

Theme: Powerful Words – Powerful Passion – “I Find No Fault in Him!”

Text: John 18:28-38

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. ²⁹ Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" ³⁰ They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." ³¹ Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," ³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. ³³ Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." ³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

"It's not my fault!" Those of you who are parents probably have heard these words a few times from your own children. Your parents probably heard them a few times from you and your siblings as well. It's not just children who like to cry, "It's not my fault!" By nature, none of us like to accept the blame, even when we have done something wrong. We like to rationalize our misdeeds, and find some really good excuses and exceptions for our sins, rather than admit we were the ones at fault.

Even in the aftermath of another tragic mass school shooting this past week, much of what you hear and read in the media and on the internet is "Who or what is at fault?" The gun laws are to blame, it's the president's fault, the government's fault, it's the FBI's fault, it's the police's fault, it's the moral decline of society, it's the lack of parental involvement, it's our society and culture that glorifies violence that's at fault. We want to find someone or something to blame for this tragedy—often blindly neglecting the blame that lies with the person who committed the unspeakably evil act.

"It's not my fault!" It's the same old song and dance that humanity has performed since Adam and Eve fell into sin: "**The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate**"... "**The serpent deceived me, and I ate**" (Genesis 3:12-13). In other words, "It's not my fault!"

There was one Son who never uttered these words of protest to His Father; the One who had no **faults**: Jesus. Do you think Pilate knew just how true his words were when he said of Jesus, "**I find no fault in Him at all**" (v. 38)? These are the "**Powerful Words**" from Jesus' "**Powerful Passion**" that we will be considering today. Pilate was of course speaking about not finding any fault with Jesus according to Roman law, but this statement: "**I find no fault in Him at all**" could only truly be said of Jesus.

We are always saddened when "innocent" people are punished unjustly for crimes they did not commit. However, even people who are innocent according to the laws of man are still guilty of sinning against the Law of God. The Apostle Peter reminds us of Jesus' true innocence, "**[Jesus] committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth**" (1 Peter 2:22). The Jews had to bring a string of lies and half-truths to Pilate in order to try and get Jesus convicted of crimes against Roman law. Luke tells us in his Gospel that the Jews "**began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King'**" (Luke 23:2). In our text when Pilate

asked them, **"What accusation do you bring against this Man?" (v. 29)** they dodged his question knowing full well that their accusation of blasphemy against Jesus would not stand up in a Roman court of law. **They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you" (v. 30).**

Jesus was of course innocent of all their charges. He had not **"perverted the nation,"** the Jewish religious leaders had done that. Jesus had not spoken against **"paying taxes to Caesar."** In fact, He said, **"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" (Mark 12:17 - NIV)** when He was questioned about paying taxes. Yes, their accusation that Jesus was **"Christ, a King"** was true, but as Jesus explained to Pilate, **"My kingdom is not of this world"** and **"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (v. 36-37).** Jesus did not come to take over Caesar's kingdom, but to establish His spiritual kingdom and rule in the hearts of people as the King of truth through His Gospel message of truth.

Well, if Jesus was so innocent, how then did He end up on the cross crucified as a condemned criminal?

First of all, because Jesus didn't defend His innocence. He willingly allowed Himself to be accused, ridiculed and mocked by His enemies. He allowed Himself to be whipped, tortured, and condemned to death by crucifixion. As Isaiah had prophesied hundreds of years earlier, **"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).**

Secondly, Jesus ended up on the cross because *God* found fault with Jesus! Not because of what Jesus had done—He was the only one who had ever lived the perfect life that God had commanded—but because all the sins of the world were laid upon Him. Again as Isaiah had prophesied, **"And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6b).** Jesus was completely innocent, yet He suffered as if He were the only one who was guilty. In God's eyes Jesus had become sin itself (**cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21**). Every lie, every theft, every murder and mass shooting, every evil thought, every sexual perversion, yes, even every act of idol worship was attributed to Jesus. God's wrath over the world's sin was taken out on Him. God found all faults in Him and in the blackness of that Good Friday He forsook Him and allowed Him to suffer the punishment of hell.

And yet Jesus never once cried out, "It's not My fault!" He never once protested this gross miscarriage of justice, or tried to assign the blame where it rightfully belonged. Instead He cried out, **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34 - KJV).**

Jesus accepted all this and endured all this so that God would not find fault with us! Because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice God now looks at us and says, "I find no fault in him! I find no fault in her! I find no fault in you!" The Apostle Paul put it this way, **"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21 – NIV).** Can you even imagine love like that? Can you believe that you and I are loved like that? In Jesus, we are! The faultless, eternal Son of God experienced death and hell so that we sinful, mortal human beings will experience eternal life and heaven.

Knowing all that Jesus has done for us, and is still doing for us; realizing all that He gave up for us, how can we possibly then **"find fault with Jesus"** ourselves? Yet that is what we do so often in our lives by our words and actions.

- ✠ Instead of resting on His grace and trusting in His infinite wisdom we doubt and mistrust the way He is working things out in our lives and in the world around us.
- ✠ We constantly ask "Why?" and demand an answer from God on our own terms.

- † Instead of humbly praying, “Thy will be done,” we complain, “It’s not fair!” when things don’t seem to be going the way we feel they should.
- † Instead of confessing our own guilt we make up a list of excuses for our sins and insist “It’s not my fault!”

The reality is God owes us no explanations, yet He has revealed the truth about Himself to us in His Word. The truth is, “It isn’t fair” that Jesus, the sinless Son of God dies and suffers hell for rebellious undeserving sinners such as us. In actuality it is “our fault” that our sins not only earned us damnation, but also that they put Christ on that cross. But despite all this, despite our sinfulness and our ungratefulness, because of Jesus’ perfect life and innocent sufferings and death God looks at us and says, “I find no fault in you at all!”

As we reflect on Jesus’ great love and sacrifice for us during this season of Lent, let us pray each day that the Holy Spirit would move us and inspire us to give Jesus our love, and yes, our very lives, in response to His grace. Amen.