

Date: 26.04.2020

Time: 6pm

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 23 (Scottish Psalter)

Scripture: John 18:28 – 19:16

Outline:

- a) Introduction
 - 1. Human depravity
 - 2. Divine grace

Gabbatha

- **Introduction**

We started this study a couple of weeks ago about three places: Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha. We look at Jesus' trials in these places and see that God is behind the suffering. He was behind the suffering when Jesus was offered to drink the cup of God's wrath in Gethsemane. Now, in Gabbatha, Jews and Gentiles come together against God and His anointed, but still God is behind this. This trial is from God and part of His requirement.

Gabbatha was the place of Jesus' second trial. Jesus had been condemned in Caiaphas' house in front of the religious leaders. Gabbatha was the headquarters where civil law was enforced by civil authorities. This place of civil trial was needed by the Jews for Jesus to be put to death.

We see here a place of unjust trials, but a place that was necessary. Jesus had to be treated as guilty. He had to be punished. He had to be condemned.

1) Human depravity

We're reminded here of an uncomfortable truth – man is of himself lost in sin and wicked. The Romans were a wicked and cruel people. The Jews were blessed with the law, but they were no different from the Romans. Both were guilty before God.

Hypocrisy: We see the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. They didn't enter the headquarters as they knew that if they did, they'd be unable to celebrate the Passover. They paid great attention to the ceremonial law, but cared little about the moral law. They knew that Jesus was an innocent man, but they were willing to break the Ten Commandments to kill Him. They raised false accusations against

an innocent man, but they wanted to join in the Passover. They were not afraid of rejecting the Messiah. They were hypocrites, white sepulchres that were white on the surface, but rotten inside. They didn't want to miss Passover, but were willing to kill an innocent man.

Hypocrisy is a real danger for us, to content ourselves with outward religion. We can dress for church on a Sunday, keep the Sabbath special, remember and even take part in Communion, but still be dead on the inside. We might condemn brethren for outward aspects of their faith or practice, but in our own hearts, we're cold as ice.

Dishonesty: The religious leaders accused Jesus of many things, we read this in the other gospels. They started their case with false accusations, and then later said that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. They started with lies to get their case heard. They're playing with rules and commandments to get what they want.

Pilate was a corrupt man. He killed people out of revenge as token of his authority, even if the people were innocent. He was afraid to put Jesus to death and 3 times said that he found no fault. He washes his hands to try to remove his guilt, even when he sends Jesus to die.

Injustice: The trial of Jesus was a mockery. It was the opposite of fair or just. Jesus did no wrong. He healed. He preached the truth. He fed the poor. He raised the dead. And the people's response was to get rid of Him. The Jews and Pilate acted wickedly and unjustly.

Violence: Our hearts can be unmoved as we know what's coming next in Jesus' suffering. There is violence. Jesus was spat on. He was mocked. He was beaten. Flogged. Abused. Humiliated. A crown of thorns was put on His head. He was treated with cruelty. This is one of the darkest hours in the history of mankind. The darkness is demonic, from Hell. Jesus' suffering was terrible.

Rejection: The people Jesus came to save didn't want Him. People who had been singing "hosanna" a few days earlier, now cried out to "crucify Him".

Self-condemnation: We see the rage of a people who were willing to condemn themselves to Hell in order to kill Jesus. A man without grace would rather Hell than Christ. What human depravity we see.

2) Divine grace

In this dark picture is a beautiful light from God.

Jesus' silence: We see divine grace in Jesus' silence. He doesn't defend Himself, or justify Himself. This is a sign of His innocence that He didn't need to justify Himself. It was also to fulfil the prophecy, *"like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth"* (Isaiah 53:7).

By His silence, Jesus did nothing to avoid death. He didn't want to be spared or declared innocent. He had to die. He was doing everything to be condemned. He could have said so many things. He had all power to defend Himself, but He didn't in order that He could defend us. He didn't speak as His own lawyer, in order that He could be our advocate.

In Jesus' defence, He is evangelising Pilate. He offers Pilate the truth and challenges him with the truth. Though He was accused and condemned, His heart was for sinners.

Jesus' control: Jesus is in charge in this situation. There's a restlessness in the people. Pilate was afraid of Jesus. Jesus had all authority in this place. He was "*pouring out His soul to death*" (Isaiah 53:12). He had a willingness to be put into the hands of sinners. He allowed sinners to accomplish His will in letting Him die.

Jesus' mercy: All Jesus had to say at any point was "enough". He could have called angels who were ready to fight for their King, just awaiting the word – but thankfully that word never came.

Jesus could have come down from the cross at any time, but He didn't.

The Father could have consumed the whole world and we'd be lost in Hell forever. But He didn't.

God is a gracious and merciful God.

Jesus' substitution: The Passover was a celebration of deliverance. As a symbol of this feast, a prisoner could be released. Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free, but the people wanted a murderer to go free instead of the innocent.

Barabbas had to die. He was guilty. Jesus had to live. He was innocent.

But Jesus took Barabbas' place. Jesus who knew no sin became sin so that Barabbas could go free. This is a picture of what Jesus did for us.

We are guilty. We are deserving of God's wrath, but Jesus took our place. He died on our behalf. Jesus took the place of a guilty man so that he wouldn't perish, but have life. Jesus took our place and we took His. He went to Hell so that we can go to Heaven. He became sin so that we could be called righteous. He was cursed so that we would be blessed.

In the darkest time, the brightest grace is seen. Even the worst of human depravity can be covered by God's grace. There are many in Heaven who cried out the words "crucify Him". Jesus prayed for them when He was on the cross.

Our sin is wicked. We are wicked. But His grace is bigger than all of our sins.