



## GROW AT HOME

## DAILY DEVOTION

## DAY 14

## READ

MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 27 + 28

## FOCUS

<sup>11</sup> MEANWHILE JESUS STOOD BEFORE THE GOVERNOR, AND THE GOVERNOR ASKED HIM, "ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?" "YOU HAVE SAID SO," JESUS REPLIED. <sup>12</sup> WHEN HE WAS ACCUSED BY THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE ELDERS, HE GAVE NO ANSWER. <sup>13</sup> THEN PILATE ASKED HIM, "DON'T YOU HEAR THE TESTIMONY THEY ARE BRINGING AGAINST YOU?" <sup>14</sup> BUT JESUS MADE NO REPLY, NOT EVEN TO A SINGLE CHARGE--TO THE GREAT AMAZEMENT OF THE GOVERNOR.

## REFLECTION from PASTOR CODY SURRATT

Jesus' story comes to a climax in the last two chapters of Matthew. He is put on trial, crucified, killed, buried, and then resurrects. In the coming weeks, we will be discussing Jesus' crucifixion and death (Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter), so I want to spend some time on His trial. Just a few years before they met during Jesus' fateful trial, Pilate had been appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius Cesar, the Emperor of Rome. The job consisted of two things: collecting taxes and keeping peace in the region. If Pilate did those two things then he could pretty much do whatever he wanted. Collecting taxes was no problem (Pilate was especially efficient and effective at this) but keeping the peace was a little bit more difficult. The Jews hated him and he hated them right back. Instead of trying to mitigate the drama, he would fan the flames by sending soldiers in to steal from the temple, parade pagan symbols around Jerusalem, and even kill Jewish people.

With this background in mind, let's fast forward to the day Jesus was arrested by the Jewish leaders. He was arrested on a charge of blasphemy because He called Himself the Son of God (which meant He considered Himself equal with God). The punishment for this crime under Jewish law was death. The problem was, the Jewish leaders didn't have the authority to put anyone to death. The only way they could enact capital punishment was ask permission from the Roman governer--Pilate. This, of course, bothered them greatly but brought joy to Pilate because they once again had to submit to him and his authority.

In Matthew 27:11-26 we get to see the conversation between Pilate and Jesus. Before we get to that, let me mention one interesting fact: Pilate was incredibly influential and well-known during his time--he literally held the power of life and death in his hands. Jesus was a nobody, born in the backwoods of a nothing town, had no money, held no position in society or government and yet the only reason we know Pilate's name is because of this meeting with Jesus. All four of the Gospels record the conversation and give us different details on it, so let me point out a couple of key lines. The first and most important question Pilate asked Jesus is recorded in Matthew 27:11, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say." John tells us that He follows this affirmation with an explanation, "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." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." To this Pilate retorts, "What is truth?" (see John 18:36-38).

Pilate was standing face to face with Truth Himself, what would he do? Unfortunately, we know that later on, he would give in to the shouts of the crowd to crucify Jesus. Winston Churchill once said, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened." Why do we do this? Why, in the face of truth do we instead choose to believe a lie? We all do it! We've all probably had a friend or two where everyone around us warned us about their character, but we simply chose to believe otherwise. We know where this lifestyle is going to end up if we keep cutting corners, keep partying, keep using, keep cheating, and yet we choose to believe it will end differently for us. For Pilate, Truth was threatening the things he wanted most: power and prestige. To stand on the side of truth may

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have cost him everything--that cost was simply too much. The same is true for us. We want to pursue power, pleasure, prestige, or we are just too prideful to admit we were wrong, so we continue to choose a lie over the Truth that is standing right in front of us.

During this season, it feels like God has given us all a time out. Go to your room and think about what you did. Think about what you need to do differently. Don't come out until you are ready to say you're sorry or to make some changes. What if you and I were to use this time to ask the very difficult question: What truth have I been trading for a lie? Immediately some of us know the area of our life where we have been willingly buying into lies. For some of us this may mean we have to be real with ourselves and with God because it may cost us.

Let me leave you with a quick vision of what your life could look like if you decided to stop buying into these lies. Imagine what your family could look like if you stopped turning a blind eye. Imagine what your relationship with God could look like if you stopped choosing things over Him. Just imagine what life would look like if you let go of the lie and grabbed hold of the Truth.

**QUESTIONS**

- WHICH OF THE WORLD'S LIES ARE MOST DISTRACTING AS YOU PURSUE GOD'S TRUTH?
- WHAT HAS GOD BEEN REVEALING TO YOU ABOUT YOURSELF DURING THIS SEASON OF "TIME OUT?"