



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### April 10, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

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## Palm Sunday: John 12:12-27 and 19:16-22, Jesus and his signs. Pilate and his.

I loved my high school physics class. I did really well in basic physics. It lost me when the math got complicated, but my first year of physics just made sense. I loved learning about Newton's three laws. His first law of motion describes inertia. The second law involved math ( $F=ma$  or Force equals mass times acceleration). "An object at rest will stay at rest unless an external force is applied to it." This is one of the fundamental rules of how the world works.

It takes a lot of force to overcome inertia. Getting something moving is usually the hardest part. Anyone with experience pushing a car that won't start knows this. Once you get it rolling, the job becomes much easier. It is that initial push that is the toughest.

This is true when pushing a car, and it is true in society as well. Social scientists believe that Newton's laws of motion can be applied to societies as well. Getting people moving is difficult. It takes a lot of force to get a social movement going. Societal change doesn't come easily, and when it does the third law often comes into play: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is true with a bouncing ball as well as true with the way societies react to forces of change. Sometimes though, one might argue that the force of reaction against change comes back with even greater force—not equal.

There are a lot of ways to explain why and how Jesus died, but ultimately I think Newton's Social Laws are what killed him.

Jesus applied force to the world. His force was love. He was an external force applied to Pilate and the Roman system of power. He was an external force applied to the religious authorities and the institutional Temple. He was an external force applied to the crowds of people who witnessed the great signs he performed. He was an external force applied to a group of men who were called disciples.

His force was love. His force was forgiveness and grace. His force was feeding thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread. His force was connecting to a Samaritan wom-

an, breaking down the barriers of nationality, race, religion, and gender. Jesus' force was applied to bodies at rest. His force was applied to bring change and move these bodies toward the Kingdom of God.

But bodies at rest remain at rest. The status quo of the Peace of Rome was too much to overcome. The comfort of religious marriage to government authority was too much to overcome. The need of the people to witness spectacle and violence was too much to overcome. The fear of the disciples to make too much of a stir was too much to overcome. Jesus' life was not enough to overcome the enormous power of inertia. In response to the external force that Jesus applied, Rome responded with an opposite and unequal reaction.

Jesus applied to force of peace. Roma applied the force of crucifixion, and the inertia of the status quo was maintained. Jesus applied the force of signs to convince people he was the Son of God. He turned water into wine. He multiplied the loaves and fish. He healed a royal official's son and restored sight to the blind. Every sign Jesus did was an application of God's force. Finally, he raised Lazarus from the dead and it looked as if the force of his signs might be enough to get the ball rolling.

Then Pilate had his own sign. His sign was a conviction. His sign was a show of opposite and equal force. His sign reminded everyone of what happens when someone comes to try and disrupt the Roman inertia. Pilate's sign was posted on the Cross so that the entire known world could read it.

Jesus did signs to show God's force of love was real and true in the world. Pilate's sign showed that the God's force was not enough—or so he thought.

It was almost as if God needed to do one more sign. The inertia of Rome, Religion, Social norms, and Nationalism was too much to overcome by Jesus' signs. Maybe God could try one more thing to get things moving...