

## WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS? Mark 15:6-15

### INTRODUCTION

The small boy had been consistently late for dinner. One particular day his parents had warned him to be on time, but he arrived later than ever. He found his parents already seated at the table, about to start eating. Quickly he sat at his place, then noticed what was set before him--a slice of bread and a glass of water. There was silence as he sat staring at his plate, crushed. Suddenly he saw his father's hand reach over, pick up his plate and set it before himself. Then his dad put his own full plate in front of his son, smiling warmly as he made the exchange. When the boy became a man, he said, "All my life I've remembered that lesson by what my father did that night." → It helped the boy understand God's love for him in the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

### READ Mark 15:6-15

#### **\*\*Life's Most Important Question\*\***

- Who do you say that I am? (**Mark 8:29**) – Jesus asked
  - This is during Jesus' transition from His public ministry to a more private ministry
  - He is teaching the apostles what the cost of discipleship really means at this time
- How does it seem to you? (**Mark 14:64**) – Caiaphus asked
- What shall I do with Jesus? (**Mark 15:12**) – Pilate asked

**Big Idea:** Jesus Christ makes a claim on every human heart, and every heart must decide what to do with Him. The most important question every human being faces is the one Pilate asks in this passage: **“What shall I do with Jesus?”**

**Proposition:** 4 people answer this question in the trial of Jesus ...

- |                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Pilate               | <b>The pragmatic coward</b>        |
| 2. Pilate's wife        | <b>The secret admirer</b>          |
| 3. The crowd            | <b>The bloodthirsty hypocrites</b> |
| 4. A man named Barabbas | <b>The pardoned criminal</b>       |

**1<sup>st</sup> person** to answer the question “What shall I do with Jesus?”

#### **I. Pilate** **Mark 15:6-10** **The Pragmatic Coward**

Point – Pilate shows some understanding of the Truth, some concern for Justice. But he is unwilling to take a stand because he is a coward.

Remember → Pilate is looking for An Escape!!!

**Luke 23:5 – “But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place.””**

Pilate was looking for an indirect way to release Jesus

- he tries Herod
- with the mention of Galilee, Pilate transfers the case to Herod Antipas
- Jesus has less to say to Herod
- Herod Antipas was a thrill seeker (**Luke 23:6-12**)

Point:

- Herod was not interested in the Truth
- Herod was not interested in justice
- Herod is there for the show
- He is interested in the thrill

Jesus didn't appease Herod. Herod sends Him back to Pilate.

**Proof – Mark 15:6-7 – “Now at *the* feast he used to release for them *any* one prisoner whom they requested. <sup>7</sup>And the man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.”**

Pilate remembers this custom – this Act of Clemency.

“**Barabbas**” – son of Abba or son of a father

“**the man**” – notoriety

**Matt 27:16** – “notorious prisoner”

Barabbas was not just a common murderer, but an insurrectionist, a robber, a traitor to Roman rule. He was probably a zealot. He was well known to the people.

well-known insurrection – “**the insurrection**”

- Possible that Barabbas was a leader or the leader of this

**Mark 15:8-10** – “**And the multitude went up and began asking him *to do* as he had been accustomed to do for them. <sup>9</sup>And Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" <sup>10</sup>For he was aware that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy.”**

Pilate is not deceived by the chief priests

- he knows what they are up to
- he knows they are not acting out of loyalty to Rome

Pilate is a pragmatist

- he is pleased with himself

- he thinks he will be able to accomplish what he wants and maintain the favor of the people

Because of Jesus' previous popularity with the people, Pilate is happy to pit the people against the priests.

- He is feeling his way around, taking a poll
- Pilate is a pragmatist
- He is not concerned with justice
- He is guilty!

### **Consider this illustration**

**I Kings 18:22** – Elijah is against 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

**19:5,7** – an angel of the Lord is ministering to Elijah (preincarnate appearance of God)

**19:9-14** – **“I and I alone stand”** – Elijah remains loyal – that is what true belief looks like – take a stand for truth despite repercussions

**Application:** What is the right thing to do? When is the time to stand up and be counted?

➔ Now! Fear God not man – that is our charge.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person** to answer the question “What shall I do with Jesus?”

## **II. Pilate's Wife**

### **The Secret Admirer**

Point – She admired Jesus from afar. Like people today, she might have said...

- “He’s a good man ... a good teacher.”
- “I like His compassion ... His peace and gentleness.”
- “I like Him as Savior.”

But – uninterested in the demand He places on my life as Savior AND Lord!

- No desire to follow.

Maybe the Cost has been counted and determined to be too much

Maybe Cost hasn't even been bothered to be counted – ...

Proof –

**Matt 27:19** – **“And while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.””**

- Note: this is Providence – not a new revelation

Whatever Pilate's wife's understanding of “righteous” may be, she is right on in her assessment.

- she adds her testimony to the innocence of Jesus.

**Application:**

God is not looking for admiration. He is not looking for mere agreement  
God is looking for total devotion

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person** to answer the question “What shall I do with Jesus?”

### **III. The Crowd Mark 15:11-14 The Bloodthirsty Hypocrites**

Point – All layers of pretense are peeled away.

- We are looking at the naked core
- A pure undoctored picture of the heart, that is deceitful above all else.  
→ Captured in “Crucify Him!”

Proof – **Mark 15:11** – “**But the chief priests stirred up the multitude to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.**”

Pilate’s wife’s intervention gives chief priests time to stir up the people

**John 18:40** – “**Not this Man, but Barabbas!**”

They want nothing to do with a Messiah in chains. They are there for a show. They are not there for the Truth or salvation. This is the original “disappointed in God” crowd. They don’t get the suffering servant. They want the victorious general. The idea of a Messiah in chains doesn’t fit in with their thinking.

Turn to **John 19:1-5** – Pilate has Jesus scourged even though he knows that He is innocent. What is his reason? He is hoping to appease the bloodthirsty crowd.

**15:12** – “**And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"**”

- Pilate is willing to release Jesus also.
- He should not have asked the question in the first place.
- He knows the answer.
- He had all these things done to Jesus even though he found no guilt in Him.
- He was a coward.

**Mark 15:13** – “**And they shouted back, "Crucify Him!"**”

They don’t just demand He be killed (beheading, or stoning). They demand the most disgraceful, shameful, and agonizing death you can imagine.

Point – Shows their true color

(v. 11 they ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus.)

Escalation of their sin – Here, they show their true depravity.

- the naked core
- pure undoctored picture of heart

**15:14 – “But Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"”**

The crowd wants blood, not justice. Even to the hardened, pagan mind of Pilate their vicious response must be blood chilling. You can't reason with a bloodthirsty mob!

**“Why, what evil has He done?”**

- again proclaiming the Lord's innocence before the world.
- this question only inflames the mob to greater frenzy, causing them to keep shouting all the more, **“Crucify Him!”** – aorist imperative → **Now!!!**

Recall:

→ The False Witnesses testify to the **Innocence of Jesus - Mark 14:55-59**

→ Judas testifies to the **Innocence of Jesus**

→ Pilate testifies to the **Innocence of Jesus**

→ Herod testifies to the **Innocence of Jesus**

→ Pilate's Wife testifies to the **Innocence of Jesus**

And now → The Crowd crying out, “Crucify Him!”  
testify to the **Innocence of Jesus**

Many of the same crowd who shouted “Hosanna!” → Guilty!

**Matt 27:24 – “when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves."”**

- This attempt of Pilate is in vain!
- **Isaiah 59:6 – “they will not cover themselves with their works”**
- Man cannot cover his own sin
- The washing of the Word through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is the only thing that will make us clean!
- Jesus Christ's spotless life substituted on our behalf is what can cover our sin

**Most Chilling Words! Matt 27:25 – “and all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children!”**

The cross strips us of all pretenses. As Jesus remains silent before the priests, before Pilate, before Herod, before the screaming crowd, they are forced to make clear the hatred in their own hearts against him.

**Consider this illustration:**

There is a wonderful story of a little girl named Mary Ann. She got mad at her brother, Jimmy, and pulled his hair and then kicked him in the shin. Her Mother asked her, “Why did you let Satan put it in your heart to pull little Jimmy’s hair and kick him in the shin?” Mary Ann replied, “Maybe I did allow Satan to put it in my heart to pull Jimmy’s hair, Mother, but kicking him in the shin was my idea!” There is marvelous theology in this story. We see the depravity in our heart. Our sin is our issue and our issue alone.

Application: All of us are like this. We prefer something else to Christ.

It may be:

- Islam
- Buddhism
- evolution
- psychology

It may be:

- my own comfort
- my opinion
- my pleasure
- my time.

Point – Preference of anything above Christ is rejection of Christ

2) Then, when pressed, “**Crucify Him!**”

3) all the more, “Crucify Him!” – aorist imperative → Do it now!!

**Application**– Like this crowd, when we get disappointed with God, and upset with Jesus and turn from him, there is always another Jesus waiting in the wings for us to follow.

**4th person** to answer the question “What shall I do with Jesus?”

#### IV. Barabbas

#### Mark 15:15

Point – Every detail of Scripture account has significance

There is great detail in all 4 gospels about Barabbas – unusual and important – told at length in the midst of other stories that seem condensed

- why is this story so prominent in the gospel narratives?
- what does God have for us to learn in this particular detail?

I am going to describe a man to you ... he is in a cell ... in a dungeon ... held in chains ... he hears the sounds of those preparing for his execution. The man is a thief. He is a traitor. He is a murderer. He is a man in which I have much in common. You have much in common with him.

You see, we are all within the cell of our own making...

... then Jesus takes our place.

**Proof** – Mark 15:15 – “**And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.**”

“scourged” – **Isaiah 53:5** – “stripes”; **1 Peter 2:24** – “wounds”

- both of these words are singular nouns in Hebrew and Greek
- they describe one shredded mass of torn flesh
- a medical doctor describes it this way: “finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding, tissue.”
- this is what Barabbas deserved

Pilate knowingly frees the **guilty** and condemns the **innocent**

**v. 14 – “You disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of Life.”**

They pick “**Barabbas**” pick the robber, the murderer, the insurrectionist, the liar ... **Why???**

- they know what to do with Barabbas
- they understand Barabbas
- they can handle Barabbas
- Barabbas is just like them ... he is just like us

Jesus is an entirely different kind of revolutionary.

- One they can't understand
- One they can't handle

So they do what the world always does. Give us the traitor. Give us the thief. Give us the murderer. We know how to deal with them.

Augustine – “The criminal escapes; Christ is condemned. The one guilty of many crimes receives a pardon; He who covers the crimes of all who confess is condemned. The cross itself, is a courtroom. In the middle of the courtroom stands the final Judge.”

“**Barabbas**” means literally, “son of the father”

- contrast to the true Son of the Father!

The “son of a father” is released and the true Son of God is executed.

Barabbas is **guilty** of precisely the crimes of which Jesus is accused.

Because of the severity of his crimes, he is scheduled for execution. Jesus is probably crucified on the cross originally constructed for Barabbas.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Consider this illustration:**

James Montgomery Boice and Donald Grey Barnhouse – Previous Pastors of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia → consider the perspective of Barabbas:

Barabbas is a picture of us! That is why there is so much information detailed in scripture.

- Are we not prisoners of sin?
- Are we not prisoners of a cell of our own making?
- We are under condemnation before God.

The Story of Stories – The story of the salvation of sinners through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ!

Imagine this from Barabbas' perspective

- from the eyes of Barabbas
- the only man in history that could literally and physically say, “this man died in my place”

Barabbas has been tried. He has been convicted. He is lying in jail expecting his execution. This is not modern day America where he is on death row for years. His execution is imminent. He knows the penalty for treason, crucifixion, is coming.

We can imagine Barabbas lying in bed at night ... this hardened criminal sweating and trembling in fear.

Barabbas surely has the grotesque picture of crucifixion seared in his mind ... of victims who ... the searing picture of scourging ... of his flesh being torn ... of the rough nails pounded into his flesh

- lacerated tendons
- convulsions
- wounds
- strain
- severe bleeding
- traumatic fever
- insufferable thirst....

It is now early morning ... another sleepless night anticipating anytime the entrance of the jailer to lead him to his torture. Suddenly he hears the noise of an angry mob. He can't hear the exact details, but he thinks he might even hear his name shouted. He hears the fanatical crowd shouting “**Crucify Him!**”

Time passes with his heart pounding in his ears louder and louder. Again, he hears even louder, “**Crucify Him!**” Fear grips his heart.

He hears the sound of the jailer coming down the hallway. He hears him outside his door. A key is inserted, the door is opened, the jailer comes in ...

The moment of his execution has come.

Jailer walks him to the door of the prison and tells Barabbas, “**You are free.**” ..... What? Barabbas doesn’t understand. This doesn’t happen. A murderer, a thief, an insurrectionist is not set free.

He moves out into the crowd – preoccupied.

He asks what’s happening and hears “The crowd has just demanded that Jesus of Nazareth be crucified instead of Barabbas.”

Perhaps he looks at Jesus.

**He is to be released ... but that One is to be crucified.**

Jesus is taken out to Golgotha for crucifixion. Barabbas follows Him out ... Can we imagine it any other way?

Barabbas hears the blows of the hammer ... knowing they were meant for Him. He looks at this One lifted up. He hears the cries of the thieves on each side of Jesus.

He hears the words Jesus cries out:

- 1) “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing”
- 2) “Today, you will be with me in paradise”
- 3) “Behold, your mother”
- 4) “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?”
- 5) “I am thirsty”
- 6) “It is finished”
- 7) “Into Your hands, I commit My spirit”

Darkness comes. Jesus dies. The earth shakes. The rocks are split. The tombs are opened and many saints come out and enter Jerusalem.

Barabbas hears the testimony of the centurion, “Truly, this was the Son of God!” ....

Barabbas leaves ... and he is thinking ...

**“He died in my place. ... This One died for me.”**

### **Application:**

All who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior ... can say ... spiritually, “He died for me.”

We are just like Barabbas.

- We are **Robbers**
  - We have taken that which belongs to God and squandered it on ourselves.
- We are **Traitors**
  - We have rebelled against the authority of God and His rule over our life.

- Are we not **Murderers**?
  - Jesus says that when our hearts are filled with hatred, we have committed murder.

We are within the cell of our own making ...

- We are under condemnation
- There is a certificate of death hanging over our heads
- God's **wrath** is waiting to crush us
- We deserve to die ... We are within the cell of our own making ...

### ➔ Then Jesus takes our place

We are now made alive in Christ and set free!

- Are you set free?
- Or are you choosing to remain the dungeon of your own sin?

### Consider this:

We could imagine the situation with Barabbas differently. I can imagine the jailer coming down the hallway, putting the key in the lock, opening the door, coming in and telling Barabbas,

“You are free. The crowd is crying for Jesus of Nazareth to be crucified. He will die in your place. You may go free. The horror of your execution is no more.”

What if Barabbas had said,

“**I don't believe it.** This can't be. A robbing murdering traitor is not set free. I'm going to stay right here in my cell.”

This is no difference than those who hear the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Christ ... of the deliverance from fear of death ... of the deliverance from the captivity of sin available in Christ ... and say ...

“**I won't accept this pardon. I like it here in this dungeon.**”

Someone might say...

“I'm not going anywhere. I don't deserve this coming punishment. I did nothing wrong. I'm not going to leave this cell until the governor comes down here, asks for my forgiveness, and says I am guilty of nothing.”

Barabbas could have remained in his cell and taken the punishment and said:

“This is all very nice ... but I don't want to leave quite yet. I want time to sort through this. I want to reform myself. I want to earn my forgiveness.”

### Conclusion:

You can't. That is not how a pardon works

- God has already pronounced the verdict.
- He Himself will carry out the sentence.

Are you refusing the pardon???

- A pardon is only effective when it is received.

**What are you going to do with Jesus? This is life's most important question.**

11/27/11