

## What's Next?

Brandon Yopp

### Discussion Guide

*Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!*

#### Open

In this week's message, Gateway's Student Pastor Brandon Yopp takes a look at Pilate's interaction with Jesus to help us realize that trying to avoid responsibility for our choice of whether to follow Jesus doesn't free us from the consequences of our decision. The reality is that Pilate wasn't mistaken in what he believed about Jesus - but his unwillingness to stand up to the crowd and do the right thing cost him far more than he could ever imagine. To get your group started, let everyone share the most ingenious or creative excuse they've heard someone give in an attempt to avoid responsibility...

#### BIG THOUGHT

When we come face-to-face with the claims of Jesus, we are forced to decide for ourselves how we should respond - and avoiding the decision doesn't keep us from being held accountable for our choice.

1. To get started, read Matthew 27:11. What was Pilate's title? At this point in Israel's history, the nation had been conquered and occupied by the Roman Empire - where proclaiming yourself king brought the death penalty (it was considered treason). How does Jesus' answer to Pilate reveal His wisdom?
2. Now read v. 12-14. What were the priests and religious leaders accusing Jesus of? (also see Matt. 26:62-66, John 19:7-8)) What do you think Pilate expects Jesus to do? (v. 13-14) Do you think at this point Pilate is looking to render true justice? To appease the crowd? Something else? Why?

3. Read v. 15-18. Do you think Pilate thought the crowd would demand Jesus instead of Barabbas? Why? And what does v. 18 let us know about Pilate's feelings toward the religious leaders? Does this make you more sympathetic to him or less? Why?
4. Now read v. 19. What would you have done if you received a strange message like this from one of your loved ones? Why do you think Pilate was unaffected by it?
5. Read v. 20-23. What do you think it means that Pilate tried to release Jesus a second time? What do you think is his motivation at this point?
6. Read v. 24-26. Why is Pilate's attempt to excuse himself from responsibility ultimately unconvincing? Share a time when you were a kid and went along with the crowd only to regret it later. And what is the irony in the crowd's final comment? (v. 25)

#### Take it Further

If you've never considered the claims of Jesus for yourself, talk with God now and ask Him to help you place your trust in Christ. If you're already following Jesus, spend time praying for someone you know who needs to make the choice to follow Him, too.

#### Daily Verse Readings

Day 1: Matthew 4:18-20

Day 2: John 14:6

Day 3: Mark 1:19-20

Day 4: Matthew 9:9

Day 5: John 3:16

Day 6: John 10:27

Memory Verse: Matthew 27:11



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