

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide

“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

24 Hours that Changed the World

Sentenced (Jesus, Barabbas and Pontius Pilate)

April 4 – April 9

1 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. 2 Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” 3 Then the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” 5 But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. 6 Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. 7 Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. 8 So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. 9 Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” 10 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. 12 Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” 13 They shouted back, “Crucify him!” 14 Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:1-15

In yesterday’s sermon we focused on the sentencing of the Roman official Pontius Pilate. In this week’s study guide we’ll read each of the four gospel accounts of the trial of Jesus before Pilate. Each account in the gospels fills in more details. Study not simply to know what happened, but to understand how this story might speak to you today.

This week as you begin your study guide readings, take out a sheet of paper, turn it sideways, and make four columns, one for each of the four gospels. Each day use one of the columns to describe what new information you have learned about the trial of Jesus before Pilate as you read the gospel for the day.

I invite you to listen to the sermon on the website if you did not get a chance to hear it on Sunday during worship.

Monday– Read Matthew 27:11-26

Notice the first name of Barabbas according to Matthew. The name, Jesus, means “Savior.” How did Jesus and Barabbas differ? Notice verse 19 – none of the other gospels tells us this. In

several churches Pilate's wife was canonized as a saint. Matthew's gospel alone records verses 24 and 25 (this section was eventually removed from Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" because it was too often used as the basis of anti-Semitism in the past). Matthew's gospel was likely written shortly after the Jews were defeated by the Romans and the city of Jerusalem destroyed after the Jewish Great Revolt against Rome – how would Roman Christians have read this passage in the light of these recent events? How does this passage speak to you?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Tuesday – Read Mark 15:1-15

Today we study the story of Jesus' trial before Pilate from Mark's gospel (part of our scripture lesson from this past Sunday's sermon). Note verse 15 in particular. How does Pilate's desire to please the crowd relate to your life today? Why did Jesus remain silent during most of his trial before Pilate?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Wednesday- Read Luke 23:1-24

Try to picture this scene in your mind's eye. Note that twice Luke mentions what Barabbas was in prison for – showing the contrast between Barabbas, who was a would-be messiah who murdered with the sword, and Jesus, who as Messiah would lay down his own life for the rest of humankind. Note how in each successive gospel Pilate's attempt to free Jesus becomes more pronounced.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Thursday- Read John 18:28-19:16

Notice that John has Jesus being tried and crucified on the day of the Passover feast – Matthew, Mark and Luke have this taking place on the day after the Passover feast. Perhaps, John wishes us to connect the death of Jesus with the actual time when the Passover lambs were slaughtered. Notice in John's account that Pilate has Jesus flogged, in the hope that this would be sufficient punishment for the Sanhedrin and the crowd, and then presents the bloodied, beaten and humiliated Jesus to the crowd, noting he found no basis for putting him to death. Notice verse 7 and Pilate's reaction to this. This account, written latter than any of the others, makes it even more clear that Pilate wished to set Jesus free. Notice that though the religious leaders hated Caesar, they preferred Caesar to Jesus, this king who threatened their religious world.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Friday-Read Acts 4:1-31

Just weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection, following his ascension to heaven, Peter and John, now emboldened by the power of the Holy Spirit and having been with the resurrected Jesus, were arrested and taken before the Sanhedrin. Notice that Peter, who had been afraid to admit knowing Jesus when Jesus was before the Sanhedrin, now speaks with power and boldness. Read Acts 4:1-31. Notice this passage points to all who played a part in Jesus' condemnation and death. Contrast the courage of Peter with the actions of Pilate.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Saturday- Read Mark 15:15b-23

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer:

Dear God,

As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN