



## STUDY GUIDE

SERMON TOPIC:  
"Is That Your Own Idea?  
- Get Your Mind Right"

WEEK 4

### 1. READ

#### **Pastor's Selected Scripture: John 18 : 33 – 34 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>33</sup> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

#### **Further Reading: Genesis 32 : 22 – 28 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>22</sup> That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

<sup>27</sup> The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

<sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

#### **Philippians 2 : 5 – 11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was[a] in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name  
that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.



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### 2. REFLECT

[Click to view this week's sermon on YouTube]



As we enter our last week of Pastor Watley's sermon series entitled "Question Everything," we've explored many of the essential questions that prominent biblical figures asked in times of uncertainty. Although we discussed many examples of biblical questioning, these were only a few of the countless questions that can be found throughout scripture. Using these examples, we have witnessed how questions can determine the trajectory of our lives.

Last week, we learned that it is okay to question God. In fact, as Pastor Watley notes, the Judeo-Christian Tradition is actually built on intense questioning. For example, God's people are named "Israel" after their patriarch Jacob who persistently wrestled with an angel all night. The very next morning, Jacob is given the name Israel which means "one who wrestles with God and with man and has prevailed." This reminds us that as God's children, we come from a long line of people that have questioned and wrestled with God. One writer even explains, "in Judaism, to be without questions is not a sign of faith, but of lack of depth."

However, in our lesson for week four entitled, "Is that your own idea? – Get Your Mind Right" Pastor Watley declares that before we question God, we must first question ourselves. Instead of immediately asking the first question that pops into our head, it is important to pause and ask ourselves where this question came from. Many times, the questions we ask God are a reflection of the critics and cynics in our environment. If we are not careful, we can begin to absorb the negative atmosphere of the world around us.



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In our scripture for this week (John 18:33-34), Pontius Pilate summons Jesus and asks him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” As we have seen, throughout his time on Earth, Jesus was consistently asked about his identity. Another example of this was in our scripture for week one (Luke 7:18-31), when John the Baptist asks Jesus, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” In both instances, instead of directly answering the question, Jesus gives them responses that require introspection. When Jesus hears Pilate’s question, he responds by asking Pilate a counter-question: “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?” In other words, who’s been in your ears? Where did this question come from?

Without even revealing his identity, Jesus essentially asks Pilate the question that we should all be asking ourselves. *Who’s been in our ears?* How have our thoughts and questions for God been influenced by those around us? How have we internalized harmful elements from our external environment? Are these our own ideas?

This important round of introspective questioning reminds us to **watch what we eat!**

It shouldn’t be surprising that what we ingest determines how we live our lives. In this day and age, we are constantly bombarded by media, messaging, and targeted advertising. If we are not mindful of what we take in, we can find ourselves moving further and further away from who God has called us to be. For this reason, this next question is perhaps the most important: **“Who are you?”** Outside of your family’s expectations or your socio-economic status, who are you at your core? This question is vital because during times of crisis and uncertainty, who you are determines what you do. As we’ve witnessed during this current pandemic, a person’s response to crisis says a lot about who they are and what they believe.

In addition, the encounter between Jesus and Pilate in our scripture for this week reminds us of the importance of a personal relationship with our savior. When Jesus is asked about his identity, he knows Pilate’s question was actually more of an assumption rather than a genuine inquiry. Instead of getting to know Jesus for himself, Pilate relies on the words of others to make an assumption about who Jesus is. However, to truly learn who Jesus is, we can’t rely on someone else’s relationship with him. We can’t define the Lord’s character based on the opinions of others. In order to learn more about him, we must get to know him for ourselves.

As we develop an individual and personal relationship with God, our questions will quickly turn into conversations. The line of communication will not only be open for us to articulate our needs to God, but we will also be able to hear what God needs from us. This is important because if we have the right to ask questions of God, then God certainly has the right to ask questions of us. However, we are blessed to have so many biblical examples of what God ultimately requires of us, *to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.* -Micah 6:8



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### 3. RESPOND

#### Introspective Questions

- Who are you?
- How have your thoughts or questions been influenced by those around you?

#### Discussion Questions

- Where do you think Pilate heard that Jesus was the “King of the Jews?”
- What does Jesus’ response to Pilate say about his character?