



Sway

Week 3: “Not my Problem”

What we want students to learn: We want our students to look at the situations in their lives as opportunities rather than problems.

What we want students to do with what they’ve learned: Don’t shy away from stepping into and helping the world around them and taking the opportunities that are placed before them.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 27:15-26

The Main Point

Welcome to week 3 of Sway! This week, specifically, we will be talking about the times when we are influenced to do nothing. You could also say that these are the times when we look at the people or problems around us and say “not my problem.” Rather than being swayed towards the “wrong” thing, we are actually swayed to do nothing at all.

INTRODUCTION

- **What is something in the past week that you have looked at and thought “that is not my job/problem?”**
 - *Maybe you didn’t pick up that piece of trash at lunch.*
 - *Maybe you didn’t help your little brother or sister with their homework.*
 - *Maybe you didn’t help your mom fold the laundry.*

PRAY that your students would begin to become aware of opportunities to be Jesus’s hands and feet. Also pray that Jesus would bless the conversations between your group members.

LESSON

- **What have we learned so far (during the past two weeks) about the story of Jesus and Pilate? Why was Jesus on trial? What did Pilate think about Jesus?**

Tonight, you and your students will read Matthew 27:15-26 together. Tonight’s message will specifically deal with verses 22-25. However, the additional verses have been added for context so you and your group can understand the larger story. Begin tonight’s lesson by reading this story. Here are a few tips on how to get creative as you and your group read this story.

- *Popcorn read – Have each student read a verse at a time*
- *Role play – choose a few different students to represent the different characters in the story and have them read the verses that correspond to their character. These include: narrator, Pilate, Pilate’s wife, and the crowd*

- *Summarize – Have a few students read a verse at a time and stop to recap what they have just read.*
- **Why did Pilate choose to wash his hands in front of everyone? What do you think that meant?**
 - *Pilate chose to wash his hands in front of the crowd to symbolize his supposed innocence.*
 - *Sometimes, we think it's easier to simply ignore the problem rather than stand up and do the right thing. But this does not let us off the hook for leaving things undone. We are still responsible.*
- **Do you think that makes him innocent?**
 - *While Pilate is not the sole reason for Jesus' death, he certainly played a role in it. Ultimately, God intended for Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Even still, Pilate played a role. Just because he said he was innocent, doesn't mean he was.*

HIGH SCHOOL ONLY - Have your students read Deuteronomy 21:6-8.

Deuteronomy 21:6-8 (God's Word Translation)- All the leaders from the city which was nearest the murder victim must wash their hands over the dead heifer. 7 Then they must make this formal statement: "We didn't commit this murder, and we didn't witness it. 8 Lord, make peace with your people Israel, whom you freed. Don't let the guilt of this unsolved murder remain among your people Israel." Then there will be peace with the Lord despite the murder. 9 This is how you will get rid of the guilt of an unsolved murder by doing what the Lord considers right.

For your own understanding, here is some brief research on this verse: "The elders wash their hands in the flowing water of the brook. This act both asserts their innocence and perhaps removes any taint of sin from their community" (Zondervan NIV Study Bible).

- **In your own words, how are Mathew 27:24 and Deuteronomy 21:6-8 connected?**
 - *In Deuteronomy 21:6 the elders of a city in which an undiscovered murder had been committed were to wash their hands over the sin-offering and to say, "Our hands have not shed the blood, neither have our eyes seen it." Pilate probably chose it to relive his own conscience and appease his wife.*

Both middle and high school, continue the lesson here.

- **What does this say about Pilate, the fact that he chose to distance himself from Jesus' death?**
 - *Pilate is unwilling to take responsibility and weak for letting his peers determine his decisions.*
 - *Even still, we must be careful not to point a quick finger at Pilate. How often do we do the same thing, distancing ourselves from the problems around us?*
- **Do you think a lot of us act like Pilate, wanting to distance ourselves from the problems around us and not do something about it?**

LIFE APPLICATION

The reality is, Jesus lived in stark contrast of Pilate. Whereas, Pilate chose to look at Jesus' death and say "not my problem," Jesus looked at us and made our sin his problem. He chose to die for our sin when He didn't have to.

- **What if Jesus would have said that our sin "wasn't His problem"?**
 - *He wouldn't have died that way, on the cross, and we wouldn't be able to have a relationship with Him.*
- **Think about and share some people in your life who have loved you or done something for you, when they didn't have to.**
 - *Parent, Small Group Leader, Sibling, etc.*
- **How would your life be different if they wouldn't have stepped into your life?**
- **What are some situations in your life that you want to look at and say "not my problem?"**
- **How can we bring the love of Jesus to the problems around us instead of saying "not my problem?"**

- *Be watchful, don't do things for an applause, keep Jesus in the focus as we are doing activities, and be willing.*
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TAKE IT OUT

Close small group out with prayer requests. Pray specifically for the group and pray that they would be able to take initiative. Pray that people would look at the problems around them as opportunities.

After prayer, be sure to remind them of any upcoming group serving activities or student events and THE WEEKEND!