

*glorify*  
curriculum



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## **NOT OF THE WORLD**////////////////////

### **Read verse 16**

We are not “of” the world. This is a major balancing act of every Christian: to be in the world but not of the world. That means we are present physically, inserted culturally, yet spiritually different, distinct, other, holy. What are the challenges you have faced on your “balancing act?” How does discipleship help in this endeavor?

## **SANCTIFY**////////////////////

### **Read verses 17-19**

To sanctify a person is to make him holy, to become more like Christ. How does one become holy? What daily habits are needed?

Is attaining holiness easy or hard work? Explain your answer. How does discipleship help your sanctification?

Read verse 18 again. How is the goal of sanctification mission? What is our mission?

## **PRAYER AND THE WORK OF GOD**////////////////////

Jesus' prayer for Himself, His disciples, and believers of many generations to follow reveals three truths between prayer and any sincere endeavor. End your study time by discussing these three truths.

1. Prayer helps us keep God's glory as the first priority in every endeavor.
2. Prayer helps us remember that any God-honoring endeavor will succeed because of His power, not ours.
3. Prayer causes us to look to God for success rather than to the world.

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**JESUS' PRAYER FOR US**  
**John 17:20-26**  
**For the Week of January 26, 2020**

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**IN A NUTSHELL...////**

Jesus now focuses on the future. He begins to pray for us who live today, for the whole church throughout all ages. He's already prayed about security and sanctification. The topic is now unity. He is concerned that believers experience a spiritual unity that is like the oneness of the Father and the Son. As you complete looking at Jesus' prayer, you see the spiritual priorities that were in Jesus' heart: the glory of God, the sanctity of God's people, the unity of the church, and the ministry of sharing the Gospel with a lost world. Those priorities expressed by Jesus from over 2,000 years ago remain so today.

**INVESTIGATE////**

**Read John 17:20-26 as a group**

Who is the focus of this third section of prayer (v. 20)?

What specifically does Jesus pray for, and why?

Verses 21-23

Verse 24

Verses 25-26

## ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

From pastor and author David Jeremiah: *“Jesus asked His Father that the church might be unified...The Father has sent Jesus from heaven to earth to redeem a people for His very own. Jesus was now about to go to the cross to achieve that purpose. Just a few days after His resurrection, He would return to heaven, yet His mission to redeem the world would go on. The necessary sacrifice, Himself, already would have been made, but word about that sacrifice needed to be spread. How would that happen? Through the disciples... Jesus’ heartbeat was evangelism and missionary outreach. He had a passion that all men and women might be saved. That’s what He prayed about in this remarkable prayer.”*

## UNITY

### Read Ephesians 4:1-6 as a group

Why are we told to “keep” unity, not create unity (v. 3)? What does that imply? What would it look like for you to “make every effort” to maintain unity within RiverLakes Church? Look at verses 2, 4-6 for ideas.

Jesus prayed in John 17:21 that believers would experience unity. How would you define the difference in the following three examples?

Unity is not uniformity

Unity is not unanimity

Unity is not unification

## **RESULTS OF UNITY**////////////////////

Look at the following passages. How does implementing each one promote unity and how does this provide an example of unity to the non-believing world?

Ephesians 5:18

Galatians 5:18, 22-33

2 Peter 3:18

Colossians 3:16

## **ENCOURAGEMENT**////////////////////

Think about it: Imagine hearing the Son of God approach His Father on your behalf. Imagine the encouragement, confidence, wisdom, courage, and perspective you would gain by hearing Him intercede for you. When earthly concerns bear down, hearing someone carry your burdens to heaven is such a relief.

A key aspect of community groups at RiverLakes Church is prayer, specifically lifting prayers up for others in your group. Discuss in your group why it is so encouraging and humbling to hear prayers of another on your behalf.

How could you make your prayer life more closely resemble Jesus' model in chapter 17? In particular, think about...

Who you pray for

What you pray for

**THREE WORDS**//

We've now completed chapter 17 and Jesus' prayer. In three words describe Jesus' entire prayer. Share in your community group.

**PRAY AS A GROUP**//

Finish your study and take time to pray as a group. Thank God for Jesus, who went to the cross to give us eternal life. Then pray for the following:

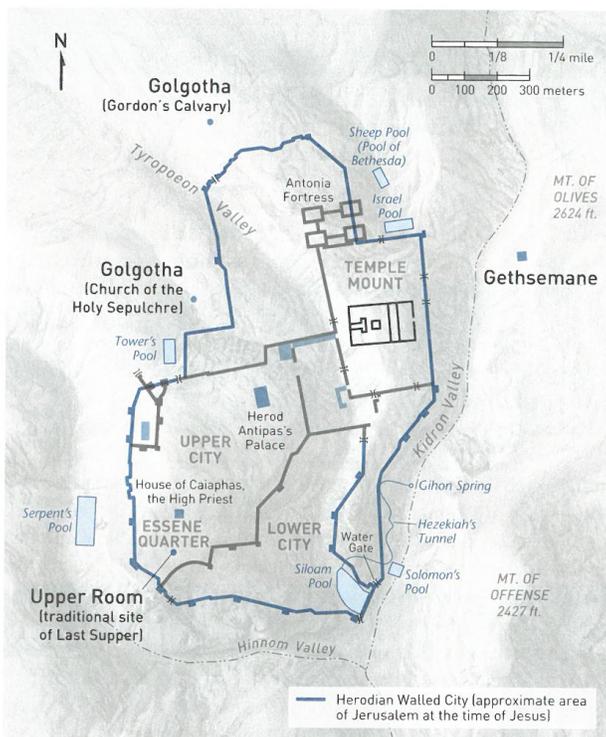
For one another, that you would be protected from the evil one and be growing in sanctification.

For RiverLakes Community Church, thanking God for the unity you share and asking God to help you maintain it.

For other churches in Bakersfield, asking God to help you to be united in the Gospel as you seek to make Christ known.

For non-Christians you know, that would come to "believe in (Jesus) through (your) message" (v. 20). Make a list in your group of those whom you are praying for salvation. Share in your group and make this a prayer request each week.

**THE ARREST AND DENIALS OF JESUS**  
**John 18:1-27**  
**For the Week of February 2, 2020**



Kidron Valley, East of Jerusalem (Source: "Swindoll's Living Insights: New Testament Commentary: John" by Charles R. Swindoll)

**START UP**

**Read John 18:1-14**

Where does this scene take place?

How does Judas know he will find Jesus there?

Who did Judas bring with him? (John 18:3)

A **detachment** was a cohort of about six hundred men, or one-tenth of a legion. Sometimes this Greek word was used for one-third of a cohort, or two hundred men. These soldiers were probably the experienced Roman troops stationed at the Antonia, a fortress near the temple. The **officers** who came with the attachment were members of the temple police under the command of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin.

What might have been the expectation of the Roman officials and Jewish council since they had sent such a force to arrest Jesus?

If Jesus knows what is going to happen, why does He ask the crowd, “Who is it that you want?” (v. 4)



"Garden of Gethsemane" Source: The Holy Land in Photochrom

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

### Read John 1:1-5

The Roman cohort came searching for Jesus with lanterns and torches and He was openly standing there (John 18:1-3) shining in the darkness. However, those standing in the darkness did not recognize Him. Two times they say they have come for “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus meets them and doesn’t attempt to hide. He confirms He is present and the soldiers “drew back and fell to the ground.” (18:6) What does this response tell us about Jesus?

Falling to the ground is a common reaction to divine revelation. Jesus identifies Himself, “I am He.” Read also Ezekiel 1:28, Acts 9:4 and Revelation 1:17. How do these passages shed light on this scene?

## DICTIONARY

ego eimi: "I AM" "It is I" (John 4:26, 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19)

*"If they have been awed by Jesus before, if they have been dumbfounded by his teaching, his authority, his directness in the full light of day in the precincts of the temple where they most feel at home, it is not hard to believe that they are staggered by his open self-disclosure on a sloping mountainside in the middle of the night." -D.A. Carson*

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

In John 18:10 consider Peter's action and then Jesus' actions. What does each action demonstrate?

Have you been tempted to react like Peter in John 18:10-11 and take a matter into your own hands without first considering how God would have you handle a matter?

Jesus rebukes Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:11). Explain what the cup is the Father has given Him.

## JESUS' ARREST AND TRIAL

What are some things that stand out to you about Jesus' arrest?

In what ways in John 18:7-9 is Jesus demonstrating selflessness even as He is being bound and taken away? (John 6:39, 17:12)

What details in v. 12-14 suggest that Jesus' trial will not be a fair one?

Beginning in John 18:19 heightened tension begins as the high priest questions Jesus. However, we see Jesus' wisdom as he responds. When the high priest realizes he is trying to contend with a mind greater than his, how does he respond and how does Jesus respond?

**PETER DENIES JESUS**////////////////////

In John 13:37 Peter boldly proclaims he would lay down his life for Jesus and now he shamefully denies he is one of Christ's disciples when he is recognized by the doorkeeper in his first denial (John 18:15-18).

Why do you think it is important that we see the imperfection of Peter?

How does Christ's faithfulness help you stay faithful?

**GETTING PERSONAL**////////////////////

Have you found yourself in Peter's shoes with every intention of being bold for Christ, but instead put in a position where you denied being a follower? Or perhaps just blew an opportunity to speak up at all? How did it feel?

How have you overcome shame in your past to be a light to the world?

What do Jesus' responses and reactions teach you about how to handle circumstances in your own life?

**PRAY FOR THIS**////////////////////

Pray that our reactions and responses would demonstrate the love of Christ to all we encounter. Pray that we would be the light of Christ in dark places. Pray that those in our life would be awed by the revelation of Christ in their own lives and they would desire to know Him.

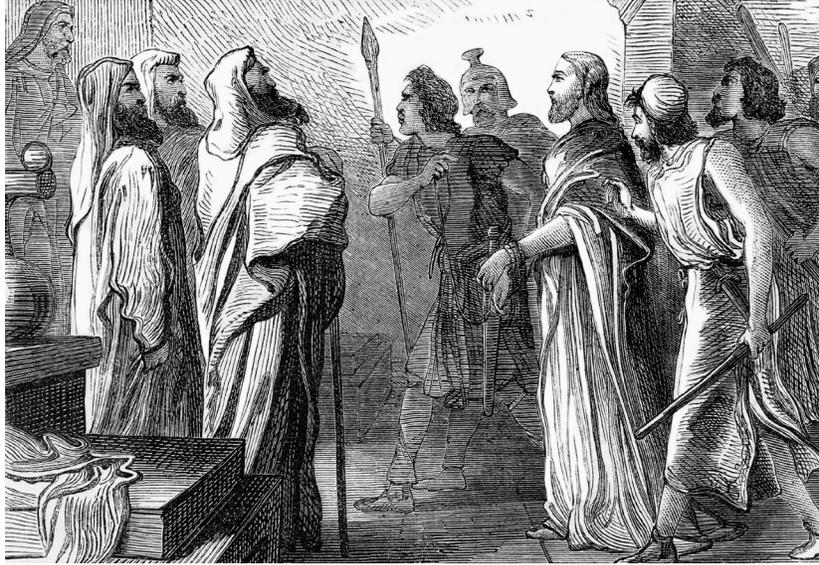
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## JESUS BEFORE PILATE

### John 18:28 - 19:16

### For the Week of February 9, 2020

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#### **THE SETTING**

It is Passover time, the festival that commemorates the rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Jewish religious leaders have taken Jesus to Pilate early in the morning. Pilate, the Roman Governor occupied the official residence called the Praetorium. Since it was home to a Gentile, Jews would not enter for fear of becoming ceremonially unclean.

#### **START UP**

Read John 18:28-19:16

#### **NOW THAT'S IRONIC!**

Throughout this passage we see many examples of irony. Write down several examples that you find. What stands out to you?

Perhaps realizing that the Jews would not normally turn over one of their own to the Romans, Pilate summons Jesus for a private interview. In John 18:33, Pilate asks Jesus if he is “the King of the Jews?” Jesus responds explaining the different nature of the kingdom of God. What do you learn about this kingdom and this King from Jesus’ own words?

Discuss the exchange Pilate and Jesus have. Does Pilate think Jesus is guilty or innocent?

### KEY CULTURAL CONCEPTS

Blasphemy –To slander deity or something sacred

Capital Punishment – The practice of executing certain criminals for their crimes.

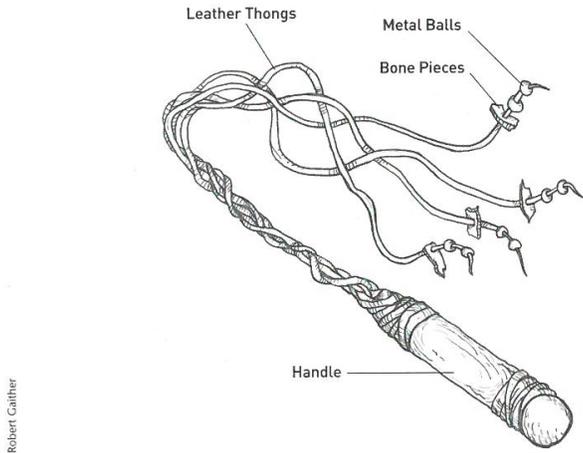
Crucifixion – The practice of executing certain criminals by staking their hands and feet to a cross as punishment for their crimes.

Judgment seat (Greco Roman) – The place of a judgment seat was a raised platform made of stone where ruling authorities performed judgment for the law courts.

Look up the definition of substitution. What does it mean?

Perhaps there is no one who got to experience the Gospel message firsthand more than Barabbas. Jesus, a completely innocent man, took his place. At this point in the narrative though, Barabbas may have only been relieved that he went free. As you stop to consider that Jesus was not guilty of your sin, yet He took your place, what thoughts come to your mind?

Why does Pilate decide to go forward with crucifying Jesus?



*Pictured: A flagrum, the brutal whip used by Roman torturers. The lector was an expert in the art of torture and knew exactly how to beat a man within an inch of his life. Source: "Swindoll's Living Insights: New Testament Commentary: John" by Charles R. Swindoll*

**EXPLORE MORE** //////////////////////////////////////

Pilate had Jesus flogged. He used the public mockery of Jesus in an attempt to humiliate him. Pilate gave into the public's wishes to have Jesus crucified. What did Pilate fear?

How did Jesus respond? According to Jesus where does Pilate's authority come from?

What crime do the Jewish leaders claim Jesus has committed?

**REFLECT AND RESPOND** //////////////////////////////////////

What was the significance that it was the Passover Week?

Discuss why it matters that the death of Jesus was not an accident, but a planned and prophesied event.

**GETTING PERSONAL**////////////////////////////////////

Pilate had to choose: advance his own status in the kingdom of earth or risk his reputation and compromise truth for the status of heaven? He decided to trust in power to serve himself and the kingdom of earth. We'd like to think we would always choose Christ. What can you put in place in your life so that when put in a position to compromise you choose Jesus?

What practical steps can you take this week to allow Christ to rule in your life increasingly each day?

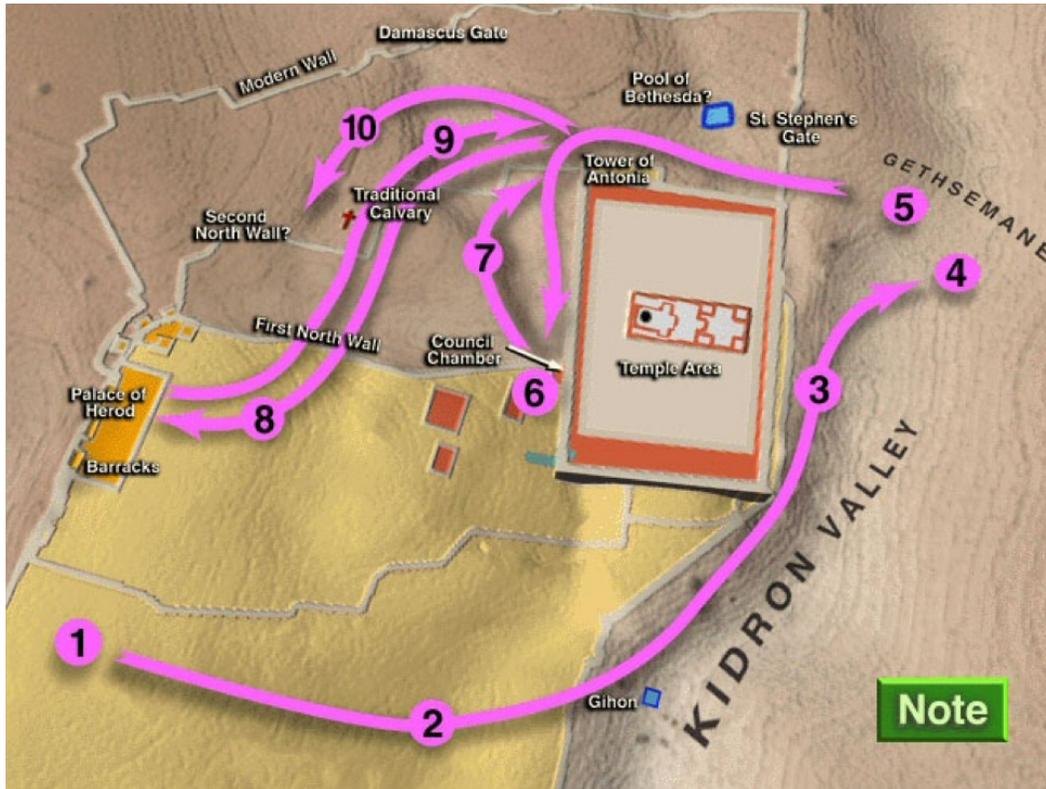
**PRAYER AND PRAISE**////////////////////////////////////

Pray for opportunities to speak up for the truth of the Gospel in your workplace, neighborhoods and with your family and friends this week.

Pray for the persecuted church for encouragement as they face trials and they continue to endure and persevere to serve and glorify God.

Take time to praise God for all that this section of Scripture teaches us.

**THE CRUCIFIXION**  
**John 19:17-42**  
**For the Week of February 16, 2020**



**THE BETRAYAL, TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS** //  
The numbers indicate the approximate order of events. Arrows indicate direction, but not specific routes of travel.

1. The Last Supper
2. Retirement to Gethsemane
3. Discourses of John 15 & 16; a warning to Peter and the 10
4. Jesus' intercessory prayer
5. Gethsemane
6. Hearings before Annas and Caiaphas; night and day trials before the Sanhedrin
7. First trial before Pilate
8. Trial before Herod Antipas
9. Second trial before Pilate
10. The Crucifixion, the burial, the guard at the tomb. The exact location of the crucifixion and burial is not known.

**START UP** //

**Read John 19:17-42**

In John 19:18, what does John say happens to Jesus? What is unique to John's gospel is that he is brief in his description. What reason do you think John has for this?

Pilate put a sign on Jesus' cross that said, "King of the Jews," in all three of the major languages of Palestine. The chief priests ask him to take it down, but he would not (John 19:19-22). What is significant about his sign and what it says? Why are the chief priests against it? What is Pilates' motive for this sign?

What do we learn about Jesus by how He cares for His mother from the cross (John 19:25-27)?

**DICTIONARY** //

*Tetelestai* – It is finished (used in John 19:30)

Did you know that archeologists found papyrus tax receipts with *Tetelestai* written across them meaning, "paid in full?"

"It is finished," are some of the last words Jesus speaks from the cross. Why are these some of the most powerful words written in Scripture? What do these words personally mean to you?

## **A PROPHECY FULFILLED** //

John quotes Psalm 22 (the most frequently quoted in the New Testament) that was written almost a thousand years earlier. The psalmist writes many prophetic details of Jesus' death. Jesus' crucifixion as written by John contains many connections to Psalm 22 such as the casting of the lots for Jesus' clothing (Psalm 22:18), his thirst while suffering on the cross (Psalm 22:15), and his "pierced hands and feet," (Psalm 22:16). The Roman soldiers casting lots and dividing his garments had participated unknowingly in fulfilling prophecy in Scripture.

Why is it important that Jesus' death fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies?

How does John show us that Jesus really died (John 19:31-37, 38-42)?  
Why do you think it is important that John shows that Jesus is truly dead?

What is the significance of the Scripture that John quotes in verses 36-37?

## REFLECT AND APPLY

What does Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 53) tell us about why this happened? What does this tell us about our need for a Savior?

Take time to pray about what the personal implications of these verses are in light of the cross:

"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."  
- Hebrews 12:2

"When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly."

1 Peter 2:23

