

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"2 STORIES, 2 CHARACTERS" | MARK 15: 1-15 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Would you rather be Pilate or Barabbas? Why?

"Why Pilate" Mark 15: 1-5

Religious leaders take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, to be tried and executed. Jesus stays silent. **How does the record of Jesus seeing Pilate help show the gospel is historical? Why is that significant?**

"Why Barabbas" Mark 15: 6-15

Pilate gives the crowd an option: release Jesus or a murderous rebel Barabbas. The crowd chooses Barabbas. **How are people all like Barabbas? How can Jesus both take our shame we deserve and identify with us when we are shamed unfairly?**

Pilate asks what to do with Jesus and crowd shouts "Crucify!" Pilate goes along despite knowing Jesus' innocence. **What are ways you have given in to avoid conflict? How does Jesus face enemies and accusations with peace and strength?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus is tried by Pilate and condemned to death instead of the guilty Barabbas, who's set free. This shows the gospel is historical, and it is powerful as Jesus takes our place of shame and understands injustice. **Have you been like Pilate lately, protecting yourself instead of standing for truth? Have you submitted to God's will like Jesus did even when it's hard? What feelings of shame do you need to talk to God about? Ask Jesus to take your guilt and to encourage you in your hardships so you live in the confidence of God's will.**

2 Stories, 2 Characters.

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online.
- B. Slide1-3 Kel: WSL. Community Groups. Harvest Festival.
- C. Slide4 Global Day of Prayer for the Rohingya: is Today. In ministry to Muslims we call them *Cousins*.
 1. We learn 2 imp things about our God in Gen.16, *that He is the God who hears, and He is the God who sees*. [hears/Ishamel; sees/Hagar/Egyptian]
 2. In ch.12 shift God speaks to Abram. 2nd was Hagar (not Sarai). In ch.12 Abraham is blessed & *his descendants* (so both Isaac/Ishmael blest). *Doesn't leave till ch. 21*.
 3. Also, My trip, many mtg's re: Roh *Removed* from our property in Nepal.
- D. Slide5 Prayer: The God who sees/hears (them/us).

II. Slide6 Intro: 2 Stories, 2 Characters.

- A. 2 Stories, 2 Characters. But why these 2 odd characters? (Pilate & Barabbas. *Why not Peter, Caiaphas?*). Quick answer: both are very important to *the gospel*.
- B. Mark writes with *Dramatic Irony* - which is when **the audience** knows something that **the characters** *don't know*. Mark knew, God knew, we know, *but* the characters don't know - *this One that they are mocking is in fact - King! How serious this is*.
- C. Outline: Why Pilate? Why Barabbas?

III. Slide7 WHY PILATE? (1-5) Read

- A. Why do 2 prominent Creeds mention Pilate? (Apostles' Creed/2nd cent & Nicene Creed/4th cent - to come against Arius/Arian theology, eg. *Jesus was a created being*. Nicea = Iznik, Turkey)
 1. Slide8 They are about the Trinity. Only 2 other names are mentioned (Mary/Pilate).
- B. Q: We understand Mary, why Pilate? It wasn't that he was popular (hated, cruel, & insensitive, to the Jews), or even powerful, or loved by Rome (opp true: to "get stuck" in "that area" of the empire, 10 yrs.). [*Judea was a difficult/volatile outpost*]

1. **As Pilate the Politician:** History records him as a man who **feared Rome**, and **feared the crowds**, **more than** he **feared God**.
 2. He is **the poster child** of a **people-pleaser** leader - always asking **“What will keep me safe?”** instead of **“What is right?”**
 3. He was a weak-leader, a fence-sitter, & an innocent-man condemner.
- C. **A:** The early church wanted to emphasize Pilate to show **that Jesus’ crucifixion** happened at **a specific time and place, under a known Roman governor** (A.D. 26-36)
1. By naming Pilate, **they anchored the story** in the same way historians mark events by **rulers** (eg. **in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar**, Lk.3:1).
 2. This also **counters** the charge that **Christianity** was **“just another myth”** like the **Greek or Roman gods**.
 3. **Pilate** represents the presiding/**earthly** authority (the official legal action).
 4. **Jesus** was declared **innocent** multiple times by Pilate, **yet** condemned anyway. **Highlighting humanity’s guilt and God’s sovereignty**.
 5. **The creeds remind us: salvation** came **not through man’s** justice, **but through Christ** enduring **injustice!** [*publicas persona* - public person]
 - a) **Jesus’ death** was **not** myth, **or** legend, **but a real historical event**.
 6. By identifying **a Roman governor**, it highlights that Jesus’ death was not just **a Jewish religious event**, **but** something carried out under **the global power of Rome**. (by a real **ruler** - in a real **empire** - at a real **time!**)
 - a) Which speaks to **Jews and Gentiles** alike: **all humanity** is **implicated** in His death, **and all humanity** may **receive** His salvation.
- D. **So the Handoff** takes place, Jesus is **bound** and **delivered by the religious leaders**.
1. They can’t execute Him, **so** they **push Him into Pilate’s hands**.
 2. Pilate asks, **Are You the King of the Jews?**. **So Important** that **John takes a whole chapter** to deal with it (18:28-19:22).
 - a) **Slide9 P52** - **oldest known manuscript fragment** we have of the NT, John Rylands text Gk. Front & back side. Jn.18:31-33; 37,38. **Papyrus/Codex**.
 - b) Especially see **His** answer about **His kingdom**, in Jn:37,38.

3. Jesus' reply is reserved: *You have said so*. (not deferring, *you said it!*)

E. *Many charges*, but Jesus offers no defense. Pilate marvels at His silence, innocence shines through. Jesus doesn't need to justify Himself; *He entrusts Himself to the Father*. (1Pet.2:23)

1. He's loving *you* in His silence. Communicating a submission to the Father, a submission that *His will be done*.

IV. Slide10a **WHY BARABBAS? (6-15)** *Read*

A. **The Custom** - at the feast, 1 prisoner is released. A gesture of *mercy* in a brutal system.

1. **Illustration:** Imagine a **referee** in a game who sees a foul but refuses to blow the whistle, *because* he's afraid the fans will **boo**?
2. That's **Pilate**, aware of *the truth*, but unwilling to act. *Bowed to the crowd rather than stand for the truth*. [And the People's Choice Award goes to - Barabbas!]
3. How often do **we** surrender the truth to avoid *discomfort or conflict*?

B. **Slide10b The Substitution** - the innocent for the guilty.

1. **The Contrast** – **Barabbas**: a rebel, a murderer, an insurrectionist - which probably meant he was a **zealot**, trying to overthrow Rome. He's actually doing what a lot of Jesus' followers wanted him to do ... and many still want Him to do today. *The contrast: Christ*: The innocent Lamb of God.
 - a) The *guilty set free*, the innocent condemned - *this is the gospel in miniature!*
 2. **The Prisoner Exchange** - Barabbas guilty of insurrection and murder. He **deserved** punishment. Yet he walked out free because *Jesus took his place*.
 - a) We are all Barabbas - freed because *Christ bore the penalty*.
 3. **The Substitute** - a Substitution in Sports - in a soccer game, when a player is **exhausted**, a substitute takes his place.
 - a) The difference with Jesus: He didn't substitute for *the weak or tired*, but for *the guilty and condemned*.
 - b) "*Jesus the innocent one is going to die in the place of a guilty one.*"
- (1) **Application:** Heb.12:2-4 *Read*. Are you bleeding yet???

- C. Slide10c **The Shame** - *hurt people, hurt people, and shamed people, shame people.*
- D. Heb.12:2 *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* [despising the shame, or to minimize it]
- E. How did Jesus do it? 2ways: (He held onto the fact there is joy and a judge).
1. He believed there was Joy coming on the other side. (and the Christian can do it also, if we truly believe there's eternal joy waiting for us).
> It's humiliation now, exaltation later, suffering now, glory later, shame now, honor later <
 2. And believing there is a Judge. And He will have the last word, on *all abusers*. 1Pet.2:23 *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to Him who judges justly.*
a) Hold onto the fact ... there is joy and a judge.
 3. Jesus deals with both types of shame: the shame that we feel for breaking God's law (He's covered us and cleansed us); and Jesus can identify with us when we are *shamed, mocked, bullied, persecuted, suffer unjustly*. When people abuse you, physically, verbally, or otherwise. You have One that can identify with you, at at your deepest level of pain. Giving you power so you don't return the shame.
a) "Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood; Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior!"
- F. Slide10d So Jesus deals with both kinds of shame: (earned vs. imposed)
1. For the shame we've earned, He offers forgiveness.
a) Adam & Eve when they *knew they were naked*. (is a picture of exposed guilt and shame before God). David after his sin with Bathsheba. (he confessed to God, *Against You, You only, have I sinned*). Peter after denying Christ, (he wept bitterly).
b) *Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.* Ps.34:5

2. **Slide10e For the shame we've endured**, He offers *healing* and *honor*.

a) **Tamar** (2Sam.13) after being assaulted by *Amnon*, she *lived in her brother's house, desolate*. Her shame was inflicted, not deserved. **The woman caught in adultery** (John 8). Even if guilty, the *public shaming* was cruel, Jesus restored her dignity.

b) He not only wipes away sin, *He also is the lifter of my head*. (Ps.3:3).

G. **End:** In Mt.27:22 Pilate asks, *Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?* Which is the very question *every person* must answer.

1. Soon, *a 1 party kingdom* is Coming. *Stay tuned!*

H. **Communion:**

1. *For the shame we've earned*, He offers *forgiveness*.

2. *For the shame we've endured*, He offers *healing* and *honor*.

[ty for dealing with/both]

I. Keywords: shame, substitution, King.