



### Opening Remarks

John describes the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate and the people of Israel with 7 alternating inside/outside scenes. Four take place outside (where Pilate and the people exchange conversation) and three are inside with the conversation between Pilate and Jesus – specifically talking about truth and power. Pilate's questions mask his cynicism and disinterest in this passage from John's gospel, but Jesus is not content to give the answers Pilate wants to hear. Instead, each of Jesus' responses aims at Pilate's heart. Jesus is remarkably calm and sovereign throughout the trial, to the point that it could seem that it is Jesus who, in fact, is Judge, and it is Pilate and the people who, in fact are on trial.

Jesus was the true Passover Lamb. He was sentenced to be crucified, just as the slaughter of lambs for Passover began. The long-awaited king of the Jews stood before them, and they did not recognize Him.

### Warm it up

Describe a time when you were falsely accused of something. How did you react to your accusers?

### Talk it over

1. Read John 18:26-19:16, asking "I wonder why..." as you read and talk about where you see the cynicism of Pilate. Note how many times/ways Pilate says, "I find no guilt in him."
2. What charges were being brought against Jesus? Contrast the vague generality in 18:29-30 with 19:7.



3. What law were the Jewish leaders quoting in 19:7? What type of death was required of those who broke this law? What new accusation do the Jewish leaders give Pilate against Jesus? What was the previous accusation (18:33)? Why is this accusation the ultimate irony?

4. Describe the relationship between Pilate and Jesus. What do you notice about Pilate's words and actions? Talk about what he might have been feeling and thinking?

5. Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent (18:38), yet he took Jesus and flogged him. And again in 19:12, we read that Pilate sought to release Jesus, yet he was crucified without a pronounced death sentence. What are your thoughts on this irony in John's Gospel?

6. Read John 1:14. Discuss Pilate's statement in 19:5 in light of this verse.

7. In verse 38 Pilate asks Jesus, "What is truth?" Why do you think his question is not followed by an answer from Jesus? Pilate's attitude when he asked this question may have been cynical, sarcastic, quizzical, sincere, angry, honest, etc. Where do you see our culture questioning truth with these various attitudes?

### Work it out

1. What most impresses you about Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus' authority and strength as displayed in these trials encourage you in your own trials?



2. Because of the threat of personal and professional loss, Pontius Pilate, against his better judgment, gave in to the Jewish leaders. When faced with a difficult situation yourself, have you been tempted to compromise integrity for the sake of expediency? How does this passage help you not to do so?

3. How do other people's attitude toward Jesus affect your willingness to talk about your faith?

### Wrap it up

Pray for one another and ask God this week for open ears to hear truth, an open mind to comprehend truth, and a Christ-like tongue to speak truth.

