**HOME GROUP QUESTIONS FROM SERMON**

**23rd March 2025**

**Sermon – Matthew 27:1-31 – Personal / Group Study and Reflection**

**“The Choices We Make”**

**Matthew 27:1-31 (English Standard Version)**

**Jesus Delivered to Pilate: 1 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. 2 And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.**

**Judas Hangs Himself: 3 Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, 4 saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” 5 And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. 6 But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” 7 So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. 8 Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, 10 and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”**

**Jesus Before Pilate: 11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” 12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” 14 But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. 15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. 16 And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” 18 For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. 19 Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” 22 Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” 23 And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” 24 So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” 25 And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.**

**Jesus Mocked: 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. 28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.**

**The following questions relate to the morning 8.30 and 10.30 services and evening 18.00 service on Sunday 23rd March 2025 (available on the church website).**

**Feel free to pick and choose questions / sub-questions as appropriate for your group’s interest, preferred study style and time available. They are simply there to facilitate good discussion / reflection. Do NOT feel you need to go through them all.**

**(1) Opening Icebreaker.**

**(a) Have there been times when you’ve been mocked or humiliated or snubbed for your faith? How did you feel and how did you handle it?**

**(2) Choice 1 - Dishonour Vs Honour. In v27-31, the Roman soldiers choose to mock and humiliate Jesus as King of the Jews. They choose to totally dishonour him and clearly had a totally different view of kingship compared with Jesus.**

**(a) How do you understand the difference between earthly kingship (e.g. our King Charles III) and the kingship of Jesus. What does Jesus’ kingship mean to you personally? How is that reflected in how you live?**

**(b) To what extent do you dishonour or honour Jesus in your daily life by what you say or do or equally don’t say or do?**

**(3) Choice 2 - Expediency Vs Integrity. In v11-26, Pilate condemns Jesus to death even though he knows him to be completely innocent. He chooses the path of expediency and allows this to suffocate any integrity.**

**(a) Why do you think Pilate acts as he does?**

**(b) Pilate ignores his wife’s advice which she got in a dream. Do you feel this was God speaking? To what extent do you listen to others’ advice like this and how do you discern if it is from God?**

**(c) To what extent do you ever act expediently and / or go along with the crowd at the expense of integrity, and if so, what circumstances might cause this?**

**(d) Pilate is outmanoeuvred by the Jewish religious leaders who whip up the crowd. He then gives in to their demand but also tries to absolve himself from any responsibility by shifting the blame. Do you ever find yourself trying to shift blame for your own actions?**

**(4) Choice 3 - Regret Vs Repentance and Forgiveness. In v1-10, Judas recognises his sin and seeks to make amends by throwing back the blood money to the religious leaders. But they don’t care as they’ve got what they want. Judas then despairs and commits suicide.**

**(a) What is the vital thing Judas didn’t do which might have saved him? In other words, what was the wrong choice he made here after sinning?**

**(b) What do you do when you you’ve done something wrong – stay silent and hope no one will find out? Own up and say sorry. Own up, repent and ask for forgiveness? And what has been the difference when you’ve repented and sought forgiveness?**

**(6) Closing Reflection. God cares about the detail and Matthew takes great care in the details he includes.**

**(a) As you reflect on the detail of Jesus’ trial in this passage and all the agony and loneliness he endured for YOU in his final day, how might you respond now in how you live for Jesus?**