

CONVERSATIONS

Jesus calls the question (John 18 & 19)

- Monday** Who's in charge? Pilate goes outside where Jesus' death is demanded (Jn 18:28-32).
Pilate goes inside where Jesus is questioned about the Kingdom (Jn 18:33-38a).
Pilate goes outside where Jesus is declared innocent (Jn 18:38b-40).
Pilate goes inside where Jesus is flogged (Jn 19:1-3).
Pilate goes outside where Jesus is declared innocent: "Behold the man!" (Jn 19:4-8)
Pilate goes inside where he discusses power with Jesus (Jn 19:9-11).
Pilate goes outside where Jesus' death is obtained (Jn 19:12-16).
- Tuesday** The main point in this message is: Choose Christ! In one of the most intense conversations of his ministry, Jesus calls the question. He forces Pilate to make a choice—are you for Christ or against Him? Note the powerful way in which John tells this story: Pilate moves in and out between Jesus and the crowd who wants him dead; back and forth, vacillating—he wants the best of both worlds but Jesus will not give him that option. Clearly Pilate is the one on trial, not Jesus. Two masters are too much. Pilate must choose. Eventually, there comes a time when the conversation needs to become a decision. What will you do? Talking about Jesus with a Christian is not the same as being a Christian.
- Wednesday** There comes a point in time when the listener needs to evaluate for himself. What is it I believe about Jesus? Pilate scurries back and forth trying to appease the enemies of Christ who, on one hand refuse to be contaminated by going into the quarters of Gentile: and on the other hand manipulate the very Gentile judicial system so that they can crucify Jesus. The religious enemies avoid going into Pilate's quarters so that they will not be contaminated from the Passover when in fact they are plotting to kill the true Passover! Irony! Jesus' enemies do not hear the self-disclosure statements of Jesus because they are made in Pilate's quarters yet Jesus wants Pilate to hear them; he wants Pilate to make a choice! You have to choose between Jesus and the world! Choose!
- Thursday** Here are five more examples of irony: (1) In John 18:34-35, Jesus, the interrogated, becomes the interrogator! The prisoner has become the judge! (2) Pilate asks condescendingly, "Am I a Jew?" yet as the Scripture plays out, he who despises the Jews winds up adopting their position. (3) It is ironic that the question, "What is truth?" is asked by someone whose sole business is to determine truth! It is the business of empires to determine truth! Pilate didn't want to do his job. He was trying to play both sides in a contest that is total. (4) John 19:12 drips with irony: To kill Jesus, the crowd must make themselves out to be more loyal to Caesar than Pilate himself! (5) The enemies put Jesus on the cross to prevent people from coming to him but in doing so Christ is lifted up and so that all may come to him.
- Friday** *Western Culture has made a fundamental change in its religious base. We have exchanged that One who said, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6) for the incredibly expensive doctrine of Freud and the words of all his varied disciples. Our new religion says with Pontus Pilate, "what is truth?" and teaches that our status is one of "original victim" rather than "original Sin." (Carol Tharp, in a letter to the Chicago Tribune Magazine, April 17, 1994).*