

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS
for the Week of April 9, 2017 (Palm Sunday)

<p>BEAUTIFUL ORTHODOXY: <i>Standing on the Side of Truth</i> John 18:28-37</p>
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1. Have you ever been blamed for something you didn't do, or something that wasn't true? How did you react? What did you learn about yourself as a result?

2. "Fake news" (meaning the deliberate spread of misinformation for the sake of financial or personal or political gain or expediency) has become a popular phrase lately. People seem more skeptical and cynical than ever when it comes to believing "truth claims" of any kind – and especially when these claims come from opposing camps (e.g., Republicans vs Democrats; conservatives vs liberals; CNN vs Fox News, etc). Today we will explore the story of Jesus standing on trial before Pontius Pilate with this in mind. **Read John 18:28-40.**

What would Pilate have labeled "fake news" when it came to the accusations of the Jews against Jesus? Why is Pilate so exasperated and "put out" by this whole affair (**see 18:35**)?

How does Pilate view Jesus in this passage? Do you think he's skeptical? Curious? Dismissive? Condescending? Fearful? Why? (**see also 19:1-16**)

3. How would you respond to the following popular wisdom of our culture . . .
 - a) *"There is no such thing as absolute truth; two people could define truth in totally conflicting ways but both could still be correct?"*

 - b) *"Whatever is right for your life, or works best for you, is the only truth you can know."*

4. A survey by George Barna once revealed that only half of all believers claim that the primary influence on their thinking about moral truth is the Bible. The other half said the biggest influences on their lives when it came to moral truth were: “family and friends, personal experiences and observations, and their own subjective emotions and intuitions.” In short, **we have become a people who are ruled by our feelings**. Why is this so dangerous? In John 18:28-19:16, what do you think is ruling the thinking and emotions of . . .
 - a) The Jewish leaders who bring Jesus to Pilate (**18:28-32; 19:6-7, 12, 15**)
 - b) Pontius Pilate (**18:31, 33-35, 37, 38-39; 19:1, 4, 6, 7-10, 14-16**)
 - c) Jesus (**18:36-37; 19:10-11**)
5. When Pilate asks, “What is truth?” (**18:38**) – do you think he’s asking this as a sincere inquirer? As a sarcastic jab? As a weary man exhausted by political expediency? What do you think Pilate means by this question, and why is it so central to this passage?
6. What is so ironic about the actions of the religious leaders, the “guardians of God’s Truth,” in **18:28**?
7. What do we learn about the nature of Jesus’ kingdom in **18:36-37**? Is Jesus simply saying his kingdom is located in heaven, and not on this earth? Or does he mean something deeper here? (**cf. Matthew 6:10**)
8. In the first century and today, everyone wants to “co-opt” Jesus into their own camp in opposition to all the other “camps.” But the question is not: “Is Jesus on our side?” but rather “*Are we on the Lord’s side?*” Why is this distinction so critical when it comes to being People of the Truth? (**cf. Joshua 5:13-15**).

What does it mean to say that Jesus HIMSELF is “the Truth” (John 14:6)?