



“Jesus on Trial”

Matthew 27:11-31

BACKGROUND

It was very early on Friday morning and still dark outside when Jesus – bound with rope or chains – was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

All four gospel writers tell us something about this “trial” before Pilate.

- Jesus had been accused by the Jewish religious leaders of being a false prophet and predicting the destruction of the Temple. This was a strike at the heart of the Jewish faith.
- He was also charged with being a blasphemer, claiming to be the Messiah and equal to God.
- Pilate’s worry was that Jesus was a rebel who threatened the political status quo.
- Even though he judged Jesus innocent, to satisfy the restless crowd Pilate caved to the will of the people and handed Jesus over to be crucified.



KNOWING GOD

a) Review **Matthew 27:11-31**. What do you learn about Jesus' character by his behavior before Pontius Pilate?

b) How does this passage reveal not only the character of Jesus, but the character of his mission on earth?

c) How does Pilate's release of the criminal Barabbas illustrate the gospel?



GROWING TOGETHER

a) Notice **Matthew 27:18**, which says that Pilate "knew it was out of envy that they [the Jewish religious leaders] had handed Jesus over to him." How do you think envy was at work in the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus?

b) How does envy sometime take hold of your heart and lead to further sin?

c) Read John's account of the trial of Jesus (**John 18:28-40**). In verse 38, Pilate asks, "What is truth?" Do you see any correlation between Pilate's attitude toward truth and those of our culture today?



SERVING OTHERS

This week's passage raises questions about the nature of justice. In what areas are you concerned about unjust laws and oppressed people groups? Are you doing anything about it? What might God be calling you to do to defend the oppressed and help the suffering?

MEMORY VERSE OF THE WEEK

"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7)