

What did Pilate try to do? Why?

How does this emphasis Jesus innocence?

Why do you think Pilate gives in?

How does this account help us to understand the meaning of Easter?

Easter 2021

Study 1: The innocent condemned

Reading: Matthew 26:47 – 27:31.

The story of Jesus arrest and subsequent trial is a story that is familiar to many of us. In each of the Gospels it is told in a way that help us to understand that although Jesus is innocent and should never have been condemned, God is in control and these events fulfils his plan to save humanity from its sin.

These events are the essential precursor to the events of Good Friday and the following Easter Sunday. As you read these events try to read them as new to search out what God is saying.

Read Matthew 26:47 - 68:

Jesus has just been praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he warns his disciples that the hour is near. What does Jesus have in mind?

The nature of the betrayal runs deep as Jesus is identified by Judas. Why doesn't Jesus resist? What does Jesus tell his disciples?

What is his comment to the crowd?

What problem do the chief priests have in v59? What does this say about Jesus?

The accusation that eventually is leveled against Jesus is a distortion of his teaching, that he would destroy the temple of God, but what do they want Jesus to admit?

Why in v65 do they claim Jesus has spoken blasphemy?

Read Matthew 26:69 – 27:10:

The false charge has been laid and they will need to refer it to Pilate for ratification and sentencing but our attention now turns to two disciples – first Peter then Judas.

In v58 we are told Peter had followed Jesus at a distance – this contrasts with the rest of the disciples who had fled. Why do you think that now Peter's courage leaves him and he denies Jesus? Has this ever happened to you?

What is the significance of the rooster crowing? How do you think Peter felt?

In Matthew 27:3 how does Judas react to having betrayed Jesus?

In v6 how do the chief priests show their hypocrisy?

Read Matthew 27:11 - 31:

In Matthew 27:1 the chief priests had decided to have Jesus killed. So, they take Jesus to Pilate. What did they expect would have happened?

How does the trial before Pilate present Jesus?

Why was Pilate surprised that Jesus remained silent?