



SMALL GROUP GUIDE: THE TRIAL

John 18:28-19:15

Opening Question:

- When you have to make an important decision, what factors typically influence you the most?

Key Takeaways:

1. It's possible to be religious and still miss Jesus entirely.
2. We make daily choices between following Jesus or our own desires.
3. Jesus endured immense suffering for our sake.
4. Our past experiences and cultural pressures can influence our view of Jesus.
5. We must each make a personal verdict about who Jesus is to us.

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon mentions how the religious leaders were so focused on their laws that they missed Jesus standing right in front of them. In what ways might we today be at risk of "perfecting religion" while missing Jesus?
2. Reflect on the statement: "Every day you will make a decision about Jesus, a verdict about Jesus." How do you see this playing out in your daily life?
3. The sermon describes the brutal scourging Jesus endured. How does understanding the physical suffering of Jesus impact your view of His love and sacrifice?

4. Pilate's past mistakes and fear of cultural backlash influenced his decision about Jesus. How might our past experiences or fear of others' opinions affect our relationship with Jesus?
5. The speaker mentions that sometimes we might not desire Jesus, but "when we desire to desire Jesus, that's evidence of the Spirit working in our life." What are your thoughts on this? Have you experienced this?
6. How does Jesus' statement to Pilate about authority (John 19:11) challenge or comfort you in difficult circumstances?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, pay attention to the daily choices you make. Identify moments where you're choosing between following Jesus or your own desires.
2. Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal any areas where you might be allowing past experiences or cultural pressures to negatively influence your relationship with Jesus.
3. Write a personal "verdict" statement about who Jesus is to you. Share it with the group next week if you're comfortable.
4. Choose one area of your life where you struggle to surrender to Jesus. Commit to praying about it daily this week, asking for His help to trust Him more fully in that area.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His immense love demonstrated through Jesus' sacrifice. Ask for His help in seeing Jesus clearly, making Him the center of our lives, and courageously following Him despite past hurts or cultural pressures.