

Human Mess

10-27-24

John 18:1–3 (ESV) O/H

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered, the HUMAN MESS! ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Imagine having communion with Jesus being washed over with the truth of Christ. It couldn't feel any better than this. Full of the presence of God, and we step out into the world, the human mess. Here comes our buddy, Judas, with a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, with lanterns and torches and weapons. Stunned we watch Judas greets Jesus:

Matthew 26:49-50 (ESV)

Judas says, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. And Jesus said, "(Hello) friend." In Luke 22:48 we see Jesus also say, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Welcome to the world. In this human mess, Jesus is unphased. Jesus knows God and knows what is coming.

John 18:4 (ESV) O/H

Then Jesus, "knowing all" that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

Jesus is fully aware what was going to happen. But no panic, no confusion. Jesus knows that God works in human messes.

To clarify their intentions Jesus said, “Whom do you seek?”

John 18:5-6 (ESV) O/H

⁵They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “**I AM.**” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

⁶When Jesus said to them, “**I AM,**” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus said, “I AM” and they were knocked to the ground. We have studied the term “I AM” in depth. The added word “he” in your Bible is not in the original language. Jesus has used “I AM” 8 times previously to identify Himself. As a review, “I AM” implies continuous existence. “I AM” was recognized by the Jews as a title of deity. In Exodus 3:14, when God commissioned Moses, HE said, “Tell the people: ‘I AM’ has sent you!” One theologian said, “This phrase harbors within itself the most authentic, the most audacious, and the most profound affirmation by Jesus of who HE was.” Jesus said, “You want me. You are getting God!”

Of course, Peter wants to help Jesus in this human mess.

John 18:10-11 (ESV)

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear.

Not understanding Jesus’ mission, Peter isn’t a help. Therefore, Jesus has to correct Peter’s misled efforts.

Luke 22:51 (ESV)

Jesus said, “Stop it!” And he touched his ear and healed him.

Now Jesus tries to give Peter some insight. God is in total control, and Jesus is fulfilling HIS purpose on earth.

Matthew 26:53 (ESV) O/H

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

Approximately 6,000 men were in a Roman legion thus totaling 72,000 angles. Jesus is telling the disciples, “I got this!” But also, Jesus tells them, “I must go through this ‘human mess’ to fulfill Scripture.”

Matthew 26:54 (NIV)

But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?

The disciples cannot grasp all of this. Matthew 26:56 says, “They all fled.” Now, Jesus is taken to face Annas and Caiaphas and other religious leaders. This is a show trial. They have already determined that Jesus was to die. In the Human Mess, Jesus remained silent. In Isaiah 53:7, Isaiah prophesied that HE would remain silent.

On the way to this dishonest interrogation, Peter denies Christ for the 3rd time. Luke 22:61 records a devastating scene when Peter denied Christ for the 3rd time. Luke says, “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.” This had to be painful. Now Jesus is sent the Roman governor, Pilate. Pilate doesn’t want to have anything to do with Jesus and this Human Mess.

Pilate knows the Jews are bringing false charges and that Jesus is innocent. Plus, Pilate's wife in Matthew 27:19 tells him to have nothing to do with Jesus, because she has had a terrible dream about this whole situation. In Luke 23:7 Pilate tries to send Jesus to Herod, the area king. Herod can't find anything wrong, so he just sends him back to Pilate. What a Human Mess! However, Scripture demanded that Jesus must go before the Roman court. The Jewish method of execution was stoning. The Roman method of execution was crucifixion. The OT and Jesus Himself clearly prophesied that HE would be crucified: Numbers 21:9, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, John 3:14, and John 12:32-33.

To confuse Pilate even more, when he asked if Jesus was a King, Jesus said in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Jesus tells Pilate that HIS kingdom is not of this world. Pilate must think, "What a mess!" But Jesus continues in verse 37, "I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Jesus confronted Pilate with the truth. Pilate's response is the same as non-believers today in 2024. The very same thing! Nothing has changed!

John 18:38 (ESV) O/H

Pilate said to Jesus, "What is truth?"

Poor Pilate, he doesn't know what truth is and he doesn't know what to do with this human mess. Now he even tries to save Jesus.

John 18:38b–40 (ESV)

Pilate told the Jews, “I find no guilt in him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

⁴⁰ They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

They crucify the King and save a robber. What a Human Mess!

Brothers and sisters, as we bring C.18 to a close, God reinforces an absolute truth. God used a Human Mess to fulfill the mission of Christ and provide for our eternal salvation as a free gift. Lesson #1 In human messes we must stand immovable on God's absolute truth.

John 14:6 (ESV) O/H

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Also in C.18, God is teaching us another equally fascinating, powerful, and eternal lesson. Lesson #2 God is working in our Human Mess. Jesus will walk us through our Human Mess and fully accomplish exactly what HE intends for us. Therefore, with conviction and confidence, we stand like Joshua.

Joshua 24:15 (ESV) O/H

Choose this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.