

It's Friday, But They Don't Know Sunday's a Comin' -Luke 23

Icebreaker: Was there a time you did something unpopular because you knew it was the right thing to do?

Introduction:

Previously, Jesus was arrested, denied by Peter, mocked and beaten, faced the Sanhedrin council (Jewish judicial court) and in **Chapter 23**, Jesus was subjected to the Romans trial before Pilate. Pilate found no cause to execute Jesus and he returned Jesus to Herod who, in turn, sent Jesus back to Pilate. Under pressure of the crowd, Pilate committed Jesus to the Roman's style execution, slow death on the cross.

Jesus the King before Pilate, Read 23:1-5

The head priest and his cohorts brought Jesus before Pontius Pilate for judgment, a Roman governor under the emperor of Tiberius in the 1st century. When asked, Jesus admitted being the King of the Jews. Pilate found no fault in Jesus.

1. Who were the accusers and how/why did they attack Jesus before Pilate? Luke 22:26
2. Pilate played the chief Roman prosecutor role. How did his question go to the core of the issue? Why was Jesus' answer so inflammatory?
3. Pilate played the role of the judge. Why do you suppose Pilate decided to find Jesus not guilty at this time? How did politics, morality, selfishness, financial gain, status or divine perspective play into it?
4. Describe who Jesus is to you and what authority does he have over you?

Jesus Ignored Herod, Read 23:6-12

When Pilate heard that Herod of Antipas was in Jerusalem and that the "Jesus problem" was under his jurisdiction, he sent Jesus back to him. Antipas was a son of Herod the Great, who was a puppet pseudo king of Galilee under Rome. He ruled

over the local affairs except for capital offenses which fell back to the Roman's governor, Pilate. Herod was glad to receive Jesus because he had questions for Jesus. Since Jesus was unresponsive, Herod sent Him back to Pilate.

5. Why do you suppose Pilate "kicked the ball" over to Herod and let him decide the fate of Jesus?

6. What do you learn about Herod from verse 8 to 11?

7. Why didn't Jesus respond to Herod?

8. How would you respond to people like Herod who only have their self-interest in mind?

Crowd Prevailed Over Pilate's Judgment, Read 23:13-25

Pilate reiterated that Jesus was innocent of capital punishment and wanted to release Him. The crowds will prevailed and Pilate pronounced capital sentencing of death on Jesus.

9. Although Pilate found Jesus not deserving of capital punishment, why did Pilate finally give in to a segment of the crowd and have Jesus executed? 23:23-24, Matthew 27:24-25

10. What irony do you see that Barabbas was released while Jesus was condemned?

11. Pilate was between a rock and hard place. What human virtues are required to choose wisely when caught between obligations versus doing what is right? What did Pilate lack?

12. How did you (or did not) develop these positive virtues in life?

Jesus Nailed on the Cross, Read 23:26-43

A great crowd followed Jesus on His way to execution. Seeing the women following Him, He warned them of worst atrocities to come. There were two criminals who were crucified with Him. One mocked Jesus, but the other recognized Jesus for

who He is. This forgiven criminal was promised a place in Paradise with Jesus.

13. What was the significance of Jesus' message to the women? 23:28-31

14. Why did Jesus ask His Father to forgive those who would murder Him? 23:34
Why is it significant for us also?

15. Contrast the behaviors of the two criminals crucified along with Jesus.
Why do you suppose they responded so differently?

16. How does each criminal describe you at different times in your journey?

Jesus' Death and Burial, Read 23:44-56

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Council asked and received permission to bury Jesus in his own tomb. (Matthew 27:60) Joseph and Nicodemus (John 19:38-42) prepared Jesus' body for burial and then left to observe the Sabbath.

17. What were the different reactions (centurion, crowd, His acquaintances)? Matthew 27:45-61

18. How should Christians respond to this grim historical event today, also known as "Good Friday"? Also consider these verses in your response:

- 2 Corinthians 5:21, *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (NIV)
- Romans 5:8, *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (NIV)