



## THE BLACKLIST | THE “CAVING” GOVERNOR | Week 6 April 14, 2019

**Matt 27:1-2; 11-26; 21-22; 47-49**

**Opening:** During the Lenten season we are reflecting on the opposition that Jesus encounters on the way to the cross. We have discussed the Jewish authorities, Roman governors, Peter and last week we discussed Judas. It's extremely helpful for our own spiritual formation to understand what motivated their hostilities and failures, perhaps what blinded them, from the very Truth in their midst. And once we understand we can prayerfully ask, “Are we doing anything like that?”

**Context:** Sometimes we just don't have time. We know what is right but it would be a real effort to follow through on it. We would have to take on a huge backlash, and even though it would be right, we aren't sure “they” would ever understand. In a nutshell we bow to the expedient, the path of least resistance, and then move on. We have kept the peace, and avoided the hassle. *Have you ever used rationalizations like this?*

**The Drama unfolds:** Read Matt 27:1-2; 11-26. You will remember from our study of Herod that Jesus was passed back and forth between these two governors. Neither wanted to be the judge on these issues brought by the Jewish leaders. But as Pastor Bianchi says “Pilate starts his morning with a religious dispute on his doorstep.” *What is your impression as you read this-- how do you react to the events? As you read, did you identify with the chief priests and elders, with the crowd, with Jesus or with Pilate?*

**Let's look at this passage from each of these viewpoints and ask the question: “Have I had that experience or seen myself acting that way?”**

**The Chief Priests and Elders:** Read Matt 26: 3-5. Preserving power and influence is a powerful motivation to sin. Look closely at Matt 27:1 and 13. *What is the goal of the chief priests? Their rabbinical conclusion was blasphemy (Matt 26:65-66). But to get Pilate involved they had to create a better case. We sometimes politely call this “spin”. How have you “spun” facts to bring about the conclusion you wanted, or thought was right? Besides the priest's blind obsession to win, what bothers you about their actions? Why?*

**The Crowd:** This is the same Passover crowd that welcomed Jesus with Hosanna. They were on a religious pilgrimage seeking a spiritual experience. Look at vs. 15-18 and vs. 20-23. *Why was the crowd there, what caused them to gather? The text says the chief priests “persuaded them”. Have you ever been part of a crowd and been persuaded (influenced)? What was it like? How do you imagine this crowd was persuaded?*



**Jesus:** Read vs 11-14. Jesus' role in this drama is most noticeable in its silence. *Have you ever been amazed at the strength of someone's silence? Talk about an example you can remember. Have you ever had a situation where you thought silence was better than defense? What was it?*

**Pilate:** Pilate, by definition, is judging this situation. He has the authority, the position and the power to choose what happens. Let's look at the facts cited: vs. 14, amazed (at calm strength); vs. 18 he knew it was out of envy; vs 19 warning from his wife; vs. 20-23 crowd gets riotous and Pilate asks "what evil has he done?" *What is Pilate weighing in his judgement of this situation? Pastor Tracey talks about learning something you can't unlearn. What do you think Pilate has learned that he can't unlearn?*

**Rationalization:** Pilate faced an inconvenient truth. He had learned about Jesus and the people who wanted him dead. *What do you imagine was the path in Pilate's thinking that took him to choose giving Jesus over to be crucified? What was he weighing in his mind? How do you think he rationalized it?*

**We can't "unlearn" the Jesus choice:** We, like Pilate, are often in a position of control—at least control of our choice of action. *What is the path in your thinking that takes you to those choices? How often do you choose convenience? Talk about an inconvenient choice you made this week.*

**Practice of the Week: Truth we can't Unlearn (Micah 6:8; 2Tim 1:7)**

This week read and meditate on these two verses. Ask God to show you where He is speaking into your life and relationships. Specifically pray about timidity, power, justice and mercy.

**Family Formation: "Somebody made me do it!"**

What can we pray about? We all know the response—we have probably all used it. "I know it was wrong but they made me do it". We each have a "decider" that is all ours. Nobody else can use it but you. Give an example of using your decider today and then ask the children to share an example.

**Additional Resources:** During this Lenten season we have been providing weekly devotionals that complement the previous Sunday's message. This Monday reflect on the one for Pilate. They can be found at [ChristChurch.us/lentdevo19](http://ChristChurch.us/lentdevo19).

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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