

# John 18:28-40 **Truth on Trial**

Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley



**Village Meeting Week of:**

November 5, 2018

**Sermon Date:**

November 4, 2018

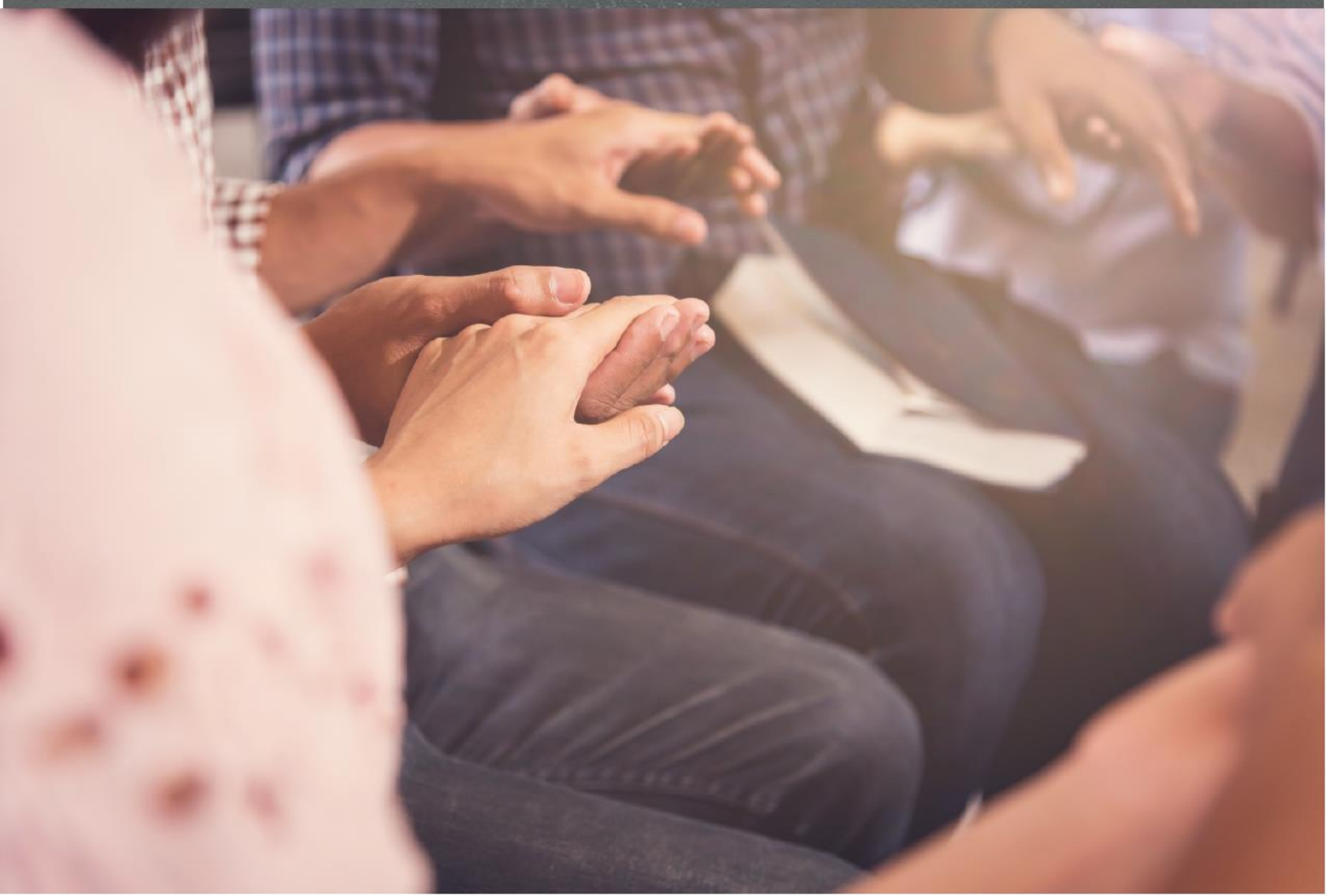
**CURRICULUM  
GUIDE**



# Notes for Facilitators:

Please begin and end each Village Discussion with prayer. The curriculum guide contains a brief synopsis of the sermon for the week. As well, below are discussion questions and activities that you may use for your Village weekly meeting. This guide is meant to be a resource for the discussion. You don't have to go through all of the questions, they simply serve to jumpstart the conversation. While you have flexibility to choose the questions and activities that most resonate with your group, please always keep in mind the aim for the discussion: to lead Villagers into deeper relationship with God through discussion of the sermon, and to provide for deep connection among members of the group.

Please note that given the nature of this week's sermon and the unpredictable nature of election days, Village conversations will be altered heavily by the results of Tuesday. Please embrace the natural flow of conversation and leave room for the Holy Spirit to direct your accordingly.







## Sermon Summary

In this sermon, Pastor Wesley reflected on our current political climate, and provided spiritual and practical tools to combat evil and affect change. Referencing the trial of Jesus, Pastor explored what occurs when followers and believers of truth do not raise their voices--truth is misrepresented. This sermon teaches us that there is power in utilizing our voices to be a light in the darkness and ensure that truth prevails.

## Key Points

### **Hatred and evil are fertilized when two things happen:**

1. Voices of Violence are Raised  
The voice of violence is the result of threatened privilege
2. Truth is on trial  
Those in power who are threatened, seek to persuade those who really aren't threatened that they're affected too.

### **Hatred and evil are changed when two things happen:**

1. We Embrace an ethic of equality that forces you to live in love!
2. We Voice our Vote!



# Getting To Know You Questions:

- 1) When have you experienced a "shut up n\*\*\*\*" moment? What was that like for you? How has that shaped how you view yourself and others in the world.
- 2) What was your reaction to the bomb threat that was called in to Alfred Street? What does it mean to be a member of a church that is a predominant voice of Christian truth and justice in a culture of secular bigotry and ignorance?
- 3) Have you ever been in a situation where someone wronged you and you would've been justified to match their evil with evil but chose a peaceful alternative? How did you respond to the situation? What was your thought process in determining how to respond?

# Into The Bible Questions:

1. "Truth" is a vital theme in the book of John, and it is repeated often in familiar passages. "I am the way, the TRUTH and the life", the "truth will set you free", "The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide into all truth". When Pilate asks "what is truth", what does the book suggest the answer to that question is?
2. In John vs the other gospels, Jesus spends less time with crowds and has more personal and one on one conversations (woman at the well, Nicodemus, Peter). When Pilate (a Roman) talks to Jesus he realizes Jesus isn't a threat, even though the priests try to convince him otherwise. In a world full of violent rhetoric how do we shift our focus from teaching a crowd to having a transformational conversation with one individual?
3. Pilate makes the people choose between Jesus, Son of God and Barabbas, Son of a Father. Real Jesus vs. Fake Jesus. According to John 3:19, why do people choose what is fake over what is real and the darkness over the light?

# Life Application Questions:

- 4) All of us have violent tendencies, yet we all have different things that trigger our violence. What are your triggers and how can you grow to be more aware of what triggers you?
- 5) How do you cope with carrying around anger and anxiety from the constant negative news stories and tragedies around our land? What methods of self-care do you perform to prevent yourself from having a "cussing on the top of your tongue"?
- 6) Pastor Wesley argues that Jesus was ultimately let down by the crowd because his followers weren't there to lift their voice in support of him. Do you have a philosophical barrier or challenge that prevents you from voting or raising your political voice? What do you say to those that do?





## "Can I Push It?"

1. What ethic of equality do you need to work on? While many of us identify as African-American/Black, we understand oppression at the hands of white supremacy, but do we treat, view, and uplift others who are different in other ways? How could you act more like Jesus in your ethic towards others of other genders, sexual orientations, immigration status, ability, etc.
2. Pastor recalled a conversation that he had with a Palestinian scholar on the Holy Land trip that "you can't out-violence violence." An outside criticism of black Christianity is that we always take a position of peace and (perceived) passivity in times of conflict. Is it the responsibility of the minority group to correct the perverse actions of the majority? Do you equate a faith based belief of peace and forgiveness with being passive?

## Activity:

**Sing the Scared Away:** On Saturday evening during the bomb threat Pastor Wesley in a time of prayer and singing of hymns. We were reminded that singing had the power to soothe fear in a way nothing else can. Take some time to have each Villager name their greatest fear. Then go back around the circle and have them name a favorite song that helps them speak faith over their fears. Write the songs down on a list and make a playlist to share with your Village and ASBC friends.





## Spirit Work:

Pastor Wesley argues in his sermon that systemic violence occurs when privilege is threatened. Reflect on what group(s) of privilege you are a part of. Have you ever responded negatively when that privilege was threatened or when you were made aware that you were privileged? What changes do you need to make and how do you ensure that you use your societal privilege to uplift and not threaten others?