

Friday, September 11, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, 'You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.'"

John 19: 9b-11a

I have always found comfort in this passage. The reason I find it comforting is that Jesus Himself is saying that any earthly authority only has authority because God has allowed it to have authority, even if that earthly authority is a threatening one. Pilate was telling Jesus that Jesus should recognize the power he (Pilate) had over Him. He basically was saying, "Your fate is in my hands." But Jesus, in essence, said, "Not so! My life, as well as your authority, is in God's hands."

You and I may be feeling like we are living in helpless times right now. It's as though the pandemic and other things are saying to us, "Do you not know that I have authority to make your life a mess?" So, what would a faith-filled, Christ-like response from us sound like? I think it would sound like Jesus' response to Pilate. We can say to anything that feels like a threat to us: "You would have no authority over me unless it had been given you from above."

How freeing it is to know that God is in charge of the things that seem like they are in charge of us! Their "authority" in our lives can only go as far as God allows them to go. And they are only there for God's appointed time. Pilate was the governor at the time of Jesus' crucifixion because God chose him for that time. In fact, it was not Pilate or the Jewish leaders or the Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross. It was God Himself. He did it to bring about our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

God is always the Authority behind every other "authority" that seems to be in charge in this world or in our lives. God is sovereign. That means He has ultimate authority all the time. He is always working to bring about His purposes. Things don't happen in this world or in our lives because everything has "gotten out of control"! It may feel that way. In fact, I have personally even said, "Everything is out of control!" But that's just my frustration talking. Jesus would never say such a thing. Everything is under the control and authority of God and it all serves His wise purposes.

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim