

5. POWER and POWERLESSNESS

Now Jesus was handcuffed. In this powerless state he was brought face to face with Pontius Pilate, the most powerful man in the whole country. Pilate had the authority to release Jesus or to have him executed. What he couldn't do is get a straight answer out of him. For some reason Jesus didn't even want to defend himself. Perhaps he knew that Pilate would never understand his message? Perhaps he wanted to teach Pilate a lesson about the limits of his power?

In the end it turned out that Pilate, the most powerful man in the land, was more scared than Jesus, the prisoner in the dock. Under pressure from the crowd Pilate released a convicted murderer and sentenced Jesus to death.

'And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. ...

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.' Mark 15 v1-5, 15

Jesus' hands are open, reaching forwards, offering himself rather than the clenched fists of someone trying to escape the awfulness of what is to come. There is a calmness there that is shocking, the willingness to die. Jenny Hawke



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