

Encountering Jesus: The Political

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Text: John 18-19

NOTES

A. Introduction:

1. Series so far: Jesus Encounters: 1] The Outcast; 2] The Adulteress; 3] The Spiritually Curious. Today's encounter: Politician Pilate.
2. Politics is all around us and Christ followers need to be involved in every level of government as salt and light.

B. Setting:

1. Our text is from the Gospel of John which depicts Jesus as cosmic, fully human and fully divine person.
2. At this point in the story (John 18:28) Jesus has gone through religious trials and is taken to Pilate for a Roman trial.

C. Four truths we learn from Pilate's interaction with Jesus:

1. **"My Kingdom is not of this world" – John 18:28-36**
 - a. The Jews brought Jesus to Pilate to have him sentence Jesus to death (something their law has no power to do). Jesus answered Pilate's question about His kingship with "My kingdom is not of this world" – John 18:36.
 - b. The Kingdom of God was what Jesus represented and brought; it is from another place. Jesus brought the ethics of God's kingdom, not religion but relationship.
 - c. Jesus gave the centers of power and money (Sepphoris and Tiberias) a wide berth. The approbation and applause of this world's political parties and authorities are of this world.
 - d. Jesus' kingdom (the way of the glory and perspective of God) should be our first allegiance, causing us to march to the beat of love, forgiveness, grace, mercy and hope.
2. **Truth – John 18:37-38**
 - a. Jesus answered Pilate's question about His kingship by alluding to His pre-existence—the truth about Himself (John 18:37).
 - b. Truth must be our 'true north'—not convenience or expediency. E.g. our church did not sign the human rights attestation required to receive summer grants money from the federal government because it is not what we believe. **Pastor Derrick:** "We operate by a kingdom ethic, not a worldly ethic."
3. **God's Sovereignty – John 18:39-19:11**
 - a. Though Pilate tried to release Jesus as an innocent man, the Jesus crowd would have none of it.
 - i. Pilate offered to release Jesus but they chose robber Barabbas – John 18:39-40.
 - ii. Pilate had Jesus ridiculed and flogged but even the bloodied and torn Jesus didn't arouse their sympathy.
 - b. When Jesus stayed silent in response to Pilate's question, Pilate declared his power of Jesus (John 19:10) to which Jesus replied with a declaration of God's sovereignty (John 19:11, compare Romans 13:1).
 - c. **Pastor Derrick:** "God is at work. He has authority and power. In front of the Revelation curtain there may be chaos, confusion and things that tempt us to be fearful. Behind the curtain the Father, Son, and Spirit are at work."
 - d. Lee Strobel story of ricochet evangelism: When Lee was a new Christian, he felt impressed by God to invite his atheist editor to church for the Easter service. When the editor declined (twice), Lee wondered about the point of the incident. Years later he met a man who told him he had been in the room doing handyman work when Lee issued the invitation. He felt convicted to go to church, so he took his family to church that Easter Sunday, came to Christ, and the course of their lives was changed.
4. **Politics is Fickle – John 19:12-16**
 - a. The Jews, sensing Pilate's indecision about Jesus, questioned his loyalty to Caesar (John 19:12). That quickly swung Pilate over to do their will (John 19:16).
 - b. Pastor's experience: He saw a former PM candidate give an insincere greeting, which illustrated to him (when he was considering a career in politics) how politics tempts to fickleness. **Pastor Derrick:** "That's what politics often does—causes us to capitulate."

DISCUSSION:

1. What is the Kingdom of God? If it's not of this world where does it originate? How does it differ from earthly kingdoms? How might it become evident that someone is part of that kingdom?
2. How did Jesus uphold truth in front of Pilate? In what areas may those in politics be tempted to fudge truth? What about those of us not involved in politics. In his concluding comments, Pastor said: "Even if truth hurts us, it's going to set others free." How might truth hurt us? How might hurtful truth set people free?
3. What was the occasion of Jesus declaring God's sovereignty to Pilate? What incidents in your life have caused you to ponder or even question God's sovereignty? When have you been surprised to discover that God was at work in a situation which made no sense to you? Share your stories.
4. How might involvement in politics tempt one to be fickle? Discuss the role of fickleness and compromise in a politician's life. In our lives. When might compromise be a good thing? A bad thing?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, please open our minds, hearts, and lives to more of the Kingdom of Heaven and less of this world's kingdoms. May integrity, righteousness, and holiness distinguish and characterize us, Your children and Your church, in the midst of this world's imperfect and broken systems. Help us to be salt and light, reflecting You in whatever vocation we are in. Amen.