



PONTIUS PILATE

(Mark 15:1-15; John 18:28-19:16)

My name is Pilate: Pontius Pilate. Appointed governor of the province of Judaea. Stationed in Jerusalem. May the gods deliver me from warring Jews! Have you ever walked on a tightrope or balanced on a razor's edge? I have. That's what it was like being governor in Judaea.

Early one morning they told me a group of priests was waiting to see me. They wouldn't come in. They wouldn't defile themselves by entering the palace! Something to do with their ritual laws and the Passover festival. But they had a prisoner they wanted tried. I went outside to see them. "What do you accuse this man of?" I wanted to know.

Their answer was evasive: "We would not have brought him to you if he had not committed a crime." Not good enough! What crime? "Then you yourselves take him and try him according to your own law." "Oh no", they said. "We are not allowed to put anyone to death." So that was it! I must do their dirty work. Must I? I was not their servant but the servant of Rome.

I went inside and sent for the prisoner. Jesus, his name was. I had heard of him. A troublemaker? Maybe. Certainly no favourite of those stiff-necked priests. I felt some sympathy.

'Are you the King of the Jews?' I asked. He looked me straight in the eye. "Is that your own question or have others told you about me?"



Who was asking the questions here? I drew myself a little taller.

"Do you think I am a Jew? I sneered. "It was your own people and the chief priests who handed you over!" Why couldn't they settle their own arguments? Why were they so dead set against this man? "What have you done?" I asked him.

"My kingdom does not belong to this world", he said. "If my kingdom belonged to this world, my friends would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. No, my kingdom does not belong here."

'Are you a king, then?'

'You say that I am a king', he answered, and went on to talk of truth. I could find no reason to condemn him. I argued in his favour, tried to find a face-saving solution that would satisfy everyone.

It was a waste of time. They wanted blood. Not just anyone's blood, but his. I did my best

but they went one better: threatened to report me to the emperor. For allowing a rebel to make his claim of kingship. The order was given, the sentence carried out. Pax Romana was restored.

Looking back I often think about that man Jesus. I wish I could have known him better. If only I had been free to decide for myself...

Forgiveness is . . . accepting God's sovereign use of people and situations to strip you of self importance, and humiliate your self love.

Martha Kilpatrick

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong

Mahatma Gandhi

Always forgive your enemies. Nothing annoys them so much.

Oscar Wilde

A mature Christian has capacity to absorb the offences and weaknesses of others, not just demand they perform up to the code of ideals.

Stephen Crosby



To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner was you.

Lewis B. Smede

People find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than for being right.

J.K. Rowling

Let us forgive each other, only then will we live in peace

Leo Tolstoy

He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass

George Herbert

"With a little time, and a little more insight, we begin to see both ourselves and our enemies in humbler profiles. We are not really as innocent as we felt when we were first hurt. And we do not usually have a gigantic monster to forgive; we have a weak, needy, and somewhat stupid human being. When you see your enemy and yourself in the weakness and silliness of the humanity you share, you will make the miracle of forgiving a little easier."

Lewis B. Smedes