

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	FW	<i>Study of John</i>
	SEPTEMBER 19	21

# SENTENCED TO DEATH

JOHN 19:1-16

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 19:1-16. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**TAKEAWAY: JESUS FACED INJUSTICE AND PERSECUTION ON HIS PATH TO THE CROSS, MODELING THE PROPER RESPONSE TO SUCH EXPERIENCES FOR HIS DISCIPLES.**

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**WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STANDING UP FOR OUR PERSONAL RIGHTS.**

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**GOSPEL CONNECTION: BECAUSE JESUS WAS SILENT WHEN UNJUSTLY ACCUSED, WE HAVE BEEN MADE RIGHT WITH GOD.**

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## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

### Notes:

- 1 Have you ever been summoned to court for a moving violation or other similar misdemeanor? Were you innocent or guilty? Were you given the opportunity to defend your case? What was the end result of your hearing?
- 2 What lessons did you learn from your experience? How did it affect the way you lived in the days, weeks, and months that followed?

Hearings or trials before governing authorities for even the most minor offenses can still be nerve-racking, if not life-altering. The experience of being held accountable for our actions by those who have power over us serves as a test of our character. Similarly, Jesus' character and commitment to God's will was tested through His intense trials before the high priest and Pilate. Through injustice and persecution, Jesus remained humble and steadfast in His obedience to the will of the Father.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

### Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 19:1-16.

- Why would the Father allow Jesus to go through so much humiliation and pain even before the cross, as described in verses 1-5?
- What new charge did the Jews levy against Jesus at this point?
- What effect did this have on Pilate?
- What crime did Pilate eventually convict Jesus of?

Though Pilate found no guilt in Jesus, the Jews would not have such a verdict. Therefore, they revealed their true concern regarding Jesus: They refused to accept the fact that Jesus claimed to have a direct relationship with God, and therefore they interpreted His statements as though He “made” Himself the Son of God. This was an idea that deeply disturbed Pilate and led him to further review the case. Pilate’s verdict was obviously “treason,” namely here the treasonous rising of a king in opposition to Caesar. Moreover, the sentence must have been death by crucifixion.

- How is the Jews’ argument that Pilate would be disloyal to Caesar if he let Jesus go a powerful one?

- Why do you think Jesus was silent regarding where He was from but vocal regarding who had authority over Him?

**Notes:**

- What does that tell us about Jesus' mission? About His love?

Listening to the crowds rather than to truth, evidence, or reason, Pilate convicted Jesus of "treason." The claim was that Jesus had set Himself up as king of the Jews in opposition to Caesar. Jesus would have been within His rights to boldly and forcefully debate the Jews' bogus claims and Pilate's gross indecision, but He didn't, He remained silent and accepted the injustice Pilate and the Jews leveled at Him. Whereas Pilate was indecisive and allowed the crowds to sway him from doing right, Jesus was resolutely fixed on going to the cross so that He might pay the penalty for our sins. Pilate's indecision kept Him from seeing the truth and trusting Christ. In contrast, Jesus' decisiveness demonstrates His love.

Jesus' trial ended with Pilate granting the religious leaders' request to sentence Jesus and let Him be crucified. With that verdict, innocent Jesus was delivered over to death as God had planned.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8.

- How was the truth of this passage displayed in Jesus' mockery and trial in John 18 and 19?
- What does this passage reveal about Jesus? What does it reveal about how we are to reflect Him to a dark and hurting world, filled with pride?

Paul challenged the Philippian believers to have the mindset of Christ in their relationships with others, then went on to describe exactly what he meant by that. Paul pointed to Christ's love for others and His obedient service to God as examples for his Philippian friends. In the incarnation, Jesus—the Son of God and one with God Himself—left His heavenly throne and became human in an act of humble, selfless love that resulted in His death on the cross.

**Notes:**

- How do we make Jesus' attitude our own in natural ways that apply at work, home, and church? In what areas of life might you need to make changes to demonstrate a more Christlike attitude?
- What about in times when you face unjust opposition?

To understand God's nature and see who He is transforming us to become, we should look to Jesus Christ. From Him, we learn that we are not to be impressed with status or position, but should seek to have a humble attitude and unselfish love for others.

- Of what did Christ empty Himself when He came to earth (v. 7)? Why was this necessary?
- What might have happened if Jesus had not emptied Himself and assumed the form of a slave?

Rather than holding on tightly to the prerogatives of deity, Jesus emptied Himself. This does not mean He left His deity behind when He came to earth as a man. Jesus Christ was the God-Man, fully divine and fully human. At no point did He cease to be God. His miraculous conception and birth took nothing away from His deity; rather it added humanity.

- What does Christ becoming a man reveal to us about His humility?
- Why do we resist serving others with the same humble love as Jesus served us?
- What are some ways we might be emptied to produce an attitude of humility? How might others see Jesus in us as a result?

**Notes:**

Christ gave us an example we should follow. From Jesus' example of humility, we learn that as Christ-followers, we are to model Jesus' humble, selfless, sacrificial love to the world. By imitating Jesus, we ensure that our love is not boastful, proud, or self-seeking. (See 1 Cor. 13:4-5.) Evidence of obedience includes personal sacrifice as Philippians 2 shows but it also leads to ultimate joy.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- Based on today's study, how are we called to respond when others unfairly accuse us, especially in the name of Jesus?
- How can you actively remind yourself this week of the great price Jesus paid?
- Who can you share the message of the cross with this week?

## Notes:

## PRAY

Praise God for His reconciling work through Christ that brought you to Him at the right time, when you were hostile and helpless. Pray that the people in your group would understand their need for a Savior and trust fully in Christ because of the price He paid for them.

## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

**Notes:**

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
  - How does the example Jesus set in His trial change the way you will live this week?
  
  - How is God calling you to humble yourself in a Christlike manner?
  
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
  
- > The challenge to memorize John 19:11.
  
- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 19:17-42.

## JOHN 19:1-16

19:1–3. In typical Roman fashion the process began with the humiliation of the prisoner. We are familiar with the flogging, the crown of thorns, and the mockery of the soldiers. Cruelty has always been a major hallmark of sin in the world, and the Romans had honed it to a fine art.

**Notes:**

It seems apparent that Pilate never intended crucifixion and expected to beat Jesus and release him. Carson argues convincingly that this was likely a *fustigatio*, the least severe flogging on the Roman menu: “The chronology of Luke and John is correct. But this means that Jesus received a second scourging, the wretched *verberatio*, after the sentence of crucifixion was passed. This would hasten the death, and the nearness of the special Sabbath of that week provided the officials with some pressure to ensure that the agony of crucifixion, which could go on for days, would not be permitted to run on too long (Jn. 19:31–33). This also explains why he was too weak to carry his own cross very far” (Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991, pp. 597–98).

19:4–7. After the humiliation of the prisoner, the law required a formal presentation, and Pilate did the honors. The text seems quite clear that Pilate found no legal basis for arresting and holding Jesus, much less physically punishing him. Perhaps he thought the bloody sight of a beaten countryman would move the Jews to pity. But as he uttered the words *Here is the man!* (*ecce homo*), the mob became even more violent in their clamoring for crucifixion. The Jews had no authority to crucify, so Pilate seemed to mock them when he told them to take the crucifixion process into their own hands.

Of all the possible charges bouncing around that day, John settled on the one we find in verse 7, a choice completely in line with his purpose for this Gospel and the only correct charge on the list (John 10:34–38). In this maneuver the Jews attempted to invoke the law of blasphemy as the basis for their claims that Jesus must die (see Lev. 24:16).

19:8–11. Finding no success in any of his attempts to end this religious and cultural nonsense, Pilate returned to another interrogation of the prisoner. He was already afraid of this volatile situation, and now his fear increased. He tried to get some information out of Jesus that would help him arrive at a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

## Notes:

But, we can ask ourselves, what did Pilate fear? Quite possibly this quiet prophet who, for reasons unknown to the governor, had evoked such emotional response from the mobs outside the palace. He also feared the mobs lest they break the sacred Pax Romana. Ultimately, however, all Roman governors feared Caesar, and the Jews knew that very well. In a moment the Jews would go to the mat: “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar” (v. 12). But we dare not rush to verse 12 since verse 11 may be the key to this first section: You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.

We do not know why Jesus interacted with Pilate in chapter 18 but now refused to respond at all. The Gospels mention Jesus’ silence at various points during the trial (Matt. 26:63; 27:14; Mark 14:60; 15:5; Luke 23:9). As much as the silence infuriated Pilate, immersed as he was in his own importance, most scholars see it as a clear fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7.

Suddenly Jesus spoke again when Pilate emphasized his own power. His answer proclaimed that a Roman governorship was nothing in the eyes of Almighty God (Rom. 13:1). Of this key statement Carson writes:

Typical of Biblical compatibilism, even the worst evil cannot escape the outer boundaries of God’s sovereignty—yet God’s sovereignty never mitigates the responsibility and guilt of moral agents who operate under divine sovereignty, while their voluntary decisions and their evil rebellion never render God utterly contingent (e.g., Gen. 19:20; Isa. 5:10ff.; Acts 4:27–28). Especially in writing of events that lead up to the cross, New Testament writers are bound to see the hand of God bringing all things to their dramatic purpose ... no

matter how vile the secondary causalities may be; for the alternatives are unthinkable. If God merely outwits his enemies, if evil sets both the agenda and the pace, then the mission of the Son to die for fallen sinners is reduced to a mere after-thought; if God's sovereignty capsizes all human responsibility, then it is hard to see why the mission of the Son should be undertaken at all, since in that case there are no sins for the Lamb of God to take away (Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991, pp. 600–01).

## Notes:

19:12–13. Suddenly we learn this governor did have a sense of justice and conscience, but they were no match for screaming mobs. The deciding factor here had nothing to do with the law or religion—it was purely political. The phrase that changed Pilate's mind was not connected in anyway to any of the charges against Jesus: If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. This was no small threat on the part of the Jewish mobs.

As Tenney puts it:

The phrase “a friend of Caesar” was more than a casual allusion to Roman patriotism. It usually denoted a supporter or associate of the emperor, a member of the important inner circle. The cry was a veiled threat: if Pilate exonerated Jesus, the high priest would report to Rome that Pilate had refused to bring a rival pretender to justice and was perhaps plotting to establish a new political alliance of his own. Tiberias, the reigning emperor, was notoriously bitter and suspicious of rivals. If such a report were sent to him, he would instantly end Pilate's political career and probably his life, too (Tenney, Merrill C. *The Gospel of John. Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 9. Ed. by Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981., p. 178).

19:14–16. John gave us detailed information on the time and place Pilate actually handed him over to them to be crucified. Backed into a corner of fear and confusion, bewildered by this articulate prophet, and frightened by the threat of some kind of political report to Rome, Pilate

caved in. In their misguided zeal the Jews were already out of control. In saying we have no king but Caesar, the chief priests denied all authority of Herod and even took Caesar's power beyond what the Romans would claim. Caesar was never called king by the Romans (at least up to this point), but the Greek word *basileus* seems to serve well in this context.

As Bruce puts it, "Their status and privileges depended on their collaboration with the imperial power. But normally they would not have been so rash as to say so outright and thus scandalize true Jewish patriots even more than they already did: they were goaded into saying so by Pilate's insistence that Jesus was their king" (Bruce, F. F. *The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, p. 365).

Let us be careful about the words to them in verse 16. In the context of previous verses, it sounds as though Jesus was being handed over to the Jews. But we already know they had no authority to carry out the death sentence. In light of verse 16b, however, we grasp that John intended us to see the soldiers in the pronoun them.

**Notes:**