October 1, 2017

Series: It’s All Yours!

**What do you Believe?**

John 18:28-19:16

Growth Track Step 1 today …

Example of Generosity …

Prayer

**Intro:** It’s all yours!

We’ve been looking at the teachings of Jesus at the end of His life -

Sources of Joy

* Confidence for the Future
* Answers to Prayer
* Plain truth & love
* Peace

The Most Important Prayer - the things Jesus prayed for us:

* Honoring God
* Protection from spiritual attacks
* Receiving truth that leads to holiness & joy, sharing that with others
* Living in the same kind of unity that exists between Jesus and Father God.
* Experiencing His kind of love

Jesus offers us all this and more -

He offers us freedom - the freedom to choose -

* To reject
* To receive
* To repent

As we have said, John’s writing is different than the other stories of Jesus - no contradictions, but a different emphasis - a much stronger emphasis on what happened at the end of Jesus’ life on earth - John goes into great detail of the people, the events, the conversations - one-third of the book devoted to the last week of Jesus life on earth -

And as we continue to look at what John wrote we continue to be confronted with this:

What do you believe?

Believe is mentioned 92 times in the book! This is John’s focus - so it is ours.

Everyone Jesus comes in contact with throughout His life, and especially at the end of His life on earth is confronted with this question - we must be confronted with it -

What do you believe? 5 questions:

 **> Was Jesus a criminal?**

John 18:28-32 - Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn’t go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn’t be allowed to celebrate the Passover. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, “What is your charge against this man?”

 “We wouldn’t have handed him over to you if he weren’t a criminal!” they retorted.

 “Then take him away and judge him by your own law,” Pilate told them.

 “Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone,” the Jewish leaders replied. (This fulfilled Jesus’ prediction about the way he would die.)

Jesus had already been on trial before the Jewish leaders - they have taken Him to Pilate, the Roman governor, to be judged and convicted by the Roman legal authority - a more powerful court than the Jewish parliament of the time.

Pilate asks, “What’s the charge?” Is Jesus a criminal?

John specialized in irony - there is rich irony here - The Jews would not go into Pilate’s home - if they did they would be defiled and would not be able to celebrate the Passover -

But they are certainly willing to convict and crucify the Son of God - the Messiah -

But there actions remove a huge division between the Jewish people and their Roman oppressors -

They seek to side with Rome - an anti-God earthly power - instead of siding with God Himself.

They are getting ready to celebrate the Passover - with all it’s picture of the lamb being slain for their sins … the blood on the doorposts … not seeing the Jesus is the fulfillment of all of that - Jesus was the Lamb of God - they would no longer needs lambs …

And as the doors were blotted with blood - it made the shape of the cross …

The missed it all!

Jesus came to and heal division bring peace -

Ephesians 2:14-16 - For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

Only Jesus can bring peace to warring factions. Only Jesus can bring peace to those who seem to be eternally divided.

Is this the work of a criminal? What do you believe?

 **> Was Jesus a King?**

John 18:33-19:3 - Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him.

 Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?”

 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?”

 Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”

 Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

 Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

 “What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews’?”

 But they shouted back, “No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!” (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

What is truth? The question of the ages - the question of the philosophers. What is truth?

For Pilate, he has a job to do. He has to keep the peace in a place where most Roman leaders hated to be assigned.

His truth is doing whatever he has to do - whatever is necessary to maintain order - maintain his power and position - truth is whatever works for him.

That’s the way it is for a lot of people today.

But here’s the question - Was Jesus a king? Is there some truth in that? In the midst of his pressure, Pilate was wrestling with this.

Jesus said He had a kingdom that was not of this world!

Wouldn’t you have liked to see Pilate’s face when He said that?

He either knew he was dealing with someone from out of this world - or a lunatic.

Still true today - you can’t just say Jesus was a good teacher and reject this statement -

Jesus is either Lord, Liar or Lunatic.

Pilate refers to Him as the King of the Jews - but turns him over to soldiers who will mock and scorn that idea … crown of thorns … purple robe … totally mockery … total rejection …

Pilate sees no crime other than disturbing the peace, and this is what he is allowed to do.

He is hoping that it will satisfy the desire of the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus - it won’t work. They would rather have a murderer released among the people - that’s how much they wanted to do away with Jesus.

Was Jesus a king? Pilate is wrestling - the soldiers and the Jewish leaders are clearly saying, “No.”

What do you believe?

 **> Was Jesus innocent or guilty?**

John 19:4-7 - Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!”

 When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

 “Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.”

 The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.”

Pilate exonerates Jesus! Though he will eventually turn Jesus over to be crucified, proving himself to be a conflicted coward, he states over and over again that Jesus is innocent! He is not guilty! There is no charge! There is no crime!

Yet the Jewish leaders still call for Jesus to be crucified.

He called Himself the Son of God - that’s blasphemy - by their law, not Rome’s, this made Jesus worthy of death.

So - in the eyes of Rome, Jesus is innocent, but will be killed anyway for the sake of peace - in the eyes of the Jewish leaders He is guilty of the crime of blasphemy, punishable by death.

Question: Who did they think the Messiah was going to be?

The only answer to that question is they must have thought that the Messiah was going to be an ordinary man! Otherwise, they would never receive any Messiah, because they wouldn’t receive anyone claiming equality with God.

They were completely done under by low expectations!

They had a terrible lack of understanding of the Scriptures that they spent their entire life studying!

Unfortunately, this is still true today …

Was Jesus innocent or guilty? What do you believe?

 **> Who has the power?**

John 19:8-16 - When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. “Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

 Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

 Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”

 When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!”

 “Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him! Crucify him!”

 “What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

 “We have no king but Caesar,” the leading priests shouted back.

 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

My favorite verse …

Pilate actually didn’t have the power, because he wanted to release Jesus … He could have, but he didn’t - He had the political power to do it, but not the power of courage.

This proves, no matter what position a person may hold, the position doesn’t give them power. Courage, conviction and truth are what gives power - and all of that comes from God - Jesus had it - and He gives the Holy Spirit so we can have it!

The Jewish leaders didn’t have the power, because they couldn’t accomplish anything they wanted to accomplish without Pilate, whom we have already established had no power.

The only person with power here is Jesus -

Given to Him by God …

John 10:18 - “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

 **> What do you believe?**

* Was Jesus a Criminal?
* Was Jesus a King?
* Was Jesus a Innocent or guilty?
* Who has the Power?

Here’s the story of the Bible - Jesus was and is -

God’s Son, sent to give His life for the forgiveness of our sins -

Isaiah 53 - There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

 We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;

 it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

 And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,

 a punishment for his own sins!

But he was pierced for our rebellion,

crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.

He was whipped so we could be healed.

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.

We have left God’s paths to follow our own.

Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

He was oppressed and treated harshly,

yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,

he did not open his mouth.

Unjustly condemned,

he was led away.

No one cared that he died without descendants,

that his life was cut short in midstream.

But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man’s grave.

But it was the Lord’s good plan to crush him and cause him grief.

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord’s good plan will prosper in his hands.

 When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier,

because he exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels.

He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

What do you believe?