



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

“JOHN 19:1-37”

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you from the sermon?
- What stood out to you from the text?
- The main theme of John’s Gospel is that by believing in Jesus as God’s son we find life.
 1. How did you find life when reading this passage?
 2. Did you personally find life in a specific way from the sermon this week?
- How did the sermon or passage point you to Jesus?

THE CONTEXT

Historical: Jesus’s trial and crucifixion happened during a period called Pax Romana. This was a period of “Roman Peace” where conquered nations paid tribute to Caesar, and in return, the Romans let them stay alive. As the governor, Pilate was responsible for facilitating this “peace” by preventing any uprisings, which he did with brutal force. Pilate had a reputation of silencing any opposition, and that reputation shows up in his actions here. Pilate willingly allows an innocent man to suffer because he has to keep the peace of the Pax Romana period.

Literary: John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” In John, there is a strong opposition between the light and the darkness. Participating in light entails belief in Jesus, the “light of the world,” (John 8:12). Only through Jesus will we find life. At this point in John, those aligned with darkness have united against Jesus and presented their verdict. As we read this passage, we need to note John’s theme of light and darkness and what happens when we participate in these sides. This passage demonstrates what happens when people choose darkness instead of Jesus.

THE CONTENT

The force of darkness left people...

1. Unable to notice God and God’s actions

- The Robe: The purple robe symbolizes kingship, but the soldiers fail to recognize Jesus’s true identity as king.
- The Crown: The word for “crown” used has royal ideas associated with it; however, its main connotation is victory. *στέφανον* *stephanon* (from where we get the name Stephen) refers to a crown given to a victor (compare: 1 Corinthians 9:25). Jesus’s crown shows us his identity and his work. As a king, Jesus takes the curse of man, thorns (Genesis 3:17), and reigns as a victor. Jesus’s work on the cross is that he takes on humanity’s sin and brings forth life to creation.

2. Fighting for a false peace

The language “Son of God” is a title that belongs to a king. When God makes a covenant with David, the office of the king is portrayed as a father-son relationship with God (2 Samuel 7:14). So, Pilate has to act in brutality to ensure that there are no threats to Caesar’s rule. His brutal attempts to keep peace result in crucifixion and friction in the community.

3. Outside of God’s kingdom

- When the people said they had no king except Caesar, officially, in their verdict, they aligned themselves with Caesar instead of Christ and decided to participate in Rome’s good news of [false] peace.
- Also, when Pilate wrote his sign, notice that his decree included the mockery of the entire Jewish people. His note implied that the Jewish nation and culture were beneath Rome. Therefore, the Jewish people were



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connected to the shame of Jesus's crucifixion. It seemed like they were promised honorable protection apart from Jesus, but they were betrayed and stuck in shame.

THE CALL

- What promises does rebellion against God make you?
- Have you noticed times when rebelling against God has failed to deliver what it promised?
- When have you found yourself acting like a member of the crowd?
- How can we remain faithful to Jesus in difficulties that tempt us to align with darkness?

1. Remember that self-denial is better than self-preservation

The basis of our faith must be surrender not selfishness. Pilate likely knew who Jesus was and understood that he should not have killed an innocent man, but he cared most about securing a false peace using brutality. In our lives, we can be tempted to follow a different agenda that makes a promise that entails selfpreservation. However, when this promise does not include Jesus, it leads us further away from God's intentions for us and into a state that requires violence and selfishness to maintain.

2. Speak, because when we have convictions and remain silent, innocent people get hurt

There was likely a large crowd that had assembled for Jesus's verdict. In the crowd, there were Sadducees who were offended by Jesus's teaching and his miracles (particularly raising Lazarus). There were also zealots who desired to see Rome be defeated with physical might. These voices probably led the charge against Jesus, but there were definitely other groups present who said nothing. The rest of the crowd simply went along with the rest of the crowd. This silence led to an innocent man, Jesus, suffering. When we are silent about the things we know to be true and retreat in passivity, the people we love can get hurt.

This week, how can you stand out in faith against the force of darkness by acknowledging Jesus?

RESPOND

- How does this passage encourage you, challenge you, or change you in your efforts to become more like Jesus?
- What is one thing you learned about yourself from God's Word? How will you respond in obedience this week?
- Who is someone you can have a conversation with about what Jesus is doing in your life or invite to join you at a CU Church gathering.

PRAY

... for each other and spend time praising God. Pray that he will show you how to better love God and love people.