



The Roman governor Pilate was one of the last people Jesus “crossed paths with” before his death on a cross.

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

John 18:33-38 also provides a window into Pilate’s confusion at this point, especially when Jesus starts talking about having a kingdom that is “not of this world.” John 19:8 even tells us that Pilate was “afraid” when he was told by some of the Jews that Jesus had “made himself the Son of God.” Finally, when the Jews challenged him by saying that if Jesus was released, “you are not Caesar’s friend” (19:12), Pilate gave in.

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. (Matt 27:11-26)

So what can we learn from Pilate and his interaction with Jesus? Let’s dig in...



For Class & Family Discussion:

1. Matthew 27:18 tells us Pilate knew “that it was out of envy” that the Jews had delivered Jesus up. What does that mean? Why would so many of the Jewish authorities have been envious of Jesus?
2. According to John 18:40 and Mark 15:7, what had Barabbas done?
3. What sort of things did Pilate see or hear that should have prompted him to steer this confrontation in a different direction?
4. So why would Pilate try to exit the confrontation by saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood” (Matt 27:24), but still deliver Jesus over to be crucified?
5. Jesus’ statement to Pilate in John 18:36-37 is among his most important teachings we have about his kingdom. In your own words, what is Jesus saying?
6. Why would Pilate have been very alarmed at what the Jews cried out in John 19:12?
7. So what about us? We want not only to “cross paths” with Jesus, but to walk with him as his disciples. So what should we carry away with us from this pivotal moment in the life of Pilate?