

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends

Is This Justice? (Guilty?)

4/14/2019

Where We Are In The Bible

This week we are looking at Part 2 of the trial of Jesus. Jesus has been found guilty of blasphemy by Caiaphas and the decision was reached to put Jesus to death. Because only Rome could carry out a death sentence, they sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor, for formal sentencing. We pick up this story in Matthew 27:11-26, although each of the Gospels records their own accounting of the trial of Jesus.

Lean In

- Pilate asks some very important questions during this mockery of a trial. The first question is directed at Jesus and seeks information about His identity when Pilate inquires “Are you the King of the Jews?” Many people today ask similar questions, such as “Who exactly is Jesus?” How would you answer that question to someone who has no prior knowledge of Jesus?
- In both Luke and John’s account of these events (Luke 23 and John 18) Pilate repeatedly says “I find no basis for a charge against this man”, yet he turns him over to be crucified anyway! How could this happen? Can you image what’s it is like to face an angry and threatening mob? What would Pilate be feeling at this point? How does someone justify allowing such an injustice?
- In Matthew 27:18 we are told that even Pilate knew it was out of the self-interests of the chief priests and elders that they wanted Jesus to die. What benefit would it be for them if Jesus died? What benefits do we receive?

The Big Idea

Pilate asks some very important questions during this mockery of a trial, but none more critical than “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” That is the question we all must answer at some point in our lives. Unlike Pilate, we cannot remain natural. We either accept Christ or we do not. We step into eternal life or we remain estranged from God and experience both physical and spiritual death. Like Barabbas, we are offered life through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, but we must believe He is who he says He is and receive this wonderful gift.

Where To?

- Read Jesus’ statement to Pilate found in John 18:37 about His purpose for coming and regarding “truth”. Pilate responds in 18:38 by asking Jesus the important question – “What is Truth?” What kind of truth is Jesus talking about? How would you answer Pilate’s question (see John 14:6 and John 17:17-19 as you consider this).
- Barabbas received what was essentially a pardon from Pilate thanks to the religious leaders and the crowd. Jesus took his place on the center cross. How does 1 Peter 3:18 remind us of this incident? What do we see that we have in common with Barabbas? How does that impact our faith walk?
- Try to find anything in the Bible that refers to Barabbas after this day. Any luck? Everyone (Pilate, Barabbas, and each one of us) must respond to Jesus in some way. In Luke 8:4-15 Jesus talks about how people receive and respond to the Gospel message. What are some of the ways we respond according to that scripture? How do you think Barabbas likely responded? What type of soil are you at this very moment?

Prayer Focus

Lord we praise you for your wonderful plan of salvation that offers us life when our spiritual condition was terminal. We thank you Jesus for taking our place and suffering the death we deserve. Help us to walk rightly in this new life you have given us and to glorify you in all that we say and do as we walk in the wondrous freedom! Amen.

