Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of March 26, 2017   **March 15:1-15**

These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.
Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. [2] Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." [3] Then the chief priests accused him of many things. [4] Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." [5] But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

[6] Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. [7] Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. [8] So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. [9] Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" [10] For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. [11] But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. [12] Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" [13] They shouted back, "Crucify him!" [14] Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" [15] So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Common English Bible (CEB)

At daybreak, the chief priests—with the elders, legal experts, and the whole Sanhedrin—formed a plan. They bound Jesus, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate. [2] Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "That's what you say." [3] The chief priests were accusing him of many things. [4] Pilate asked him again, "Aren't you going to answer? What about all these accusations?" [5] But Jesus gave no more answers, so that Pilate marveled.

⁶During the festival, Pilate released one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. ⁷A man named Barabbas was locked up with the rebels who had committed murder during an uprising. ⁸The crowd pushed forward and asked Pilate to release someone, as he regularly did. ⁹Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" ¹⁰He knew that the chief priests had handed him over because of jealousy. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas to them instead. ¹²Pilate replied, "Then what do you want me to do with the one you call king of the Jews?" ¹³They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate said to them, "Why? What wrong has he done?" They shouted even louder, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd, so he released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus whipped, then handed him over to be crucified.

Connection Questions:

1. Why was Jesus a threat to the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jewish people?

2. Why was Jesus a threat to the Roman government?

3. Basically Jesus was silent to the charges of blasphemy claiming to be king of the Jews. Discuss why you think he was silent.

4. During the years between Jesus' birth and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, there were as many as thirteen possible people claiming to be the messiah by some Jewish group. Jesus' claim was different from the others. What was unique about his message?

5. Why did the crowd pick Barabbas, a prisoner who deserved to be in jail, over Jesus? Would you have picked Barabbas? Why or why not?

6. What was it about Jesus' message that eventually brought down the Roman government?

7. Might makes right was a popular philosophy in how to govern in Jesus' time. It still is a popular philosophy. Discuss how this philosophy works.

8. Jesus' message challenges might makes right philosophy. How do we interpret his message in our modern culture? Is Jesus calling us to be a pacifist or something different? Discuss.

9. Martin Luther King in his sermon, *Strength to Love,* said, "We will win victory by demonstrating love rather than hate toward you." How did King's followers live out his message?

10. What challenges do Christians face today in trying to live out the servant leadership that Jesus taught?