

MAIN POINT

Though innocent of all charges, Jesus was delivered over to death in our place so that we, the guilty ones, could be free from the wrath of God.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been blamed for something you didn't do? How did you respond? Did you simply accept blame, or did you try to clear your name? Why?

What lessons did you learn from the experience? How did it impact how you lived in the months that followed?

Salvation is a free gift for those who receive it, but, as we will see, it was very costly for Jesus. In the narrative of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion, God's ancient plan of salvation emerged from a flurry of injustice directed at His Son. The wrongful accusations, arrest, and death sentence were horrifically unfair, and at the very same time they were the greatest expression of God's love for the world.

DISCUSSION

> **READ LUKE 23:13-25.**

Although Pilate and Herod both found Jesus innocent, why did Pilate finally give in to the leaders? What does this reveal about his character?

In what ways might we respond to Jesus in a similar fashion, even unknowingly?

The very people who should have recognized Jesus as the Messiah influenced Pilate to reject Him. Does God hold Pilate and others who are taught to reject Jesus accountable for their response to Him? Why?

What contrasts do you see between Jesus's kingship and the authority of Pilate and Herod?

What thoughts and feelings are stirred in you as you consider what Jesus experienced during His trial?

Verse 24 tells us Pilate released Barabbas, a murderer and political insurrectionist, in place of Jesus. What ironies do you see in the fact that Barabbas was released, while Jesus was condemned?

Have you ever considered how you might be like Barabbas? What did he have in common with all Christians?

How can the story of Barabbas explain the life, death, and mission of Jesus?

APPLICATION

What are some ways a Christian might, in effect, influence others to determine that Jesus is not worth following (i.e. silence, openly criticizing other believers and churches, living without any evidence of hope or change, etc.)? How does this point challenge you personally?