

Questioning Jesus (John 18:28-40)

Christianity isn't a matter of blind "faith" or "personal truth". It isn't simply about "being true to yourself" either. In John 18:28-40 Jesus tells us the reason he was born; his purpose for coming into the world was to bear witness to *the truth*. It was met with a question that echoes throughout every generation: "*What is truth?*" A question we all must wrestle with.

1. Accusing Jesus (John 18:29-32)

"They" are the religious leaders of Jesus' day; "they" are supposed to be the defenders of truth. The religious leaders knew a crucified man was considered despised and cursed. Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13
Jesus knew the love it would reveal, the rescue it would accomplish.

2. Questioning Jesus (John 18:33-38)

Pilate wants to figure out if Jesus is actually a threat to Rome so he interrogates him. V36 Jesus describes the true nature of his kingdom. He wasn't there to take over Pilate or Caesar's dominion – it was much bigger than that! Literally "not from here"; from another place. Jesus' Kingdom is altogether different than the kingdoms of this world. Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 27

V37 Jesus came into the world: "*to bear witness to the truth*". John 1:14-18

This is about revelation.

V37 "*Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.*" John 8:32

Pilate responds sarcastically, "*What is truth?*" Romans 1:25 – an awful exchange.

3. Exchanging Jesus (John 18:38-40)

A willingness to exchange the truth of Jesus in order to get what they want.
"Bar-abbas" literally means "son of the father". Here is Jesus, the *true* Son of the Father AND Barabbas a son of the father. One is innocent the other guilty. 1 Peter 3:18; Galatians 3:10-13

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read John 18:28-40. What vague accusations do the chief priests bring against Jesus?
2. Why are they bringing Jesus to Governor Pilate in the first place? What is their ultimate goal?
3. In John 19:33-36 Pilate begins to cross-examine Jesus, trying to discern if he is a threat to Rome. When asked if he is a king, Jesus begins to describe the true nature of his kingdom. Explain in your own words what Jesus says about his kingdom.
4. What is the reason Jesus was born; the reason he came into the world? And what do you think that has to do with his kingdom?
5. Christianity isn't a matter of blind "faith" or "personal truth". It isn't simply about "being true to yourself" either. Jesus says, "*Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice*". What does "listening" to Jesus' voice require? What will it produce? See John 8:32
6. Pilate responds to Jesus with a cynical question: "*What is truth?*" Can you share an example of a time you struggled with cynicism (maybe you still do)?
7. What response can we offer friends, relatives, neighbors – when they cynically scoff or ask questions similar to Pilate's in V38?
8. Why is it so vital that we give space for others to ask honest questions about what it means to follow Jesus? What does that demonstrate? Why is it important we take the time to give them honest answers? What does *that* demonstrate? How can we practice this more?
9. Describe what's happening in V38-40. What are they exchanging Jesus for? How does it relate to Romans 1:25? Now read 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 John 1:8-9. What is Jesus doing for all of us?

Spend a few minutes thanking Jesus for "*bearing witness to the truth*." Confess your skepticism and doubts and ask him to fill you with gratitude for what he has revealed. Thank Jesus for standing in your place – willingly exchanging his life for yours. Ask him for the humility, courage and love to speak the truth of who he is to those around you.