

PZ's Gospel Preview

For the week of 11/15 – 11/21

Text: John 18:33-38

I. Opening Questions:

- A. Do you think Jesus would make a good President? What strengths would he bring? What weaknesses?
- B. As Christians we say we live “in the world, but not of the world.” What does that actually mean?

II. Read the Text.

- A. Ask your group to open their Bibles to John 18:33-38. Either you or a volunteer read the passage aloud.
- B. Ask your group these questions. What did you hear? What jumps out to you? What tickles your mind or spirit about this passage?

III. PZ's Text Note

- A. Here we are, back in John again. Sunday (November 21st) is another festival Sunday—Christ the King Sunday. Christ the King is always the final Sunday of the church year. I guess Jesus ends the year by going out as King!
- B. This year we have a very interesting text from John 18. Jesus is before Pontius Pilate, and talking about his “kingdom.” He says, “My kingdom is not of this world.” This is a hard truth for Christians to understand! Would that everyone in the world become a Christian! Would that all forms of government find their basis in the teachings of Jesus! Yet, this is not our reality. We live in the world, but not of the world. It can be a difficult tension to walk. Yet, our this tension can also be liberating for us. When we trust that we will experience the Kingdom of God *in its fullest* when we inherit eternal life, we are free to give our lives away in the here and now. We are truly free to love and serve others *here and now*. We know where we are ultimately going, and that frees us for life today.
- C. When pressed by Pilate what could this mean, Jesus replies “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (vs. 37). Now the really interesting part . . . Pilate asks a deep existential question—“What is truth?” Do you see the answer? Do you see Jesus’ reply? No! Jesus does not answer Pilate’s question. Jesus does not tell us what the truth is.
- D. Why would Jesus not answer the question? I mean, this is his moment! Some scholars

believe Jesus, by not answering, is affirming that the truth is too awesome to express in words. It cannot be described in language. Other scholars believe Jesus, by not answering, is affirming that *he* is the truth. It's like, by his silence, Jesus is saying "You're looking at the truth."

IV. Bad News/Good News

A. What's the bad news this week? The bad news is that Jesus is not President. And he won't be. His kingdom is not a kingdom of secular authority like David in the Old Testament.

B. But, the good news is that his kingdom is much more powerful than any secular authority. His Kingdom is forever! It transcends all nations and all Presidents. By the grace of God, we have a place in the Kingdome. We are free, now, to live in that reality.

Watch for the sermon this weekend . . . these bad news and good news ideas may show up!!!