



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 18:28 - 19:16a

Suggested 'Dramatic Reading':

Implement the following suggestion by having 4 groups/individuals read the 'script dramatically'. The 4 groups reading the parts/lines of Pilate, Jews, Jesus plus narrator.

- "The entire text of the trial before Pilate (18:28 – 19:16) [in the previous page] could be duplicated & used as a script for readers' theater. ...Read the entire narrative first, then re-read it, stopping for discussion at the end of each scene ('act')" [Lamar Williamson, Preaching... John, p. 261]
- Discuss what kind of emphasis, intonation should be given. E.g. when Pilate says "What is truth?" is he sincerely inquiring of Jesus about 'truth'? Or is he dismissive, scornful? (Same question, different tone.)

Discussion Questions:

1. One scholar says: "That we have a trial is clear from the fact that we have accusers ('the Jews'), an accused (Jesus) and a judge (Pilate)."
 - However, another says: "Because the so-called 'trial' is conducted for the sake of political interests — and not to ensure a fair trial for Jesus — I prefer the designation 'show trial'." a. What factors might distinguish a "fair trial" from a "show trial"? Are these factors present? Discuss. b. Why might it be misleading for contemporary readers to title this episode "Jesus' trial before Pilate"?
2. A scholar says: "Pilate has often been perceived as an ineffectual or even kindly governor who tries unsuccessfully to get Jesus released... But the reality was very different."
 - From this Bible passage where/why might people conclude that Pilate was an "ineffectual or even kindly governor who tries... to get Jesus released"?

- This scholar suggests that “the reality was very different.” What clues suggest a “different reality”?
3. When Pilate offered ‘the Jews’ the choice between Jesus & Barabbas (19:39), Pilate declared “do you want me to release to you the ‘king of the Jews’?” a. Why did Pilate designate Jesus as “the ‘king of the Jews,” rather than (say) “Jesus of Nazareth”? b. What difference might Pilate’s wording make to the Jews’ response?
 4. In 19:6b why does Pilate tells the Jewish leaders “You take him and crucify him ...” when he’s fully aware that, under Roman rule, ‘the Jews’ don’t have authority to crucify anyone? What is Pilate doing here?
 5. Earlier in John’s Gospel Nicodemus dialogued with Jesus (John 3), now Pilate has several short dialogues with Jesus. Pilate also observed Jesus’ behavior throughout this ‘hearing.’ a. What should/could Pilate have realized from this? b. Did Pilate have an opportunity to believe? Or (at least) to inquire further? c. What might have prevented Pilate from recognizing/responding to ‘Jesus as his king’? d. What lessons might this have for us today?