

WHY, WHAT EVIL HAS HE DONE?  
LENT WEDNESDAY

MARK 15:12-14  
MAR. 22, 2017

And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, "Crucify him."  
And Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him."

There is a new kind of crime to add to your vocabulary:  
Identity crime.

You have probably heard of identity theft,  
in one way or another assuming or using someone else's  
identity, passwords, account numbers, etc.  
to steal from them or some other personal gain.

Despite new ways of doing this in the digital age,  
this kind of identity crime is not that new.

What is new is being guilty because of your identity.

If you are an immigrant, no matter what you do or don't do  
you are guilty of taking a job or resources from  
someone who is native to this country.

If you are Muslim, no matter what you do or don't do  
you are guilty of making people feel unsafe.

If you are rich, you are guilty of oppressing the poor  
If you are a male, you are guilty of oppressing women  
because no matter what you do or don't do,  
you automatically benefit from a social system that  
makes it easier for people like you to get ahead.

If you are a white, you are automatically guilty of racism  
because you benefit from a society which for generations  
has supported your privileges, and because  
it is simply impossible for you to fully understand  
what it is like to be a racial minority.

If you are middle class American you are automatically  
guilty of using more than your share of world's resources

Whatever groups you happen to be part of,  
you are automatically guilty of the faults that group has  
because of your very identity.

Get the picture? So what made Jesus guilty? It is identity.

JESUS IDENTIFIES ALL SINNERS AS THE SAME  
JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF THE SAME AS GOD  
JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS THE SAME AS US

## JESUS IDENTIFIES ALL SINNERS AS THE SAME

The Jewish leaders had an answer to Pilate's question  
about why Jesus deserved to die: he claims to be a king.  
but this answer is not where they started.

What made them so upset with Jesus & considering him evil?  
I think it started with how he treated others who were guilty.  
both those who were apparently guilty of something  
because God saw fit to make them sick or crippled  
and those who were obviously guilty because they were  
tax collectors or other sneaky cheats.

He treated them as if God cared about them  
as much as he cared about good people.  
He touched them, ate with them, healed them,  
and flat out told them they were forgiven  
before they had done anything to make up or pay for  
the ways they were wrong.

But there was more to it than that.  
At the same time, he implied or even flatly stated  
that the Pharisees and other religious leaders,  
the pillars of society and best examples of piety,  
were themselves sinful and needing to repent.

He treated them as if all sinners were the same,  
as if one hateful thought was as bad as murder,  
greed was bad as theft, and lust was bad as adultery.

He went on to talk as if the Pharisees and their arch rivals  
the Sadducees were just as bad as the other.

That is where it started, because as anyone knows,  
calling what is bad good and what is good bad  
is the essence of the Devil's lies.

Now it is true that what makes something good or bad  
is that God himself says it is,  
but that brings us to the next step  
of their being convinced Jesus was pure evil.

## JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF THE SAME AS GOD

When Jesus was confronted with question of what gave him  
the right to tell people they were forgiven,  
and what gave him right to tell disabled people  
to carry their bed or go and wash on Sabbath day  
or act like he knew what was in people's hearts,

He said things that implied he was equal with God.  
He said he knew Abraham, and came down from heaven,  
and had spiritual authority.  
And when confronted with how this sounded like blasphemy  
he came right out and said he was one with the Father  
& referred to himself with God's unspoken name: I AM.  
Everyone knows that the original sin of Adam and Eve  
was acting as if they had the right to make decisions  
as if they were the same as God.  
Claiming to be equal with God is the terrible sin of blasphemy.  
The punishment for this is being stoned to death.  
This is why the Jewish leaders tried more than once  
to stone Jesus to death, but he slipped away.  
So, they resorted to plan B, having him killed by the Romans.  
But the Romans couldn't care less about blasphemy  
and Jesus' claims to be God.  
after all, the Roman emperor himself claimed to be god.  
But that might be the ticket. It might not matter \\  
if Jesus claimed to be equal with God  
but it could matter a great deal if Jesus claimed  
to be equal with the emperor. He would be a traitor.  
There were many who said Jesus was the messiah,  
that is, the anointed one. And he never denied it.  
One kind of Biblical anointed one was a king.  
If they could show that Jesus claimed to be the messiah  
and this was a claim to be a rival king,  
that could do the trick.  
And it did, because...

## JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS THE SAME AS US

The crime for which Jesus was crucified  
was posted over his head: he was king of the Jews.  
The Jewish leaders protested. He claimed to be A king.  
but that didn't mean he was their king.  
But by keeping quiet when he was charged with this,  
Jesus was indeed claiming to be king of the Jews.  
He was identifying himself with them as their representative.  
This one who was true God in the flesh  
was identifying himself with these mortals  
because he had made himself one of them.

He was identified with all of them, both the good and the evil,  
in fact, he himself had identified them all as sinners,  
so he was identifying himself as one of the evil ones.  
No matter what he had done or not done,  
he had identified himself as not only the representative  
but the leader of all those who rebelled  
not just against the Roman emperor but God himself.  
So he had made himself responsible for  
everything wrong any of us have ever done.  
This is why he had to die, because we have to die.  
As with any just sentence, it has to be carried out  
so that good can result.  
Sometimes dangerous people are eliminated,  
or bad people are taught lesson,  
or those who were harmed are paid back.  
The good that results from Jesus' being sentenced to death  
is that he who is truly the same as God  
dies a totally innocent death,  
but because he does truly identify with all of us  
who are truly all equally sinful,  
we are therefore declared righteous and truly forgiven  
and therefore free from death,  
by the judge who truly has authority over heaven & earth.  
all because...

JESUS IDENTIFIES ALL SINNERS AS THE SAME  
including all of us, who are so hopelessly far gone  
that we can only be saved by God's grace.  
JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF THE SAME AS GOD  
so that when he forgives God himself is forgiving  
and when he dies God himself is dying for us.  
JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS THE SAME AS US  
so when we are identified as his people  
through faith in him,  
no matter what we do or don't do,  
we are not evil but holy  
because he died in our place to take away our sins  
and when he rose again we received eternal life.