

## Good Friday 2026. BEHOLD THE MAN

I'm preaching on the chapter I've just read. John chapter 19.  
I'm looking at the BEHOLDS. Behold means look, see, here is. So let's do it.  
Behold is an old fashioned word. My granny used say, 'well lo and behold'  
There is no single English word that translates the Greek word for behold. "Ido"  
The best I can do is 'stop and look and listen, cause here's the thing, what I am going to get you to look at is important'

Verse 4 ' Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him'

Pilate, the governor, has made up his mind that Jesus is innocent and he is determined to let him go, but he needs some back up from the crowd and the religious leaders.

He has played the Herald card, the Barrabas card and now he hopes the compassion card will move the chief priests and the elders and the people to change their minds. So he has Jesus scourged. Scourging is so cruel that not everyone survives it.

After he has Jesus scourged Pilate says to the crowd.  
"Behold I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him.  
Pilate could find no fault in Jesus.

Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe and Pilate said to them, "BEHOLD the Man" It's a haunting line.  
What is Pilate trying to say? What do you think he is trying to say? After all, it's obvious Jesus is a man.  
I think he is saying "Look at this man. He is a threat to nobody. He is tortured beyond recognition. He is bleeding profusely from the wounds on his back. Surely I've punished him enough. He won't be stepping out of line again after this experience. Don't you feel sorry for this man. I will let him go free.

But John has recorded these words because he sees a deeper meaning. Reading John's account again I am struck by the levels at which you can Behold or see these events. The crowd, the religious leaders, Pilate saw or Beheld the unfolding events with their human eyes but there is something infinitely more profound and heavenly taking place. John's reason for recording these events is " so that you might believe he is the promised Messiah" John is saying look at or behold this man. He is the true Man, the word made flesh, the Man who has come into the world to show us what God is like, the Man who has made the invisible God visible. Believe what he says about himself, he is fulfilling OT scripture and his claims are true.

Pilate goes back to Jesus and says " where are you from?" Jesus doesn't answer him .  
Pilate says to Jesus " Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have the power to crucify you and the power to release you?" Jesus answers v11 "You could have no power at all against me unless it was given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin."  
Jesus is almost kind to Pilate, like consoling him. "Don't worry Pilate, everyone here is guilty, but you are not as guilty as they are. " Suddenly the roles of prisoner and judge are reversed!  
It is Pilate who is being tried, but is less guilty than those " who delivered Me to you"

Verse 12 is the game changer.

From then on Pilate sought to release Jesus , but the Jews cried out saying." If you let this man go you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." We think of Pilate as a weak man, but up til now he has been resolute in trying to let Jesus go. But from v 12 onwards it all changes. From that moment on Pilate is lost. If it gets back to Caesar Tiberius that he has let a self proclaimed king go free, Pilate's job and his very life is on the line. Caesar Tiberius is cruel, debauched, a capricious ruler and Pilate has fallen out with him before. He can't risk it again.

V13 and 14. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat him down in the judgement seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but In Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews. "BEHOLD your KING."

This was said by Pilate in Mockery. This is the sort of King you crazy people deserve. Once again John hears these words and realised they had another truer meaning. Jesus is the King of all who have gathered. He is the king of the chief priests, of Pilate, of Caesar. He is the king of history. He is in fact our King.

He is also a suffering servant type king, as we read in Isaiah 53, nothing like their perception of what a king is. In mockery they have dressed Jesus in a purple robe and put a crown on his head. These were Pilate's symbols of kingship. But let's look below these symbols, what are Jesus' true symbols of kingship? - his wounds, his humility, "he was led like a lamb to the slaughter" - his complete obedience to his father's will. It is through his suffering and death that he becomes King.

V16 Pilate delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led him away.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened it to the cross. It read JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. It is written in three languages Hebrew , Greek and Latin.

Everybody could read and understand it. Crucifixion was a political statement. It said " if you engage in trying to overthrow the Roman government this will happen to you too. " this crucifixion was an entertaining of religion and politics.

We sing ' On a hill far away.' Maybe for us, but not for the inhabitants of Jerusalem . It happened just outside the main city, by the roadside, where people passed by all the time. If the Romans were in charge of Mangawhai it would have taken place on the road just past the school or the Kaiwaka Rd just past Terry and Cherrie's house.

The chief priests didn't like Pilate's sign. V 21,22. " therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,'do not write The King of the Jews, but he said I am the King of the Jews'

Pilate had been out manoeuvred by the high priests. He was determined to have the last word.

It was in fact God who had the last word. He used a pagan ruler to deliver the truth. Pilate asked "What is truth" in John chapter 18. Pilate had no idea what the truth was, but here he is declaring the truth.

BEHOLD I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM  
BEHOLD THE MAN  
BEHOLD YOUR KING  
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

Mary is standing near the cross she is beholding her son. She is grief stricken. Imagine being a mother watching other humans doing that to your son. Imagine any parent watching.

What is she thinking. Maybe..

"Why couldn't he have stayed at home and taken on the family business when Joseph died.?"

He was a skilled carpenter.

If only he had kept his thoughts to himself.

If only he hadn't ruffled the feathers of the wrong people.

If only he hadn't healed people on the Sabbath

If only Pilate had had the courage of his convictions.

If only, if only

But I sort of knew something like this was coming. I remember Simeon's words in the temple on the day of his dedication.

" the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too"

I remember his first miracle when he turned water into wine at a wedding. Jesus said to me " my hour has not yet come." Has it come now? Is this hour he was referring to .

Suddenly Mary's thoughts are interrupted. Her son is speaking. "Woman behold your son" He is not looking at her, his eyes have shifted to the man standing next to her and to him he is saying " behold your mother" Even in his extreme pain he is thinking of his mother.

And from that hour that disciple ie John took her to his own home.

We'll look at the last 2 utterances from the cross that John records.

After this v26 Jesus said 'I thirst.' John often records Jesus speaking of water. Remember the long conversation with the woman at the well. He said to her "will you give me a drink" Then Jesus offered this lady living water. It was clear he had abundant supply. His thirst resulted in her salvation. And here we see it again. Jesus asking for a drink, his extreme thirst resulting in our salvation.

The last of Jesus' words from the cross. "It is finished" Its all done . It's just one word in Greek. It's the word people write across a bill after it has been paid. The debt is cancelled. Your bankruptcy has been dealt with. The job Jesus came to do is complete. We can stake our lives on his finished work. It doesn't mean the story is finished, it's like this chapter of the story is completely and utterly finished, and on this basis a new chapter can begin.

And bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

Look at verses 31-36. ' Not one of His bones shall be broken' These words occur 3 times in the OT. Once they refer to a person and twice to a lamb. In Exodus the events of the 1st Passover are described. Each family was to kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood on the doorposts of their house and when the angel of death passed over in the night the first born inside the house would be protected but if there was no blood sprinkled as in the houses of the Egyptians the first born son would die. After they had sprinkled the blood they were to cook the lamb and eat it , but no bones were to be broken. The Passover lamb was the means of Israel's liberation and freedom from slavery in Egypt.

And look what they used to sprinkle the blood with, the hyssop plant, the plant that is mentioned in v29. It's another Passover reference. John takes all this Passover imagery to show us the great passover lamb has come. All those other lambs killed each year to remember the first Passover, they all point to Jesus. He is the Passover lamb as well as the King.

The events of Good Friday took place on the day of preparation for the Passover.

What did the cross achieve? Much , I'll look briefly at three things.

The cross is the truest window into God's loving heart. It shows us how much God loves us and all the world.

" This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. 1 John 3:16.

" This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:10

Apart from the cross the world wouldn't know what true unconditional love is .

Someone has said , if we want to know what true love is, we shouldn't look in a dictionary, but at the cross.

Jesus has suffered for us in our place making it possible for one day all suffering to cease. Jesus also suffers with us. He feels the pain of whatever we are going through.

Secondly the cross shows us that God through Jesus has triumphed over the devil, evil and death itself. It was predicted in Genesis that an offspring of the first humans would crush the head of the serpent ie Satan. Colossians 2 13-15 says " He forgave us our sins , having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us: he took it away nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." It is the resurrection that sealed Jesus' victory over death.

"O death where is your sting, o death where is your victory. The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord"

The cross and the Resurrection are inseparable and are nearly always mentioned together in the Bible. They are parts of one event, it's just that today we are focusing on Jesus death. It's Friday but Sunday's coming!

Thirdly and foremost the cross achieved the forgiveness of our sins. I asked some of my friends what was the greatest achievement of the cross and they all said, "we can have our sins forgiven" "Where would we be if we couldn't have our sins forgiven." I was surprised by everyone's depth of feeling, in light of today's world where the guilt of sin is explained away and the need for the cross is unacknowledged. God never takes sin lightly. The cross shows the gravity of sin. Forgiveness is costly. It cost God the death of his son.

Jesus prayed from the cross. "Father forgive them for they don't know what they do."  
Forgiveness for the men carrying out his execution.  
Jesus said to the criminal dying next to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."  
Forgiveness for the man dying on the cross next to him.

Three times in the past month from different sources I have had my attention drawn to a sermon delivered by Alistair Begg. It ends in talking about the thief crucified next to Jesus and an imaginary scene in heaven. I was touched by it and feel compelled to pass it on.

I'm quoting . 'Think about the thief on the cross.... I can't wait to find that fellow one day to ask him. "How did that shake out for you,? Because you were cussing the guy out with your friend.? You'd never been in a Bible study, you never got baptised, you didn't know a thing about church membership and yet you made it! You made it! How did you make it? This is what the angel must have said. What are you doing here? I don't know! What do you mean, I don't know? Cause I don't know. Let me get my supervisor. We've got a few questions for you. Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith? The guy said , "I've never heard of it" Let's go straight to the doctrine of scripture, what about the doctrine of scripture? Mystified silence.  
On what basis are you here?  
"The man on the middle cross, said I could come"  
The man on the middle cross said I could come.'

The invitation still stands , the man on the middle cross is saying we can come.  
The man on the middle cross has made a way for us to come. Will you come? Will you remember how you got here?

Let us pray.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling,  
Naked come to thee for dress,  
Helpless, look to thee for grace.  
Foul I to the Fountain fly,  
Wash me Saviour or die.

Amen