



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 1

This past weekend, we began the final series in our 2022 focus on the Gospel of John. John 18 and 19 tell the most difficult part of Jesus' story. The betrayal, denial, arrest, beating and crucifixion of Jesus are all part of the story we wish we could skip over, but we can't (he couldn't). As you read and wrestle with the suffering of Jesus may your Easter perspective fill you with gratitude for the perseverance of the Son of God.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. You might also pray this prayer.

God, you are present with me in my seasons of suffering. Allow my heart to stay tuned to the undercurrent of redemption and resurrection that flows from Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Amen

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 18.1-3

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

- It is amazing that Jesus didn't practice elusive maneuvers that day. He knew that Judas had betrayed him, and he knew that Judas would easily find him in the garden on the other side of the

Kidron Valley. Yet Jesus followed through on his larger mission—not to save himself, but to save the world. Can you imagine the thoughts of Judas as he led the soldiers to the place where Jesus was? What was going through his mind? Had he made up some story to convince himself that this was the right thing to do? Did he already feel regret? Were there tears in the corners of his eyes?

- *God, forgive me for the times that I have led people in a way other than Your way. Come and redeem my story today.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 18.10-14

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹ *Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"*

¹² *Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.*

- We might have mixed feelings about Peter's actions with the sword. It feels right to have let the arresting officials know that this arrest was not just. But it was also clearly outside of the Way that Jesus and his movement had been operating. Jesus rebuked Peter for his action and reminded him that there was something much bigger going on here—God the Father was still working. Has misguided anger and violence ever served as a stumbling block to God's will in your life?
- *God I want to give you all of my heart. So I lay down my misguided bent towards violence and revenge and put my trust in You.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 18.15-18

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard,¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ *"You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter.*

He replied, "I am not."

¹⁸ *It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.*

- Peter's repeated denial of Jesus and his association with him are a rare detail that is recorded in each of the four Gospel accounts. Not unlike Judas in Monday's reading, Peter must have been feeling a deep inner pull between what might save his life that day, and who he knew Jesus to be. The words, "*I am not*" must have been ringing in his mind. Standing sheepishly with servants and officials around a fire, did he wish he had what it took to change his answer? Many of us live in a quite different context, but it would still be a good exercise to answer the question of the servant girl every day. Are you a follower of Jesus?
- *Jesus, in the power of your Spirit, give me words and actions that affirm and do not deny my connection with you. Make me bold to proclaim that you are my King.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 18.28-37

Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰ *"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."*

³¹ *Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."*

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected.³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³ *Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"*

³⁴ *"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"*

³⁵ *"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"*

³⁶ *Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

³⁷ *"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.*

- In this complicated exchange, Pilate was looking for justification to either appease or deny the Jewish leaders who want him executed. To each person with any kind of worldly power, Jesus was a problem to be fixed. He didn't play by the rules and was undermining authority with his words. Execution was how problems were solved, but Pilate needed to hear from Jesus himself. The whole exchange would have been much shorter if only Jesus would have claimed that he was king of the Jews. A political threat to the order of things would have been enough. Jesus spoke instead of a kingdom that is not of this world. Where do you see evidence that Jesus is in fact King of a Kingdom that is not always visible in this world?
- *God, I lift up my eyes to You- the One who has rescued me. As I look to you today may I see the Kingdom that is above every other kingdom on earth.*

FRIDAY: JOHN 18.38-40

With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release "the king of the Jews"?"

⁴⁰ *They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.*

- Pilate demonstrates more integrity than those who have brought Jesus forward to be executed. Maybe he was just trying to provide himself some cover, but he offered to release a prisoner. The crowd had already determined their verdict. Jesus was on the road to suffering. Can you imagine crowds in our day shouting support for a known criminal instead of inviting Jesus to rule?

Somehow this is one of the more difficult details in Jesus' story of suffering and death. The crowds turned away from him.

- *Jesus, you are my King. Reign in my heart over any other ruler (person or possession) that I am tempted to cry out to.*

SATURDAY: JOHN 19.1-6

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

⁴Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

⁶As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

- Even after Jesus had been beaten and mocked, Pilate repeated the lack of evidence against him. Pilate revealed his own lack of power by putting Jesus back before the chief priests and officials. By saying the words "*Crucify! Crucify!*" the local leaders were making plans to move on from this whole episode and get back to the status quo. Little did they know, three days later, an empty tomb would mean that the world would never be the same.
- *Jesus, thank you for stepping into this broken world for us. You showed us how to live in the face of mockery and violence. In your death and resurrection, you showed us the way to live forever.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Years after the events of John 18 and 19, Paul recorded his reflections on what all of this meant in Romans 5.6-11. As you read his words below, consider how they frame the hard story of the beating and crucifixion of Jesus.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- Paul invites us to imagine what kind of person would die for a sinner. Who would you put your own life on the line for? What does it mean that Christ died for us even though we are not good or worthy all on our own?
- We are saved through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We can not pick just one of those three to say we are reconciled to God. It is the fullness of God's sacrificial offering that restores us completely to God. What does it mean to *boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*? Can you put verse 11 into your own words?