

# John 1:18-14

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 18 April 2014

Preacher: Paul Levy

[ 0 : 00 ] Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy. Cast off that I might be brought in. Trodden down as an enemy that I might be welcomed as a friend. Surrendered to hell's worst that I might attain heaven's best.

! Stripped that I might be clothed. Wounded that I might be healed. Thirsty that I might be healed. Drink. Tormented that I might be comforted. Made ashamed that I might inherit glory. Entered darkness that I might have eternal life. My Saviour wept that all tears might be wiped from my eyes. Growned that I might have endless song. Endured all pain that I might have unfading health. Bore a thorned crown that I might have a glory diadem.

Bowed his head that I might lift mine. Experienced reproach that I might receive welcome. Closed his eyes in death that I might gaze on unclouded brightness.

Died that I might forever live. That is the message of John 19. It's a message beyond comprehension. Of a king who is stripped that you might have clothes. Of a king who is rich beyond our wildest imaginations.

[ 1 : 33 ] And yet is made poor so that we may be made rich. A king who is fullness himself. Empties himself. That he might fulfil us. It is the king's execution. And I want you to see that beyond any doubt. That is what John wants you to see.

So can you turn back to John chapter 18. And you will see as we go to that passage. Over and over and over again. Jesus is called king. This word keeps coming back.

It keeps coming up in the narrative. I wonder what you think of Jesus. It builds momentum. And it pushes the plot on. So it's there in chapter 18 and verse 33. Pilate says to Jesus.

Are you the king of the Jews? And then you look at verse 36. Jesus answered. My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world. My sermons would have been fighting. That I might not be delivered over the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this world. Look at verse 37. It's there. So are you a king?

[ 2 : 32 ] Pilate says. It's there in verse 39. Do you want me to release you the king of the Jews? And then on to chapter 19 and verse 3.

They came up to him saying. Hail king of the Jews. Verse 12. If you release me this man. You are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king.

Opposes Caesar. 14. He said to the Jews. Behold your king. Verse 15. Pilate said.

Then shall I crucify your king? King. King. King. King. King. It's about royalty. And the momentum is building as we approach the cross.

We are seeing the king. And in our own passage. Written in capital letters in verse 19. Jesus of Nazareth. Verse 19. The king of the Jews. And then there is an argument about his identity.

[ 3 : 28 ] Is he a king? Or does he just claim to be a king? And John is wanting us to see very clearly. At the moment. Of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus is the king.

At the cross. Jesus is God's king. Now the first point is this. He is this king. In the midst of his power.

But that power and majesty. In the midst of that. The king is passive. The king is passive. Is it passive? Have a look at the end of verse 16. So the soldiers.

Took charge of him. So he delivered him over. To them to be crucified. So they took Jesus. More literally. They took charge of Jesus. That's not how you treat a king is it?

No you treat them with honour. No they treat charge of him. Look at verse 18. There they crucified him. Within two others. One on either side.

[ 4 : 27 ] And Jesus between them. The king appears. Doesn't he to be weak. And vulnerable. And feeble. He is passive. As his hands. And as his feet. Are nailed to the cross.

The king is passive. In his crucifixion. He is passive. In his argument. That goes on. About his identification. Who is this man? And Pilate says. I'm going to write.

On the sign. That you are the king of the Jews. Jesus of Nazareth. But the chief priests. Don't like it. And they bat it back and forth. And there is debate about who he is. And what is his identity.

And what does Jesus say in the midst of that? Nothing. He is silent. As a sheep before the sheers. As a lamb before his executioners.

He is passive. And again he is stripped. His clothes are taken from him. Even his garment. Which was seamlessly woven. From one piece to the top or the bottom. It's taken by the soldiers.

[ 5 : 25 ] And what does Jesus do about it? In his defence. He does nothing. He is passive. The king is passive. Vulnerable. Weak. Feeble. Before the whole world.

You've got that wonderful scene of you. In the book of the lion. The witch and the wardrobe. Where Aslan is tied up. You've seen that film. And he's hauled onto the stone. And his mane is shorn off. And his enemies laugh at him. You are not a king. You're just a big cat. That we can kill. And that is the scene we read of here. At least on the surface. At least on the surface.

We see a king who is passive. But we also see a king who is public. A king who is very, very openly public. The execution is taking place. Think of the timing. When did the cross happen?

When did Good Friday happen? It happened at the Passover. One of the main festivals of the Jews. Jews have flocked from all around Israel. To Jerusalem. The execution is a public execution.

[ 6 : 27 ] Now where is it taking place? In verse 20. Where Jesus was crucified near the city. If you look at the maps. You'll see that Golgotha. Was just outside the city walls.

We think, don't we? Outside of the city. As kind of Hem of Hemset. Or high wicked. Or something like that. But it's not like that. Get that out of your mind. How do we know that it wasn't far?

Well, you can carry the cross to it. It's close enough to have walked his cross. From Pilate's palace. Having been beaten and whipped. It wouldn't have been far. So in terms of time in Passover.

The greatest time for all the Jews to come together. In terms of location. It's right there at the city gate for all to see. And in terms of the sign. Have a look at the sign. It's written in three languages.

Isn't it? Verse 20. It is written in Aramaic. In Latin. And in Greek. Why is it written in those three languages? Have you thought about that? Because Pilate wants to make sure that everyone understands it.

[ 7 : 29 ] Aramaic was the language of the people in those days. Latin was the language of the Romans. The Roman centurions. The Roman army that was there. And Greek was the trading language.

And Jerusalem would be filled with traders. Three different languages. Just in case anyone missed it. This is the king who is publicly being displayed. This is the king who is vulnerable.

And who is weak. Who is passive. And public. In the midst of his execution. Now before we go on. Let me just answer something here. There's a conspiracy theory.

Isn't that? That exists. Out there. About the crucifixion. You've probably heard it. Many Muslims believe this. But it wasn't actually Jesus that was crucified. And it wasn't Jesus who was put up on the cross.

It was Simon Cyrene. It was another man. The man who helped Jesus carry the cross. We read about him in Matthew, Mark and Luke. To carry the cross. Simon Cyrene. And there's this belief that somehow Jesus managed to get away.

[ 8 : 27 ] He managed to run away. And the Roman soldiers, they got the wrong person. And they nailed Simon Cyrene to the cross. It's the belief actually that's popularised in the Monty Python. The life of Brian.

That it's not Jesus on the cross. It's someone else. We'll just look at this passage. And take this passage seriously. John claims to be an eyewitness. He claims that he was there.

And he saw it. Now looking at this passage. There's one major problem. That answers this conspiracy theory. And that problem is the chief priest.

These chief priests were close enough to the cross. To be able to read the inscription. Above Jesus' head. So I can just about.

Well I can see the no entry sign in the back of the door. Can you do that? Can you chin around and see the no entry sign? Can you see that? The green sign right at the back door. I suspect that is the

distance.

[ 9 : 25 ] Now you can see that. You can see that. And the chief priests were close enough to be able to read the inscription. They weren't standing miles away. They weren't kind of standing on the other side of Drayton Green.

Reading the inscription. They would have been able to see Jesus' face. Like I can see David Jones' face in the back. Turn around and see David Jones. It's a wonderful face to see. But you can see it. Now these are chief priests aren't they? They are begging for Jesus' blood. He's been a thawed in their side from the beginning of his ministry. And surely wouldn't they have pointed it out? Wouldn't they have said you've got the wrong man Pilate?

Would they not have stopped it? You've got the wrong guy. This isn't Jesus. This isn't the one we put on trial 24 hours ago. This isn't the one we've been trying to kill from months on end. Why didn't they stop the execution? And then you've also got Jesus' family.

In verse 25. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister Mary. The wife of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene. How did they manage to watch if they've got the wrong man on the cross?

[ 10 : 31 ] What do you make of that? I think it's very, very hard. I think it's impossible to hold that conspiracy theory and take this passage seriously. John is wanting you to think very clearly this morning about the cross.

It is passive. Jesus is passive. And it is publicly being executed. But when we look at the passage and we go just a little bit beneath the surface. We see that Jesus being passive is not just quite what we think it is.

We find actually that Jesus is fully engaged. Every step of the way in his own execution. Jesus is walking through his passion. And he is bringing about the events that lead to his death.

So we see that it is passive. It is public. We see that Jesus is active. Can you look at that verse 17? He walks to the cross.

Who is carrying the cross in verse 17? Jesus is carrying the cross. It's interesting John doesn't mention Simon of Cyrene. Why? Why?

[ 11 : 37 ] Well because the emphasis is on Jesus walking to his death. And as we saw in John 12 last Palm Sunday. We saw Jesus has been waiting for the hour. Over and over again John has been saying.

Jesus talks of the hour. This is my hour. This is my hour of glorification. This is the hour of my death. The reason I've been born is for this reason. This is the hour. This is the moment. And Jesus is lifted up on the cross.

And it's at that point we see the king crowned. We are witnessing a coronation. Jesus is active in his crucifixion. And he is active in his identification.

So we're thinking of this notice aren't we? The notice in three languages that is put above his head. Now I know nothing about launching a product.

I got sent a book this week. Somebody obviously for a joke has sent me a book about marketing the church. If I find out who it is. I'm going to put them on the church discipline or something like that. But I know nothing about marketing.

[ 12 : 39 ] And no church should be into marketing. But if you're going to launch a product. Let's say we're going to launch a product. That you're trying to sell. I think you'd think of these three things.

You would think very hard about when to do it. You'd think very hard about when to do it. About the timing of when you'd launch a product. You wouldn't launch Cadbury's cream eggs.

Two weeks before Christmas would you? You'd launch them before Easter. You'd think when to do it. But you'd also think where to do it. Where to do it. Location. And you'd think what words do I use? What language do I use to launch that product? Do you notice they're all there aren't they? The perfect time for most people to be in Jerusalem.

Is the time of the Passover. The perfect place. Was just outside the city wall. And the language. Well the wording. Three languages. So that the whole of the civilised world can see what is going on.

[ 13 : 41 ] Yes a sign about Jesus' head. In a sense it's a warning. The Romans are saying. Aren't they? Yes if you mess with us. If you screw with us. This is what happens to you. Yes the sign above Jesus' head.

Is Pilate's revenge on the chief priest. He's humiliating them. Calling Jesus the king of the Jews. And they feel the sting of that. But ultimately the sign above Jesus' head. Is a declaration. It is a proclamation. For the whole world to see. This is the king. This is God's king. This is the king of the Jews. Pilate Jesus' enemy.

Is serving Jesus' cause unwittingly. Isn't he? People say to me. They say. Look if Jesus came today. If he came in the 21st century. And he died on the cross.

And he rose again from the tomb. And if they videoed the whole thing. And they put it on YouTube. Surely. That would reach more people. Surely there would be more chance of people believing.

[14:35] Isn't it? If he came today. And it was all over the news. And they stuck it on YouTube. YouTube. Well what I want to say to you. Is John 19. Is the 21st century equivalent of that. They didn't have YouTube then.

But Jesus is broadcasting his crucifixion. To the masses. On this day. In this place. In this way. And Jesus is actively engaged in his identification.

And he's actively engaged in the fact that he is stripped. His clothes are taken from him. Do you see that in verse 24? The soldiers are there. They've taken his clothes. Perhaps his belt.

His sandals. His cloak. His headdress. But now they've got the garment. And they say. Let's not tear it. Let's decide. By lot who will get it. Well why did they do that? Why did that happen?

Can you see that in verse 24? This happens so that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Which scriptures?

[15:36] Psalm 22. They divided my garments among them. And they cast lots of my clothing. And so that is what the soldiers did. So we see Jesus' enemies unwittingly aligning themselves with God's plan.

A prophecy of prediction. Which was made hundreds of years before. Coming true. As Jesus' enemies do exactly as God had predicted. Jesus is in complete control. So you see the word fulfillment.

Comes up three and four times. Doesn't it? By implication. Just look. It's there in verse 24. This was the fulfillment of what the scripture says in the middle. It's there in verse 28.

To fulfill the scripture. It's there in verse 36. They took place so that the scripture might be fulfilled. And it's there in verse 37.

And then the scripture says. There are so many illusions and echoes of Psalm 22. Jesus' hands and feet were pierced. As predicted in Psalm 22.

[16:39] Jesus was thirsty. As predicted in Psalm 22. Not a bone of Jesus was broken. As was predicted in Psalm 22. There are three other Old Testament quotations.

In this passage alone. Fulfillment. After fulfillment. After fulfillment. After fulfillment. You see. This is not Jesus out of control. This is Jesus active.

This is Jesus actively engaged. As he walks through the carnage. Of his own execution. So the king is active. The king is in complete control.

The king is in control. He is active. The king is passive. The king is public. But amazingly and wonderfully. The king is personal this morning.

In the midst of his agony. In this anguish. Anguish. We see Jesus reaching out. And personally loving his people. Do you see it there in verse 26? In verse 26.

[17:40] When Jesus saw his mother. And the disciple. Whom he loved. Standing nearby.

He said to his mother. Woman. Behold your son. And then he said to his disciple. Behold your mother. And from that hour. The disciple took her to his own home.

That disciple is John. We cannot imagine. Can we. What has been going through Mary's mind. I tried to read a little bit.

About the Korean ferry disaster. I don't know. Whether you saw those text messages. From the young lad on the boat. To his parents. Heart rending.

Heart rending. What must have been going through Mary's mind. Every material instinct. Is to protect. And to care for. And love her son. So what must have been going through Mary's mind.

[18:35] As she witnessed him. Being treated in such a brutal way. And feeling. Utterly help her. You and I. Cannot understand. The sadness of your mind. Some of you have lost children here.

And you know more of what that is like. Her world shattered. And falling apart. You know what that's like. But I want to say to you. It is amazing.

That in that context. Jesus reaches out to the grieving. And he does. What does he do? He provides her. Dear woman. Here is your son. Her world is falling apart. But Jesus is putting her back together again. And here is someone to look after you. Living in his home. And he is caring for his disciple. John. John. This disciple whom he loved. His world is falling apart.

And you see this friendship. Being treated in this way. When you see a friend. Who you love. Suffering. What do you feel? Surely you long to help them. And yet you have in your own heart. [19:33] A fear for your own life. And so you feel guilt. And what do you do? What is Jesus doing? He is protecting him. There is a sense. Isn't there? Where Jesus is saying. Verses 26 and 27. He is reaching out.

And saying. I am in control Mary. And I am in control John. Don't worry about serving me. Don't worry about protecting me. Don't worry about loving me.

I am in control. I am loving you. Accept my love. And it is breast chicken. When you think of the context. Let me use the words of Psalm 22.

About what Jesus is going through. Jesus is there on the cross. And he is surrounded by many bulls. Wild oxen. With sharp horns.

And they are circling around him. There are roaring lions. Who have torn the flesh of their prey. And they are waiting to tear his flesh. Jesus is poured out like water.

[20:29] All his bones are out of joint. His heart is melting like wax. Dogs have surrounded him. A band of evil men has encircled him. And it is in the midst of all that.

That he reaches out. And he loves his people. And as the king is weighed down. By the weight of people's sin upon his shoulders. As he is crushed by the father's anger.

Against men and women's sin. He reaches out in the midst of that agony. In the midst of that brutality. And terror and violence. And he reaches out. And he loves. And he provides for his people.

Isn't that breathtaking? That this is your God. The servant king. That is Jesus loving each one of us. Offering himself up for us. Now why did he allow himself to go through that? The answer is. Is he allowed himself to go through that. To allow himself to be strict.

[21:26] That he might clothe us in love. He allowed himself to be humiliated. That we might become sons of the father. That he might build us up.

And reach out to one of us. And it rings bells for another story. Doesn't it? It echoes for another story in the Bible. Children. See if you can work out who this is.

There's a man whose robe. Whose tunic. Was ripped. A man whose father loved him. A man whose brothers hated him.

Anybody got it? That's right. They hated him because he was his father's favourite. They were jealous and they were envious. So they ripped his robe off.

His robe with many colours. They ripped it off and they threw him into a well. And they sold him into slavery. And he was taken away. And he was taken to a far away land. And as far as they were concerned.

[22:24] He was dead and forgotten. But we know the story don't we? We know the story of Joseph. We know that God was in control. That Joseph trusted God in the midst of his anguish and agony.

And God knew what was going on. And God sent Joseph to a far away land. That he might lift him up and exalt him. That Joseph might be there ready to welcome his brothers back.

To forgive them and to provide for them. What a great picture of what Jesus is doing here. His tunic is ripped for him. He is abandoned by his brothers.

And Jesus is going to the far away land where he is to be exalted. Where he will provide for and forgive each one of his people. And he will welcome them to his table.

To his banquet. That is what is going on here. I wonder whether you have heard the story of Simon. Simon is a young man. He decides to leave home.

[23:22] And say goodbye to his mum and his dad. And seek his fortune. So he goes off to the big city. To make his fortune. As he goes into the city. He sees two street vendors.

And he turns to the first street vendor. And he sees a tall slender woman. With a kind of dark grey drab coat on. And he looks at her. And he sees her complexion is hard. And there is kind of mud on her face.

He looks at her fingernails. And he sees there is dirt under them. And to be honest. There is nothing attractive about this woman at all. And as he looks down at her store. To see what she is selling. She is selling fruit.

Or at least what used to be fruit. There are grapes that are shriveled up. That look more like raisins. There are apples and pears. That have been bruised. And are starting to give off a stench.

And Simon to be honest. Recoils from the woman. And his stall. And he turns around to the other street vendor. And his breath is taken away. As he looks at a woman who is beauty personified. It's a woman who is tall and is slender.

[ 24 : 20 ] Whose hair is as black as raisins. Whose skin is as smooth as oil. A woman who is tall and slender as well. Whose words are like butter.

And she speaks to him words of flattery. She is clothed in a robe. But it is a luxurious thick velvet robe. And as he looks down at what she is selling. He is dazzled by her goods.

He is dazzled by the brightness of the jewels. By the gold and the silver. By the sparkle in the midday sun. And she says to him. Come home with me. Come home with me. And I will show you some more of the things that I have to sell.

And Simon is enchanted. He is captivated by her presence. And he follows her home through the alleyways. And the streets of the city. And he walks down the steps after her.

Into a basement. And before he knows it. She has opened the door. And he has gone in. And she has shut the door behind him. And turned the key in the lock. And walked away.

[ 25 : 20 ] And Simon is left in the darkness. Alone and empty. And ashamed and vulnerable. He has fallen for the oldest trick in the book. All that glitters is gold.

The things of this world will fill you. And bring you meaning. And satisfaction. And significance. And Simon has fallen for that trick.

And let me say this. I have fallen for that trick. Many, many, many times. Over and over. And over again. The things of this world.

Will bring you meaning. And significance. And they will satisfy you. And make you happy. And Good Friday. Screams at you. And this table screams at you. And says.

Don't go with that woman. Because you'll end up in a place of emptiness. And loneliness. And shame of nakedness.

[ 26 : 23 ] Longing to be clothed. It's very interesting isn't it. In Joseph's story. It takes a famine for his brothers. To come to their senses. And go to Egypt.

And get their food. It takes a famine. Empty stomachs. Before they go to Egypt. And beg for food. And God often sends famine into our lives. Doesn't it? It might be an emotional famine.

It might be a famine in the middle of your life. A crisis. A material famine. A period of unemployment. A disaster in the family. And God sends these famines.

To bring us to our knees. So that we will go to Jesus. To be clothed. And filled. So my question for you this morning. As if you're not a Christian. Is why wait for some famine? Why wait for that moment of lowness.

And emptiness. Jesus is there on the cross. The king has been stripped. That he might clothe you with love. He is there.

[ 27 : 20 ] He is cast out. So that we would receive a welcome. At his father's home. And he welcomes. To the banqueting table. Why wait for the famine?

Christ was all anguish. That I might be all joy. Cast off. That I might be brought in. Trodden down as an enemy. That I might be welcomed as a friend.

Surrendered to hell's worst. That I might attain heaven's best. Stripped that I might be clothed.

Wounded that I might be healed. A thirst that I might drink. Tormented that I might be comforted.

Made ashamed that I might inherit glory.

Entered darkness that I might have eternal life. My saviour wept. That all tears might be wiped from my eyes. Groaned that I might have endless song. Endured all pain.

That I might have unfading health. Bore a thorned crown. That I might have a glory diadem. Bowed his head. That I might lift up mine. Experienced reproach.

[ 28 : 20 ] That I might receive welcome. Closed his eyes in death. That I might gaze on unclouded brightness. Expired. That I might live forever.

Let's sing. Let's sing.