

John 18:33-19:16

“Jesus: Crucified Under Pontius Pilate”

Scripture: John 18:33-19:16

Memory Verse: Mark 15:15 *“Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.”*

Lesson Focus: Peer pressure is powerful. In this section of Scripture we will see just how powerful the voice of the crowd was on Pontius Pilate who sent Jesus over to be crucified. We will then challenge the kids to stand up for the truth, even if it means going against the crowd.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Jesus before Pontius Pilate, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: The Narrow Gate

Starter Activity: Peer Pressure

We will have all of the kids stay in the Summit Room for our starter activity. We will watch a video that portrays the power of peer pressure. Before the video, have a little bit of discussion on what it means to “go along with the crowd”.

Sometimes we want something “because everyone else” seems to have it or be doing it. *

Q: But just because everyone else is doing it, does that make it good or right? No!

In response, you may have heard your parents/guardians say something like, “If all of your friends decided to jump off of a bridge, would you jump too?”

Their point is that just because everyone else is doing it, that doesn’t make it right.

[Now watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IJCXXTMrv8>]

[Pause it at 0:47] What do you think she will pick?

[Stop it at 2:35] (Be sure to stop it as the rest of the video is BALONEY!)

Q: Did you hear that last question? Have you ever **ignored the truth** to fit in with the group?

That last guy didn’t want to seem stupid or be made fun of. He “**ignored what he knew was true**” to “fit in” with the group.

In our study today, we are going to look at someone who does this very same thing, except the result is a lot more serious than just getting a silly question wrong.

Bible Study:

We are studying through the final chapters of the gospel of John where Jesus is fast approaching His death on the cross. Last week we looked at how Jesus was betrayed by Judas and his trial before the Jewish religious leaders.

Q: Does anyone remember what Peter, one of His closest followers had done?

A: Denied Jesus three times! Even Peter was overpowered by the crowd!

And yet as we advance now into this next scene with Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, you see Jesus is completely composed. As hard as this is for Jesus, He knows this is what He came for!

John 18:33-34: Pontius Pilate is probably annoyed to be having to deal with this Jewish dispute and you can imagine the sarcasm as He first questions Jesus. “So YOU are the king of the Jews?” *

But instead of Jesus pleading for His innocence or responding defiantly like criminals Pilate is used to seeing, Jesus asks HIM a question! Jesus is calm and composed which probably takes Pontius Pilate by surprise.

John 18:35-36: Jesus begins to let Ponty know that His kingdom is divine. He did not come to setup a worldly kingdom.

Even His disciples hadn't quite figured this out yet! Remember their shock when Jesus washed their feet? This is why Judas had betrayed Him as Judas was looking for that earthly kingdom where Israel was restored to its glory.

John 18:37-38a: Jesus clearly declares to Ponty that He is a king but also that He is the king of Truth. In fact, elsewhere Jesus said that He IS the Truth. (**John 14:6**)

I think Pilate is getting uncomfortable by Jesus's composure and just dismisses Him by asking Him, “What is truth”?

Q: Let's discuss Ponty's question. What is truth?

A: A good definition: Truth is telling it like it is. Truth is the way things actually are (whether you believe it or not)! *

Q: What is the opposite of truth?

A: Lies/falsehoods! Even at the youngest age, you KNOW you are doing something wrong when you lie and ignore the truth. You are doing the opposite of what God wants and who God is. (**Titus 1:2**)

Read John 17:17. Jesus Himself said that God's word is truth. If you want to know the way the world actually is, you need to know God's Word! *

John 18:38b-40: Pilate is now faced with a problem.

He knows that the TRUTH is that Jesus is innocent and that this trial is a sham. While He feebly tries to get Jesus released, the crowds and their lies are powerful.

Q: Have you ever had a situation where you had to choose between the TRUTH and what is right when the crowd was pressuring you to do the opposite? *

It can be hard to stand up for the TRUTH. You might get laughed at or made fun of. For Ponty, his job and reputation as governor was at stake.

John 19:1-5: Unable to get Jesus released, he compromises and has Jesus tortured.

Remember Who this is being tortured! Jesus Christ is the God-man! He willingly endured all of this shame and mockery because it was the ONLY WAY for our sins to be forgiven. He suffered all of this for you and for me! *

Pilate then brings Jesus back out to the crowd thinking that after having him mocked and tortured it would satisfy them.

Q: Do you think this worked? Do you think the crowd will be satisfied and let Jesus go?

John 19:6: Nope! And you can see that Ponty is still struggling because he knows this is all wrong!

John 19:7-10: Now Ponty learns something new about Jesus and becomes afraid: Jesus is on trial because He claimed to be the one and only Son of God.

Ponty is so troubled that he runs back to Jesus and asks Him straight up: WHERE ARE YOU FROM? And Jesus does not answer! Imagine how mad Ponty is at this point! He then boasts of the power that he THINKS he has over Jesus. *

John 19:11: And Jesus clearly tells him that he would have NO POWER if it weren't given to him by God! Jesus speaks to Ponty as a parent would to a naughty child!

Q: Who REALLY has the power here, Jesus or Ponty? *

John 19:12-15: Here we come to the climax of this drama between Ponty and Jesus. He knows Jesus is innocent and in v. 12 we see that he wants to release him. Ponty has to decide what is more important: The Truth or pleasing the crowd to save his own position/status. And the crowd is louder and stronger than ever.

Q: What do they continue to shout out? "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

John 19:16: Ponty went with the crowd. History says it did not end well for Pontius Pilate. This is a very sad ending for him.

Key Point: Let's revisit the video that we watched at the beginning. Do you remember that people were "pulled by the crowd" away from the truth?

In that video, people were planted to pressure an unsuspecting person against the truth...and it worked! Multiple people ignored the truth to fit in with the group.

The same thing happened here with Ponty! This whole trial was a sham and these religious leaders were planted to persuade Pontius Pilate to send an innocent man, the God-man, to His death!

But do you remember in the video there were a couple of people who had the boldness to say, "No! I'm going with C, because that is the truth! These people are wrong!"

They stood up for the truth. There is an old saying, "*Those who stand for nothing, will fall for anything.*"

As Christians, we need to know the truth (God's word) and stand up for the truth! We need to stand up for Jesus!

- 1) When the crowd pressures you into something that you know is wrong, stand up for Jesus!
- 2) When your friends try to talk you into doing something stupid, stand up for Jesus!

Read Mark 15:15. It says Pilate wished to satisfy the crowd. That ultimately was most important to him. What is most important to you?

Bring It Home

(Devotional for the Family)

Lesson Theme: “Jesus: Crucified Under Pontius Pilate”

Scripture: John 18:33-19:16

Memory Verse: Mark 15:15 *“Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.”*

Teachers/Parents: We got our lesson started by sharing a quick video that presents the power of peer pressure. The crowd is a powerful voice in our lives and in our text it was a powerful voice in Pontius Pilate’s decision about Jesus. Have some discussion with your kids about times when you were all challenged by the crowd (friends, peers, etc.) to do something you knew was wrong and how you responded.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some reasons why the crowd is powerful enough to pull us away from the truth and what we know is right?
- 2) Read **John 18:37**. Jesus says that He came to testify to the truth. What are some claims that Jesus made that He might be referring to here? (Hint: Checkout **John 3:16**, **John 11:25**, **John 14:6**, and **John 17:3** for some ideas).
- 3) In **John 18:38**, Pilate responds to Jesus and seems to dismiss Him with a very famous question still relevant today, *“What is truth?”* How would you answer Pilate? Why do you think truth is so important?
- 4) In our culture, it is popular to think that “all truth is relative”. What is wrong with that statement? (Hint: Is that statement absolutely true?) What are some things that we know are absolutely true?
- 5) Read **John 17:17**. This is a prayer of Jesus for His disciples. Where would Jesus have us go first to know truth?
- 6) Read **John 19:12**. It says here that Pontius Pilate wanted to release Jesus and even back in v. 10 that he had the power to do so. Why do you think he didn’t release him even if he wanted to? (Hint: Review our memory verse!)
- 7) There is a famous saying that says, *“Those who stand for nothing will fall for anything.”* What do you think this means? What are some ways that you can more boldly stand for the truth and for Jesus Christ in your life?