

Week 9: John 18:28-40

Key Theme: Authority, Power, and Truth through the Lens of Pilate

SEE my Life: Life Map & Fasting Reflection Icebreaker (15 mins)

Share briefly how your time of fasting and reflection with your life map and John 14:25-27 went. What is God reminding you of or teaching you through this experience?

Option: Share a time when you rebelled against authority. Maybe it was a rule that you broke as a kid, or something more serious you did as an adult. How did you feel before and after you did what you did? What were the consequences?

SEE Jesus: John 18:28-40 (30 mins)

Pilate's interrogation of Jesus stands as both a dramatic scene that leads to the Crucifixion and a character study that is remarkably contemporary with our own times. As you discuss the text, think both about the lens through which Pilate sees Jesus and the ways in which we in our own times and in our own lives can identify with the Roman governor.

1. What stands out to you from the text? What word or phrase seems significant to you? What questions do you have about the text?
2. Why won't Jesus' Jewish accusers enter Pilate's house? What seems ironic about this? (vs. 28)
3. Why do they come to Pilate in the first place? How would you describe their interaction with the Roman governor?
4. Take a closer look at the conversation between Jesus and Pilate in v. 33-39. How would you describe Pilate's attitude toward Jesus? How does he identify Jesus? How does Jesus respond?
5. Jesus claims to "testify to the truth" (v. 37). What does he mean here? How does Pilate respond?
6. How does Pilate, in the end, see Jesus? What do you think keeps him from seeing Jesus clearly?
7. What is the source of Jesus' authority? What does he ultimately do with his authority?
8. As you take a closer look at Jesus through this story, what aspects of his character draw you to him?

SEE my Life: Authority, Power, and Truth (30 mins)

As you reflect on this scene, think about the conflict between Jesus' Kingdom and your own kingdom. Think about what it means to follow, to truly follow Jesus and what it means to follow your own path. Some of the squares on your life map might help you here as you process the following questions. Consider breaking into smaller and/or same gender groupings for these questions. Don't feel pressured to "cover" all three sets of questions. You might start with the set that you think would resonate with your group the most.

1. Dallas Willard defines God's Kingdom as "the range of his effective will." It is where, as one pastor describes, "God gets what God wants." What does it mean for you personally to have a "Kingdom" mindset? In what ways do you

feel like God “is getting what He wants”? In what ways, are you rebelling against God?

2. Jesus says, “Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (v. 37). What does it mean personally for you to “listen” to God? Have you ever felt like you were not “on the side of truth”? How did that affect your ability to listen?
3. Pilate’s famous question “What is truth?” can be read several different ways. Some view the question as a genuine pursuit, while others view it as a cynical commentary on the impossibility of actually discovering truth. What has your own search for truth—truth about God, truth about yourself, truth about life—looked like? How would you describe your attitude? More genuine and hopeful, or more skeptical and cynical? How has your attitude changed over time?

SEE the practices of Jesus: Fasting (15 mins to explain and close in prayer)

Continue with your practice of fasting this week. Skip at least one meal and purposefully spend 30-60 minutes reading and reflecting on Philippians 2:1-11, which describes Jesus’ ultimate act of humility—setting aside his authority out of love for us. Read the verses several times and meditate on the sacrificial love that Jesus has given us. Consider the following scripture meditation exercise based off of Martin Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray” and Tim Keller’s *Prayer*.

- **Rejoice**—How can I praise God for the sacrificial love he has given me?
- **Repent**—What have I done wrong because I have forgotten the blessing of sacrificial love?
- **Recount**—How specifically has Jesus blessed me with sacrificial love?
- **Request**—What is something that I am not doing right now that I need to do to apply the blessing of sacrificial love? What do I need help with?
- **Rethink**—How can I live my life differently in light of the blessing of God’s sacrificial love?
- **Reflect**—Why is God telling me today?

Close in prayer with a focus on your one person you have been praying for.