

## A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE KING OF KINGS

February 16, 2025

**When It All Went Down // John 18:28-40**

### CONNECT – Announcements (page 2) & Building Relationships

1. What's new in your life since the last time we met? Are there any ways you've seen God at work in your life or in the lives of others around you since then?
2. Think of a time you had a "close encounter" with something you didn't expect (a moment you could've leaned in or backed away). What happened—and what did you do?

### REFLECT - Out of the Word and Into Our Lives

3. Read John 18:28–40 aloud together. What stands out to you? Does anything stand out to you from Sunday's message? What encouraged or challenged you?
4. What hypocrisies do you notice in the religious leaders in vv. 28–30? What were they careful about externally while ignoring internally?
5. Where are you most tempted to substitute "external trappings" (Christian routine, appearances, preferences) for real obedience?
6. Why might Jesus emphasize His kingdom's nature instead of defending Himself with achievements?
7. What does it look like to live as if Jesus' kingdom is *more real* than what we can see, touch, and measure?
8. What do you learn about Jesus from v. 37 (His identity, mission, authority)?
9. What does "listening to His voice" look like practically this week (Scripture intake, obedience, confession, witness)?
10. What do you see in Pilate's response that sounds like modern "spiritual sophistication"? How do we see similar claims in our culture, "What is truth?"
11. Where do you see Pilate trying to stay "neutral"? Why is neutrality toward Jesus never truly neutral?
12. The exchange is the heart: **the King takes the rebel's place**. How does Barabbas help you understand what Jesus has done for you personally?

### PROTECT – Care for one another (divided, gender-specific groups)

13. Where are you currently tempted to treat truth like Pilate did—asking the question, but not waiting for the answer (avoiding repentance, delaying obedience, staying vague)? How can we pray for real submission to Christ's voice?
14. Are you living like someone who has been "released from death row"—like Barabbas set free? If not, what's stealing your joy, courage, or gratitude? Share one burden and let your group pray specifically.



Along with any other prayer requests you may have, pray together: for honest hearts, personal surrender, freedom from lies, & joyful obedience.

### Announcements

**Stew Fundraiser: February 21<sup>st</sup>** – Help send our Youth Students to Summer Camp and enjoy some delicious stew. Sign up for \$9 quart or to help make it at the plug-in portal.

**Family Skate Night: February 25<sup>th</sup>** – Join us with your whole family as we go to the Roll-A-Bout in Eden. Skates cost \$3. Inline \$4. Admission is only \$5.

### Resources for Going Deeper

Article on Pilate's Cynicism: <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/pilates-cynicism>

Article on Barabbas being a Mirror of Us: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/when-guilty-men-go-free>

Podcast Recommendation: [\*The Briefing with Albert Mohler\*](#) – Daily News from a Christian Worldview. Almost daily Dr. Mohler goes through how the world proclaims what Pilate says, "What is Truth?"