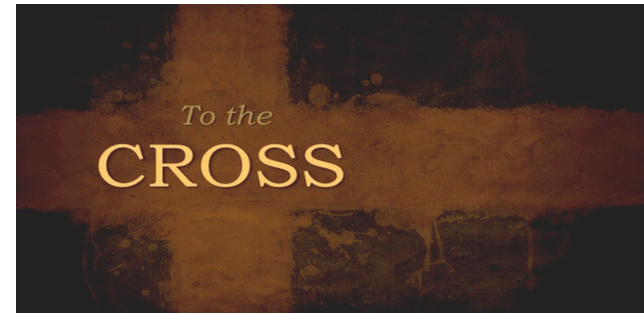


Praying Together

Spend time praying together with your group, giving time to share joys and concerns, but making sure you have enough time to actually pray. Jot down your own prayer requests before your gathering begins.



"Make Up Your Mind"

Luke 23.1-25

Eric Sorenson

March 4, 2018

Notes on How to Pray for Others

How to Pray for our Church

Pray for unity

Pray for wisdom as we move forward in the senior pastor search process

Pray for the staff and leadership board members during this critical time

Other:

Pray for our Community, the World, and our Missionaries.

Opening Up:

What connotations pop into your mind when you hear the name, Pontius Pilate?

Digging into Our Text:

Read Luke 23.1-25. Why are the Jewish authorities bothering to send Jesus to Pilate? Why don't they just deal with him themselves (as a reference, note John 18.31)? Based on your reading of this story, how would you describe Pilate? What else do you know about Pilate based on the sermon, or other information? Pilate seems so indecisive – why? How do the Jewish leaders manipulate Pilate into passing judgment on Jesus?

Pilate attempts to remain neutral in this dilemma. Is it possible to remain neutral about Jesus? Notice Jesus' claims, such as John 10.30; 14.6 and Matthew 12.30. Considering these, why is it so difficult to *really* remain neutral about Jesus?

React to CS Lewis' assertion: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil from Hell. *You must make your choice.* Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great moral teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." (Mere Christianity). Agree? Disagree?

How do we sometimes attempt to remain neutral toward Jesus? Have you tried to remain neutral about him? What was your experience like? How is it true that no decision about Jesus is a NO decision about Jesus?

When Pilate finally caves into the pressure, how does Luke describe it at the end of verse 23? Even as followers of Jesus, we still struggle with choosing him over competing voices. What are some practical examples of these "competing voices?" What do you think CS Lewis meant by asserting that we all feel "the terror of being left outside?"

Getting Personal:

It's possible that right now, your regard toward Jesus is neutral; you're on the fence about him. (If it is, you don't need to share that with your group, although every group should be a safe place to share that!) Really think about a time when you tried to remain neutral about Jesus. What was that like? What changed your perspective?

For Pondering in Private:

It may very well be that right now you're feeling very neutral about Jesus; you're not totally on his side, but you're certainly not against him. Has this look at Pilate's treatment of Jesus affected you? If you are committed to him, how does the celebration of the Lord's Supper strengthen you to stay on course following Jesus?