



Sermon Discussion Questions:

1. Rowan Williams wrote in his little book "Tokens of Trust", that the historic summaries of the Christian faith – the Nicene and Apostles Creed, both of course name Jesus, and "the one who says Yes to Jesus" (his mother Mary); and "the one who says No to him" (Pontius Pilate). Why do you think it is important to name both Mary and Pilate in the Creeds?
2. What do you make of the fact, in verse 19, that Pilate's wife has a dream about Jesus? How is God wanting to use this unnamed woman?
3. From the scripture passage, how do we know that Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and what does this tell us about Pilate's character?
4. God used Pilate's "No" to Jesus to bring about the salvation of the world. In what different ways, public and private, do you find yourself saying "No" to the activity of God? How might God redeem your "No" for His purposes?
5. Jenny said that because nothing about us shocks Jesus, we can count on him to love us when the chips are down. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus is the one person who truly knows everything about you, and yet still delights in you? How can that knowledge strengthen us for the future?

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-26 NIVUK

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'

'You have said so,' Jesus replied.

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, 'Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?' But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge – to the great amazement of the governor.

Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, 'Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.'

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' asked the governor.

'Barabbas,' they answered.

'What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' Pilate asked.

They all answered, 'Crucify him!'

'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said. 'It is your responsibility!'

All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.