evident that Pilate has found Jesus innocent of the charges, the real heart of the issues spills out from the Jews. Verse 7 - *The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.*

The Jews had considered what Jesus taught and they understood that He made Himself out to be God. And they were offended by that claim. They understood well that if Jesus was God they owed Him their lives and their worship and their allegiance. But they rejected His claim. They rejected His offer of life.

How about you? Who is Jesus? Have you beheld Him? Do you understand that He claims to be God? And if you know it to be true, if you profess it by faith, then what difference is it making in your life? How does it affect your relationship with your wife, your husband, your children or your parents? What difference does it make in how you work or your school? How does it impact your sufferings, and your victories? If Jesus is God, then He's not the beaten criminal that a casual glance into John 19 might suggest. If Jesus is God then you need to commit your life to beholding the Man, to looking at the Man, to knowing the Man who gave His life for you.