

A Judge's Verdict

Scripture Reading — John 18:28-40

“What is truth?” Pilate asked.

John 18:38 —

Let's say you're wrestling with an issue that has two clear options. One option really benefits you. It will boost your career, increase your salary, and enhance your social standing. The other option doesn't have any personal benefit. Instead, it has significant personal cost. But your conscience keeps telling you that the second option is the right one. So which option will you take?

This was the dilemma of a Roman governor named Pontius Pilate. He was given the unenviable job of deciding whether Jesus of Nazareth deserved death as a threat to Roman rule.

Pilate was responsible for upholding Roman justice. And the Roman system of justice was as respectable as ancient legal systems got. Meanwhile, Jesus was the only sinless human ever to live on this planet. Surely this was the clearest case ever to come into Pilate's court.

But self-interest will trump justice. Doing the right thing for Jesus meant doing the wrong thing for Pilate. Pilate didn't want anyone to think he was soft on rebels in his district. So he squirmed, washed his hands of the matter, and handed Jesus over to the execution squad.

It's easy to be hard on Pilate. But self-interest often trumps the right choices in my life too. That's the bad news. The good news, though, is that Jesus went to the cross to carry away the very guilt of my selfishness.

Prayer

Lord, “who was the guilty? Who brought this upon you? It is my treason, Lord, that has undone you. ‘Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied you; I crucified you.” Amen.

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