



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of March 27, 2022 (John 18:28-40)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

A New Lord's Prayer:

Our [Parent], who is neither male nor female, in heaven, which is both nowhere and all around us: May the names that we give you not limit our perception of you, but lead us more deeply into the mystery of your being. May your kingdom make all power structures obsolete. May we discover that what you want for us is what we most wanted for ourselves all along, and so may our shared will be done. Give us each day the reassurance we need to survive, and the curiosity we need to grow. Forgive us our too-easy answers as we forgive those who try to impose their answers upon us. Lead us not into dogmatism, but deliver us from dithering; for the mystery, the paradox, and the profundity of truth are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

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Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

The Story: John 18:28-40

Context: This week there is less context to speak of since we pick up at the very next verse where last week's text ended. That said, there are a couple of things to point out.

First, as we read about the Governor Pontious Pilate, it's important to know that his "headquarters" or "residence" is not Pilate's home. He lived elsewhere, but as the one charged with "peace-keeping" in the region (i.e.: "Pax Romana"), he was in town because of the crowds that were coming in for Passover.



With that in mind, it's also important to note that he is a Roman official, not a Jew, but he is responsible for this peace-keeping among the Jews as Israel is occupied by Rome. So there are Jewish officials (primarily the Sanhedrin, of which Caiaphas is the high priest, and our friend Nicodemus is a part) on whom he relied to keep this peace.

With all the tension around Jesus, his influence, and claims to the King of Israel, Pilate is in a tough spot. He

Acts of Compassion & Justice:



UKRAINE SUPPORT UPDATE!

Congrats, Aldersgate Church, you met The Foundation's challenge and contributed over \$3,000 for Ukraine relief through UMCOR! (Exact amount not available at the printing of this document). Thank you for your incredible generosity!

Feed My Starving Children Event, April 14th:

Join us for a food packing event at Feed My Starving Children at 7pm on April 14th. This is a great way to "set apart" Holy Week ("holy" literally means "set apart"). Sign up by clicking the event image at aldersgatemn.com!



needs to thread a needle of keeping the peace, while at the same time not taking a side. Lest we think that political strategies are an American invention or problem, here we see Pilate doing whatever he can to appease both sides and stay in good graces with his bosses (chief among them, Caesar).

Reading the Story:

As you read the story this week, continue to keep an eye or ear out for Good Shepherd themes. How is Jesus embodying the Good Shepherd here?

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What words, images, or moments stand out to you in this passage?
- If someone were before a legal authority today and answered questions the way Jesus does, how do you think authorities would reply?
- Looking at how "light and dark" and "day and night" function symbolically in the Gospel of John, what might be significant about the note, "it was early in the morning"?
- Why do you think the religious authorities don't name a specific crime to Pilate?
- What do you think about how Pilate handles this situation? What seems to be good about it? And what seems to be fishy?
- What are the implications (some of which Jesus names) of Jesus' kingdom being "not from this world"? How do kingdoms function and what would be different about one that is not from this world?
- What connections in this passage can you find to the Good Shepherd discourse in John 10:1-18?
- What is truth? What is truth according to the Gospel of John? What is truth in its broadest sense? What is the difference between "truth" and "fact"?
- How else has "truth" shown up in the Gospel of John?

