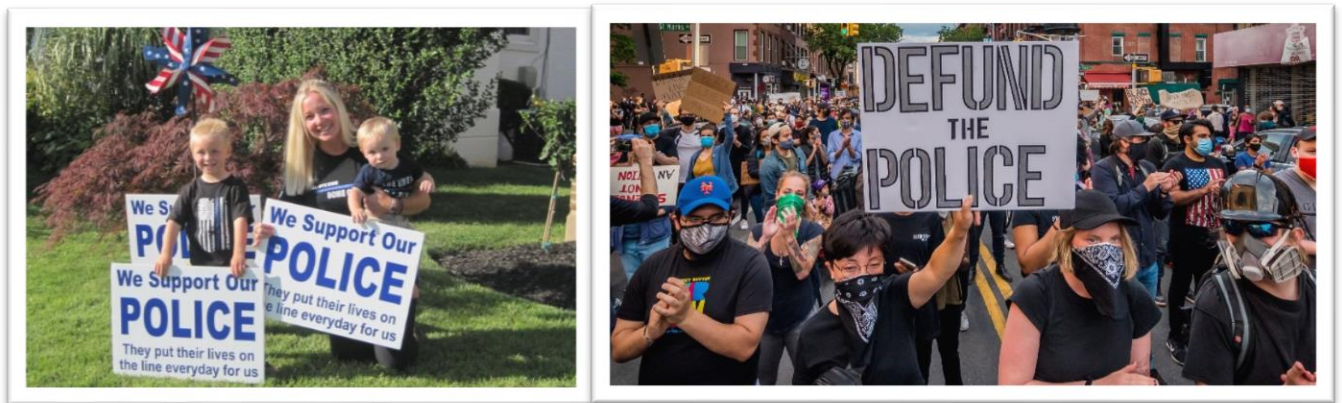


# "You Either Die A Hero, Or You Live Long Enough To See Yourself Become The Villain"

- Harvey Dent from *The Dark Knight*

## The State of Law Enforcement from a Biblical Perspective

By Justin Dillard



May of 2020 was one of the most contradictory months in the history of Law Enforcement. At the beginning of the month, people were showering first responders with support who bravely served on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic while everyone quarantined safely in their homes. Starbucks gave us free coffee, McDonalds gave free value meals, people came out of their houses during quarantine at 2000 hrs to howl and shoot off fireworks as I left my house for the graveyard shift. Then things took a turn.

By the end of May, people cursed the police, calling us racists who systematically oppress Black Americans in the communities which we serve. They said our "brutality" against criminals would no longer be tolerated as people called to defund the police. Within a matter of weeks in the same month, we went from heroes to villains. The very people that we have been sworn to serve and protect are rejecting us. Large agencies are losing massive portions of their budgets and laws are changing so police can be charged criminally and civilly for doing their jobs. Who would want to do this job when the people we serve hate us for serving?



Let's look at this from a Biblical perspective. We experienced a dramatic turn of events in a matter of a month. Jesus experienced a dramatic turn of events in a matter of a week. On Sunday, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 which says:

*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

## SUNDAY

Luke 19 tells of the fulfillment

<sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

<sup>34</sup>They replied, "The Lord needs it."

<sup>35</sup>They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>**As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.**

<sup>37</sup>When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, **the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:**

<sup>38</sup>**"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"<sup>[b]</sup>**

**"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

<sup>39</sup>Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

<sup>40</sup>"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

<sup>41</sup>As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it <sup>42</sup>and said, "**If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.** <sup>43</sup>The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup>They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

## FRIDAY

Matthew 27 tells about the change in the crowd before the government.

<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

<sup>12</sup> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” <sup>14</sup> But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

<sup>15</sup> Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. <sup>16</sup> At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus<sup>[b]</sup> Barabbas. <sup>17</sup> So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” <sup>18</sup> **For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.**

<sup>19</sup> While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

<sup>20</sup> But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

<sup>21</sup> **“Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor.**

**“Barabbas,” they answered.**

<sup>22</sup> **“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.**

**They all answered, “Crucify him!”**

<sup>23</sup> **“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.**

**But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”**

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

<sup>25</sup> All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”

<sup>26</sup> Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The people decided to glorify a criminal and villainize the man whom God sent to serve and save the people...**and the government let them do it!!!** Five days passed between the crowds yelling, “blessed is

he who comes in the name of the Lord” to them yelling “Crucify him!” As law enforcement officers who are *commissioned* to serve and protect, we now know from experience a small taste of what that must have been like. Here is why this is good news for us: Jesus endured this for us as he took on the sin of the world, died as a penalty for our sin, three days later rose from the dead and asked us to follow Him.

Jesus didn’t die on the cross so we could live safe, cushy lives where nothing bad happens. His mission was to go through hell on behalf of his people, the church, and nothing was going to keep him from completing his mission. As believers and followers of Jesus, the church is called to follow this mission. Look at the Apostle Paul as an example. In Colossians 1, he wrote,

## Colossians 1

***<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.***

*<sup>25</sup> I have become its servant by the **commission** God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness.*

Paul rejoiced in suffering for the people because he found that his life was “lacking” in comparison to what Christ went through. By experiencing that affliction, he grew closer to God in whose image we were created and looked more like God and less like himself.

Brothers and sisters who have been **commissioned** to hold the thin blue line, I implore you to not let what’s happening deter you from continuing the mission of serving and protecting the people, regardless of how they feel and act towards us. God’s people did the same to Jesus. What we’re doing is a righteous act, a small version of what Christ went through for us, so now we rely on His power to look more like Jesus in the midst of this historic time and less like ourselves.

## James 1

*<sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*