

PILGRIM HOME GROUPS

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH/SMALL GROUP/CLASS GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce yourself if new/new people in group, check-in with each other. What’s been happening in your week(s) since we last met?
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group; name these needs and have sentence prayers (just short sentences/open ended, not long-winded) at end of the gathering time
- + **COMPASSION:** What compassion work is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbors to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** (church-wide and group-only)
- + **DIG IN:** Any reflections, discernments, disagreements from last week’s teaching (or since you last met)? Look at the Bible passage(s) again and read some of them out loud in the group (and other verses that may have been mentioned). What jumps out at you? Discuss some of the questions as a group.
- + End and Homework: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read John 18:28-40. What vague accusation do the chief priests bring against Jesus before Pilate?
2. Pilate was walking a line, trying to keep things quiet in the Middle East while also snubbing his Jewish subjects’ leaders in particular. His basic view of “justice” was, “What would work?” Why do you think Pilate is trying to avoid deciding the case against Jesus?
3. In the ancient world, kings were known by how they became kings, birth and murder (no monarchy-lite “constitutional” queens in mind here). How does Jesus respond when Pilate asks him if he is the “king of the Jews”?
4. Jesus and Pilate discuss truth. What do they each mean by it?
5. When people (friends, relatives, neighbours) cynically scoff and ask questions like Pilate how do you think we should respond?
6. Pilate was trying to “keep it all together” through craftiness, compromise, and walking the fence. In doing so he was avoiding a commitment to Jesus and to what Jesus was teaching. Where do you see people trying to “walk the fence” with Jesus? What about right now in your life? What areas (or maybe initial belief) are you trying to balance competing claims on your life, time, money, relationships, etc.?
7. Talk about how you see Jesus’ Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world? How should a Christian live with these two?
8. Other thoughts, insights, Holy Spirit promptings in the passage?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

November 25th, 2018

“Authority is not given you to deny the return of the king, Steward.”

-Gandalf, The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King



RETURN OF THE KING

My kingdom is not of this world..:

JOHN 18:33-37 - Christ the King Sunday

MAIN IDEA: Choice paralysis and avoidance–vacillating between Jesus and the crowd.

SECONDARY: Two Kingdoms and us, compromise

“Jesus is politically incorrect–the ultimate inconvenient truth. Convenient truths are one thing. Like cheap toilet paper, they don’t really cost you anything. In fact, convenient truths gain for you good standing and get you ahead in life, like knowing that two times two always equals four, and that it is always good to get your ducks in a row. But Jesus has a way of messing with the math tables and moving the ducks all around and getting your neck out of joint so that you end up wanting to slap him for saying the right thing at the wrong time (and BTW there is never a good time to say many of the things that he says...) Jesus isn’t politically correct; he’s the ultimate inconvenient truth.”

–Paul Louis Metzger (235)

WALK THROUGH THE TEXT

+ Part of seven scenes 18:29-19:16a (and two Acts 18:29-19:3, 19:4-19:16a)

+ Concern for ritual purity...

+ The trial before Pilate and the People is five times longer than before Annas. John is emphasizing Christ's trial before world power: Pilate of Rome (secular) and the People of Israel (Spiritual power).

+ Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas are all about self-preservation. Talk of Truth and Justice seem idealistic and they are now opportunistic, disillusioned and cynical - they are hardened people.

+ Jesus who is in fact Judge and Pilate and people are on trial

JOHN 18:33 So Pilate went back into the governor's residence, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Christian truth itself has eyes to see with. In fact it is all eye. That's very disquieting. Think of looking at a painting and discovering that the painting was looking at you. Precisely such is the case with Christian truth. It is looking back at me to see whether I do what it says I should do.-Soren Kierkegaard

JOHN 18:34 Jesus replied, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or have others told you about me?"

"Pilate discovers, as many discovered before him and many have since, that when you ask Jesus a question the answer is likely to be another question."

-NT Wright (114)

JOHN 18:35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own people and your chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?"

JOHN 18:36 Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my servants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

"The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state and never its tool."

"His kingdom is from another place. His kingdom is given by God, not established by human struggle. His kingdom is active IN this world, and will one day come with power, but its power is not of this world, it is of God."

-Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love

JOHN 18:37 Then Pilate said, "So you are a king!" Jesus replied, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world - to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

CLOSING

+ Fence walking

- Decision avoidance

- Pilate was increasing his anxiety by trying to avoid a decision

+ Making the popular or power-preserving choice is not always the right choice
There are higher truths we must learn to decide for.

+ Living in two kingdoms

+ Following Jesus

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.