



Pilate

We have come a long way from the last supper and the broken promises in the garden of Gethsemane.

“Get up, let us be going. See my betrayer is at hand.” were Jesus’ last words spoken in freedom.

Immediately after he’d said this, he was kissed by Judas, arrested by the chief priests and elders and abandoned by all his friends.

Peter denies him. Judas commits suicide.

And Jesus is brought before Pilate.

There stands Jesus in front of Pilate.

Even though Pilate is the man who controls the country, he appears confused.

Confused that a king would attempt to set up a kingdom in the manner that Jesus has pursued.

Confused that the religious leaders are fighting against their own people.

Confused about the way this all goes...

He notices the mob that seems to be restless on that morning. They are howling about something and they are quite serious about their requests. Pilate tries to recall what he knows about this wandering preacher... the words in his heart, "I find no fault in this man." And he reviews the last three years:

A widow’s son is miraculously called from the deathbed.

The bride whose wedding almost went bad had more wine than she’d veer planned.

The cripple who walked out of the house carrying his bed.

The parents who rejoiced over their daughter’s restoration to life.

The thousands who were fed.

All of this Pilate remembers.

And now Jesus was thrust into his courts by the religious leaders.

It was here that things began to go wrong for Pilate.

He violates the voice of his conscience.

Instead he orders Jesus to be whipped.

But that is not enough. They want him crucified.

Pilate can no longer stand this. In the brilliance of his mind, he vaguely remembers an old Hebrew habit: He calls his servant and orders a basin of water to be sent and washes his hands.

Pilates actions and non-actions may accuse us in one way or another.

They may question us.

They ask us, where we see ourselves as we are reflecting on Jesus hours before Pilate.

Are we part of this washing hands and looking the other way, saving our bare skin and neglecting what could be done to save somebody else's life?

Where are we standing?

...guilty of doing nothing?

Are we among the oppressors who are handing innocent lives to the cross?

Are we washing our hands in innocence as Pilate does, because we shove the responsibility for what is going on in the world to others?

Stations of the Cross cannot be looked at without getting involved.

They touch us.

They draw us near.

They make us part of their story.

And they make us part of the story of Jesus' passion.

In all who suffer, in all who are tortured and die Jesus suffers, too.

...and at the same time he bears the guilt of the world.

Whoever is willing to follow Jesus, must play a part in the stations of the cross of this world...

Then we learn to see with Jesus' eyes:

images of horror on the one side,

and visions of hope on the other;

people who comfort and help and

people who believe in life in spite of death.