

PURSUE

BUILDING FOR PEOPLE. BELIEVING FOR MORE.

3

Leader Guide

The Truth

April 10, 2022

Main Passage: John 18:33-40

Theological Theme

Christ's work on behalf of sinners led Him to submit to human authorities, endure unjust accusations, and undergo an illegitimate trial. He stood before a pagan governor as a criminal and accepted this humiliation for our sake.

Introduction

- ❓ What was the most recent sporting event you attended in person, whether professional or youth sports?
- ❓ How important would you say the scoreboard is in this setting? What role does it play?

Just as the scoreboard is the ultimate standard in all sporting events, the truth is the truth and Christians must not lose sight of the fact that their standard of truth is the Scriptures, no matter what the culture around them might say. In our text today, we will consider Pilate's questions, "What is truth?" The answer to this question is critical, especially in light of the Western perception of truth and reality.

1. The Way of Suffering (John 18:33-34)

The idea of the Jesus, as God, suffering at the hands of sinners is difficult for some and unimaginable for others. Mohammed, the founder of Islam, refused to believe that this could be true. He saw it as problematic and decided that it didn't actually happen. According to Islamic teaching concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, God the Father took Jesus off the cross and replaced Him with Judas. The problem with this teaching is not only that it is anti-biblical, but it makes the gospel null and void. If Jesus did not truly die as a payment for sinners, then there is no hope for sinners in the death of Christ. And if there

is no hope in the death of Christ for sinners, then there is no hope at all, for there is no other place for sinners to find relief from the punishment that is due them. The Bible is clear that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:22).

2. Absolute Truth (John 18:35-38)

When Pilate began his line of questioning, Jesus revealed something critically important about His purpose. He said, “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (v. 37). This statement is full of meaning. First, Jesus alluded to His incarnation, stating that He was both born and that He came into the world. He also made it clear that His teaching ministry was foundational to His purpose on earth. Not only was He to die for sins, but He had rightly and truthfully taught the crowds throughout His ministry. This was part of His prophetic ministry. Jesus claimed that He spoke the truth when He taught. Implicit in any truth claim is the assertion that anything which contradicts it is false.

3. A Picture of the Gospel (John 18:39-40)

It was custom that the Roman government would release a Jewish prisoner during the feast days. Pilate saw his chance to be rid of this very difficult situation in which he felt pressured by the Jews to execute a man in whom he found nothing worthy of death. Pilate thought Jesus could be released according to the custom. Yet, when he suggested this, the crowd shouted, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” So Barabbas—a man who had rightly been convicted of a crime—was released, while Jesus, who was without any sin, was held captive and then prepared for the cross. This is what Jesus does for sinners even today.

Questions to Guide Your Group’s Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?
- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?
- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?
- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?