



Jesus On Trial - Pilate

Key idea:

Pilate, the religious leaders, and the crowd worked together to wrongfully crucify Jesus in the place of a wicked man. This act mirrors the Gospel - we are freed from the punishment we deserve because Christ willingly takes our place.

Key text:

Mark 15:1-15

1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. 2 “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate. “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. 3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.” 5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed. 6 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. 9 “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. 12 “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them. 13 “Crucify him!” they shouted. 14 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” 15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Key points:

1. The trial of Jesus before Pilate was unjust, with various parties motivated by their own agendas.
2. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent but chose to appease the crowd rather than uphold justice.
3. The story mirrors the gospel: Jesus, the innocent, is condemned so that the guilty (represented by Barabbas) can go free.
4. All of humanity bears responsibility for Jesus' death due to our sin.

Discussion Questions:

1. What struck you most about the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate?
2. The teaching mentions that Pilate was "inflexible, stubborn, and cruel." How do you see these traits manifesting in his handling of Jesus' trial?
3. What do I think about Pilate's question, "What is truth?" What does this reveal about his worldview, and how does it contrast with Jesus' statement about testifying to the truth?
4. Why do I think Pilate ultimately allowed Jesus to be crucified? Do I ever face a similar temptation? How does Pilate serve as a warning to me?
5. How does the story of Barabbas being released instead of Jesus serve as a picture of the gospel? How does this relate to our own lives?
6. The teaching emphasizes that all are guilty of putting Jesus to death. How does this perspective change how we view ourselves and others in light of the cross?
7. Reflect on the statement: "It was my sin that held him to that tree." How does this personalize the crucifixion for you?
8. How does the knowledge that we will all stand before Christ as judge one day impact how we live our lives now?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, take time to reflect on your own sin and how it contributed to Christ's sacrifice. Write a prayer of confession and gratitude.
2. Practice sharing the gospel using the analogy of Barabbas and Jesus. Role-play with a partner in the group.
3. Identify an area in your life where you might be prone to "appeasing the crowd" rather than standing for truth. Commit to one specific action to address this.
4. Memorize the Apostles' Creed as a reminder of the core truths of the faith.
5. Consider how you can live more intentionally in light of future judgment. What one change can you make this week?