

Introduction

This week, we step into a courtroom where Jesus confronts Pilate's views on authority and kingship, guilt and innocence. Though beaten and wearing a crown made of thorns, there's little doubt that Jesus controls the outcome. Our questions focus on how this shapes our *belief* in Him.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

Here are some suggestions to get your conversation started:

1. What's something you have that carries sentimental value?

2. What is your favorite time of day and why?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For openness to what you're learning together
 - c. For friendships to deepen and grow

 - 2) Invite someone (or a couple of people) to read John 19:1-16 to the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

Please complete these questions before your group meets.

- 1) Based on things you're learning throughout the book of John and including this passage, what kind of King is Jesus?

- 2) Pastor Bryan has described Pilate as a practical man who wanted to please Rome and keep the peace among the Jews. Read John 19:4-8 to gain some insight on Pilate's leadership.
 - a. Consider what kind of leader Pilate was. Why would He scourge a man he finds no fault in?

 - b. What was Pilate so afraid of? (See also Matthew 27:19)

- 3) If you could put yourself in Pilate's shoes – a practical man, in a dead-end job, and visibly afraid – what would you hope to achieve by claiming authority as he did in verse 10?

What impact would the words of Jesus have on you (as Pilate) in verse 11?

Now read verse 12 and discuss what the phrase "as a result of this" refers to in this exchange between Pilate and Jesus. Can you make an educated guess about what Pilate is thinking?

- 4) As key players in this courtroom drama, the Jewish Chief Priests claim allegiance to Caesar over King Jesus in verse 15.
- a. Who or what do you pledge allegiance to instead of allowing King Jesus to have authority?

 - b. How might you express your *belief* in Jesus this week by giving Him authority in some area of your life?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 10 min)*

A significant part of creating unity with God and one another is being open and honest with our lives. Praying with a group of people may be a new experience for you, or it may be familiar. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone participates in sharing this time before God together. Here are a couple of suggestions of how you can pray together as a group.

1. Read John 10:14-18 and consider what it means for Jesus to be your Good Shepherd. As thoughts of how Jesus leads, directs, and protects you come to mind, take turns speaking them in simple sentence prayers, “Jesus, thank you for being _____.” or “Lord, we praise you for _____.”

2. This is a group prayer time where each person in the group will pray. Before you start, tell everyone that if someone is not comfortable praying out loud in the group setting, they can pray privately and say “Amen” when they are finished. That will let the next person know it is their turn to pray. The group leader will start the prayer time.