

## Why Did the Authorities Fear Jesus?

Sermon Notes for Oct 8, 2017 at Brentwood – Thanksgiving Sunday

Ps 19 (488) & Matthew 21:33-46 (901)



**They wanted to arrest him,  
but they feared the crowds,  
because they regarded him  
as a prophet.  
(Matt 21:26)**

### Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- You may well be wondering what a picture of the crucifixion is doing on the screen on Thanksgiving Sunday – hey, Brian, you got your festivals mixed up – the right picture is of all the food being harvested this time of the year for which we are all so grateful – at least that’s what happens in this part of the world – it’s a harvest festival – focusing on nutrition for our bodies – wrong picture, Brian!
- But maybe not – maybe I just want to make a point in a weird way – we’ve seen the work of this artist before – it’s John Stuart, a Presbyterian minister in Tennessee – he does a lot of his work in crayons – I love the textures he gets in his blending of colours – what strikes me about this image is the way Jesus is looking over the city of Jerusalem – the city is the local seat of power of the authorities who executed him as a criminal – frightened of his power to expose their abuse of God’s beloved human beings – that’s what prophets did back then (and what we are invited to do now as we mature into authentic members of the Body of Christ) – they imagine a different way of seeing the world – not through the eyes of possessions and power, but through the eyes of compassion and companionship – through the eyes of Jesus on the cross, suffering through the agonizing death of a seditious traitor for his prophetic convictions – in this act of unspeakable cruelty, God is reconciling humanity back into a covenant relationship with the community of the Holy Trinity – the beloved are invited to return to their true home
- And the core challenge is this – if we see things through the eyes of Jesus on the cross, we see the abuse of power for the hoarding of possessions for what it really is – a rebellion against the original intent of God in creating human beings – we were created for compassionate companionship with God and with each other – the Great Invitation is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God – that is the focus of our thanksgiving festivals at their best – grateful celebrations of the riches that flow from God’s natural grace – but to see this in its true light, we need the light that flows from God’s redemptive grace in Jesus Christ – his prophetic teaching, his redemptive death, and his promising resurrection

### So, what are we going to do with this ...

So, as we enjoy the companionship and compassion of Thanksgiving this year, let us remember the true source of our flourish, the God we come to know most intimately in Jesus Christ through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit – with our prophetic gratitude focused on God’s vision of compassion and companionship, we will be ever more faithful in our witness to another way of seeing things and being together in God’s world

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,  
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