

Introduction: in today's lesson, Pontius Pilate fails to pay the price that truth demands from him.

John 19:1-22 (NRSV, Anglicized)

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. 3 They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face.

4 Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' 6 When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' 7 The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

8 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. 9 He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' 11 Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' 12 From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' 15 They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; 17 and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. 21 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to

Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' 22

Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Response: Thanks be to God.