

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Luke 23:13-25

This passage is full of irony and invites us to some interesting comparing and contrasting. As was mentioned in the sermon, we can compare the Jewish religious leaders with the political leaders (Herod and Pilate). The religious leaders should have recognized Jesus as their Messiah and recognized His good, right, perfect, innocent agenda. Instead they were afraid of Him, and afraid He might disturb their relatively comfortable status, so they found Him guilty of trumped up charges. Herod and Pilate, who had no basis for understanding Him, and who should have been concerned about Him and His agenda, found him innocent.

Then there is the comparison between Barabbas and Jesus...each representing two different systems—the world vs. the Kingdom of God. Interesting Barabbas' name means "son of the father", while Jesus is the Son of God (the Father). Jesus sought to advance the Kingdom of God through the power of love. Barabbas sought to advance the nation of Israel (misunderstanding it as the Kingdom of God) through the power of violence. Jesus was (falsely) accused of being a "trouble maker"—for "subverting the nation", for "opposing payment of taxes to Caesar", and for "claiming to be Christ, a king" (ok, 1 out of 3 was accurate...see 23:2). Pilate, as ruthless as he was known to be, saw no evidence of Jesus "inciting the people to rebellion" (vs 14). Barabbas, on the other hand, was already found guilty and was imprisoned as an insurrectionist and murderer. (The sheer fact that Pilate would agree to release such a person is baffling...freeing a known enemy of the State/empire could not have been in Pilate's best interest.) The healer vs. the murderer...and the murderer was set free and the peaceful healer was crucified. What a travesty of justice.

Then there is the comparison between Barabbas with you and me. Though you and I may not be blatant murderers, we typically settle for the ways and means of the world over the Kingdom because it's easier, and we're simply more accustomed and conditioned toward it. The ways of the Kingdom are costly, and all we have to do is look to Jesus to see that. The ways of the Kingdom are also right, beautiful, and ultimately victorious...and all we have to do is look to Jesus to see that.

- Q. Jesus was mischaracterized, misunderstood, misidentified, and mistreated...share of a time when you could relate to that is some way.**
  
- Q. When you/we are misidentified, mischaracterized, misunderstood or mistreated, how do you/we respond? When do you/we patiently endure it? When do we do something about it? (Following Jesus' example, what does "doing something" even look like?)**
  
- Q. Many people fear being a "doormat". At the same time, most people would say that Jesus was not a doormat. Yet, the fear of not being a doormat is often an excuse given for not following the example of Jesus. How do we reconcile this?**

- Q. Love, by its very nature is self-sacrificing...meaning it's painful. Share some pains you have endured out of love.**
- Q. How do we discern when the natural pain that is associated with love crosses a line to abuse that we should not put up with?**
- Q. What are some ways in which Jesus is still misidentified, misunderstood, mischaracterized, and maybe even mistreated, today?**
- Q. It is clear that part of the reason the Jewish religious leaders didn't understand Jesus was because they didn't understand their own calling. As Christians we can be (and have been) guilty of the same mistake. How do we insure that we understand Jesus properly and represent Him accurately to the world around us?**
- Q. Identify some injustices in our world today. What does it make you think, how does it make you feel, what perspective does it give you, to know that Jesus endured injustice Himself? What might we learn from Jesus as to how to handle injustice?**
- Q. What do you think happened to Barabbas? (We aren't told anything more about him. Did he repent and become a follower of Jesus? Was He tailed by the Romans and arrested at a later date? You guess is as good as mine.)**