

John's Gospel @ CF!

John 18:28-40

Sermon notes – BK

March 1, 2026

**Of course, we are in the Gospel of John this morning...
Don't get used to it, this is about to change after April!**

**Pretty regularly, I look at messages I speak after the fact...
I have to say, it is tough to be “upbeat” talking about these
verses...**

- It is not that I am trying to just entertain you... but it is nice not to be looking at a sour face for so long!
- THAT said, these are tough passages to just “skate” through...

Surprisingly, today is a bit of a breather...

Today, we see Jesus before Pilate

Remember the context we are in here–

- Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden
- The disciples scatter
- John and Peter follow (from a distance I am guessing)
- John had connections to get in and got Peter in too
- While Jesus was being falsely accused, Peter denied Jesus 3 times (as Jesus prophesied he would)... and the rooster cowed as Jesus said would happen as well...

BACK to Pontius Pilate –

- He was the Roman prefect (governor) of Judea (26-36 AD)...
- The one making the decision about Jesus.

This is likely not new information for you...

Pilate is a familiar character in our minds in this part of the story...

BUT John gives us much more than the other Gospels...

Today we get to see –

- Honest Questions
- *More* honorable intentions than most of those mentioned in this story

Pilate... known in history to be a horrible leader...

- Recognizes injustice
- He is not wanting to be a part of this injustice...
- IS by no means perfect and is ultimately more interested in his own well-being than that of Jesus

THIS... coming from the one in charge of oppressors of the Jews! The one who rules them and who they are subject to...

Does this not strike you as *interesting* at least?

It certainly does me!

John pauses to give more detail to one of the most intriguing elements of what Jesus went through before the cross.

You will see John continuing to weave who Christ is, and that in this, He is not worried, but He is in control of this whole thing.

- Exposing the irony and injustice of those who want power**
- Revealing that (like comparing the woman at the well and the Pharisee Nicodemus) the ones who SHOULD get it do not, and the one who SHOULD NOT get it, (at least in some way) does.**

Have you pondered any of this in reading this passage in John before?

Let's read through this and see if you agree...

John 18:28-40

28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" 30 They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." 31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put

anyone to death.”³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”⁴⁰ They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

We are going to do a bit of a Bible Study today.

I hope you take notes – or are at least on the mailing list to get the notes :-)

I talked about the context

I read the passage...

Now I want us to go together through the passage and look at some words that are interesting, and see how they unfold into a clearer picture of Jesus.

So, this will not be like a normal message (not that they are ever “normal”) – you know what I mean!

It is important when we are engaging in familiar stories like this, that we read it fresh...

- **Ask questions**
- **Look for nuances**
- **Read carefully to see what is there...**

PRAY

- **That HS would illuminate His Word to us**
- **Turn on the light, that we may see...**
 - **Your truth**
 - **Your leading us into Your truth**
 - **We would respond with humility and hunger**

AMEN!

Let's go through this passage and see what we can find...

Look for key things...

- **Write them down**
- **I will cover my list and if you have more on your list, dig into it this week!**
 - **If you have questions, email me**

- If you have found other insights, email me that as well!

John 18:28

28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

SO much irony here...

- They take the perfect man, from a far-from-perfect trial to see the one who was actually in charge, though they acted like they were
- They tell Pilate to come to them... Isn't that what religion does? It makes you come to them, trying to keep the "upper-hand" in the conversation.
- They want to be "clean" according to the Law, but they are displaying absolute filth...
- They do not want to "defile themselves" so they could eat a meal...
 - A meal that foreshadows the one they are about to have crucified.
 - They want to be clean to participate in a religious ceremony
 - They do not see THEY are the ones who slay the "...lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" as John wrote in John 1:29...

This is exactly what Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 23...

Matthew 23:24

24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Jesus further rebukes them in Matthew 23:29-36, prophesying they will follow in the footsteps of their forefathers who killed righteous people...

John points all this out, so those who read this will have a fuller understanding of what took place...

29 So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” 30 They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”

Interesting, they did not answer Pilate, did they?

They had no valid accusation – just an evil agenda

Jesus asked them a bit earlier in the evening *after He was struck in the face...*

John 18:23

“If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?”

They had no answer then, they have no answer now...

This is the nature of the enemy – he accuses...

Revelation 12:10

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of

our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Question – How do you defend against the “accuser of... you?”

With the truth...

- Even if the thing that is being spoken of happened... it is NOT who you are
- Know the truth... it will set you free! (John 8:32)

³⁰ They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”

Pilate saw through this...

³¹ Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” ³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

They had no case against Jesus according to God’s Law... only their own.

Their law did not allow for capital punishment under Roman rule – though we do see stoning (as with Steven in Acts 7)

They wanted for Jesus to be publicly humiliated... there was nothing more humiliating than crucifixion.

We will get into that later...

John was pointing out how all the details of what Jesus said was going to happen... is happening...

33 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34 Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” 35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”

Why did Pilate ask this? Was he looking for Jesus to accuse Himself?

Jesus answers Pilate with a question, the answer is different if it is from a political perspective or Jewish...

- Trying to **oppose Ceasar?** No
- Is He the **Messianic King of the Jews?** Yes!

“What have you done?”

There was not enough time for THAT answer!

So, Jesus made it simple... sort of...

36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” 37 Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.”

Truly Jesus' kingdom is NOT of this world... but much higher!

Paul says it perfectly to his “son in the faith” Timothy, even while referencing this very conversation...

1 Timothy 6:13-16

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Jesus continues with...

John 18:37b-38a

For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” ³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

Jesus is dropping some amazing revelation to Pilate...

Jesus tells Pilate that this is the reason He came... to bear witness to the truth...

The religious leaders were not interested in the truth

Pilate is right there...

“Everyone who is OF the truth LISTENS to my voice...”

I am not sure if he’s on his phone, or distracted by the TV, but he misses all of it!

Clearly Pilate missed all of this... (I can kinda get it)... this is seen in his question...

38 Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

Pilate asked the right person... but not the right question...

He asked, “WHAT is truth?”

Better question? “WHO is truth?”

Pilate is right in front of all he could ever truly want or need... and missed it.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

People still miss it today...

John 18:38b-40

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰ They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

Pilate was clearly wanting out of this deal

- He was not a man of character and he was undone.
- He tries to invoke a custom... That backfired

They wanted Barabbas to be released not Jesus.

Barabbas – Who was he?

Most commonly known as one who was fighting against Rome and was part of an attempt to gain back power.

One source said something interesting, *“The name "Barabbas" is Aramaic, meaning "son of the father" (bar = son, abba = father). This has fueled symbolic interpretations, especially in contrast to Jesus as the "Son of the Father" (or Son of God). Many scholars highlight the irony: the crowd chooses the false or earthly "son of the father" over the true one.”*

Could be.

Interesting John calls him a robber, this is consistent with what He records Jesus saying in John 10...

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

AND... THIS is the one they chose over Jesus...

SO... IF we are paying attention... We have a clearer picture of Jesus

- **He is King**
- **His Kingdom rules over this one**
- **Jesus willingly left His Kingdom to save this one**
- **Jesus is truth and we will come to know it through Him**

We see contrasting people (still in the world today)

- **We have powerless people grabbing for power (*some use religion to do it*)**
 - They are **not interested in truth**
 - They are **willing to compromise just about anything to get what they want**
- **We have people in power**
 - **May be interested in truth, but not willing to give up their own comfort for it.**
 - **They may ask questions of the right people, but do not really want an answer...**

THEN... we have redemption, where all can repent and come to Jesus, who is “The way, The truth and The life...”

We will see this unfold as the Gospel continues...

Application Questions...

- **Am I honest about my own sin?**

- Do I recognize it?
- Am I humble enough to repent?
- Am I so stuck in my thinking, that I cannot hear the truth?
 - What is in my “blind spots”
 - Do I want to know?
- When I see clearly, what will I do then?
 - Will I walk in freedom in the light?
 - Would I prefer to stumble in the dark?

We see this play out in today’s passage in John 18...

It is raw and real... It is important for us to be the same with ourselves...

- That we know the truth
- That we walk in freedom!

Last Sunday, at the Family meeting, and then following up with this last week’s letter, I am encouraging a time of prayer. This is what I wrote in the letter...

Here are some things I believe are important areas to ask and seek the Lord in –

- *That our hearts and minds would be fixed on Him and walk by His Spirit.*
- *That our mission in Snohomish would be led and empowered by Him.*

- *That we as a church would be a reflection of the heart of Jesus to one another, as we seek to build each other up in love.*
- *That He would continue to provide all we need in the mission He gives us being wise stewards all along the way.*
- *That our long-term place of worship would be secured by Him for His glory and the building of His Kingdom.*