

December 6, 2020

Not this man, but Barabbas ~ John 18:39-40

This morning, more than anything, I want you to see the love of God in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ for condemned/guilty sinners:

I want you to see that Jesus would not fail to die for the ungodly; the only failure would be yours in refusing to believe on Christ!

I'm so glad God determined to save sinners from eternity past; if He hadn't, none of us would be saved!

At the precise time, (God's time) Jesus came into the world (the God-Man, God manifest in the flesh); He would die for a world of sinners; and He would die at the hands of many sinners who hated Him. Acts 2:22-24

We begin this morning, at the time of Jesus' betrayal by Judas, immediately before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Just so you know, this happened right after the Lord Jesus had washed the apostle's feet and right after they ate the Passover. At the Passover, of which Judas was a participant, he had already gone to the chief priests and planned how he would betray Jesus to them.

Mark 14:10-12, Luke 22:1-5, Mark 14:18-21

Judas, one of the twelve, (an Apostle of Christ), betrayed Him. This ought to strike a fear in every one of our hearts as believers in Christ.

After Passover: Jesus & His apostles went to Gethsemane; but not Judas.

Judas would never again fellowship with Christ; he had departed the Passover and fellowship to gather a band of men/soldiers to execute his plan to betray the Lord Jesus to the chief priests and Pharisees.

Judas the apostle of Christ was now the betrayer of Christ!

Those that hated Daniel for his righteousness knew where they would find him at certain times of the day; at a certain place, doing a certain thing; praying! Here was Judas, one of Jesus' chosen apostles, who knew where to lead Jesus' enemies to arrest Him. Matthew 26:36-46

Oh beloved, are there certain times each day, and a certain place where you may be found communing/praying to your Heavenly Father? Judas knew the place! John 18:1-2, Then the Arrest: John 18:3-11

After Jesus' arrest: John 18:12-14

Now Israel's long-awaited Messiah would be falsely accused and unjustly condemned to die by His own people, who refused to believe that God had sent Him into the world to be their Lord and Saviour!

Why? Because He wasn't the Messiah that they wanted! Many there are in the world today who will tell you that they want

Jesus! But after they meet the Jesus of the Holy Scriptures and hear His gospel and His commands, they want nothing to do with Him and His Word/commands.

Jesus came into the world TO SAVE SINNER! But if that's going to happen, sinners must hear the gospel and be convicted and convinced that they are sinners! And many will say to that: Who are you to judge me?!

In Jesus' day, He exposed sin and the religious hypocrisy of those who thought they were God's children by telling them the truth, and for that, they hated Him and wanted to destroy Him! John 1:10-11, Isaiah 53:3

But testimony after testimony only CONFIRMED that Jesus WAS INDEED Israel's promised Messiah and Saviour of the world; now he would be falsely accused and treated like a condemned criminal; ALL for simply showing the love of God to fallen/sinful humanity!

Pontius Pilate, the Gentile judge who presided over the corrupt court proceedings to condemn Jesus; after he heard all their evidence against the Lord, he said that he found no fault AT ALL in Jesus. In Pilate's estimation, He was not guilty!

What a testimony of the unblemished character of Jesus, that even an unbelieving judge could find no fault/no sin at ALL in Him! Luke 23:39-41

In fact, the scriptures teach us that Pilate knew exactly why the Pharisees, chief priests and elders delivered up Jesus to be condemned and killed, because they envied Him. Matthew 27:18, Proverbs 27:4

All scribes and Pharisees wanted from Pilate was for him to confirm their verdict that Jesus should be condemned to die; they didn't want to hear any actual testimony; they knew He was sent of God, but they rejected Him!

Now the hypocrisy of the chief priests and elders was put on full display. We will read this in a moment, that they refused to enter into Pilate's court (who was a Gentile) for fear of being considered unclean before God before the Passover feast; but only a few minutes earlier, they were in their own high priest's palace, scheming to kill the Son of God! John 18:28-30

What hypocrites! Their pretended religious convictions aggravated their hypocrisy; they were very careful to keep to a form of godliness in their religious formalities, but their hearts were filled with hatred and malice against the Lord Jesus! (Remember: Be not righteous OVER-MUCH)

Be careful Christian, of being a lover of religious practice and formality rather than a lover of Christ.

When Pilate went out to hear them, like any fair judge, he asked them, what accusation do you bring against this man?

They told him this is an open and shut case, you just need to confirm our verdict against Him. If he were not a criminal,

we would not have brought Him unto you! John 18:30
Pilate said, what are your charges against Him? They
answered: He is morally corrupt, He is perverting our nation
and misleading our people; He refuses to pay His taxes and He
is teaching the people to not pay taxes to Caesar. And on top
of all that, He professes Himself to be a King. That
statement got Pilate's attention! We will pick up in Luke
23:1-25

Three times, Pilate declared that he found no fault in Jesus, but this filled them with indignation and made them more fierce in calling for His death!

And we will see in a moment that these same religious leaders began to incite the common people to call for the death of Christ. The common people did what the chief priests said because they feared them.

Interesting that 4-5 days earlier, these same people were shouting Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest! As Jesus, the Messiah-King rode into Jerusalem on a colt! Now these same people were shouting Kill Him! Crucify Him!

Psalm 69:4: They that hate me without a cause are more than that hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty

How could there be so much hatred for a Man who went about doing good? Who healed the sick, cleansed lepers, cast out devils, and fed the multitudes? Jesus who never hurt anyone, but who came to save fallen man from his wickedness and sins; He was called a friend of sinners!

How could such a Good Man be so hated in the world?

Pilate was in a fix: in the midst of the shouts of the religious mob, He heard that Jesus is from Galilee, which was Herod's jurisdiction! Luke 23:5-7.

But when that didn't work, Pilate had another idea to wash his hands of this embarrassing trial. Matthew 27:15-17, John 18:39-40

Who was Barabbas? He is dropped into all four (4) gospel accounts, and then after he is released from prison, nothing more is written of him.

His name means son of a father. Remember what Jesus called Peter, Simon Bar-jona, or Simon, son of Jonas.

So here we have Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, and Barabbas, the son of a father, BOTH presented to the multitude, to choose one to be released, freed at the Passover. Jesus, who was unquestionably innocent, and Barabbas guilty beyond any shadow of a doubt; condemned to die.

Pilate took his seat as judge: Who shall I release? Who shall die?

But instead of judging righteously, he decided this trial by public opinion, asking the angry mob: Whom will ye that I

should release to you?

Matthew 27:19-23, Mark 15:11-14, Acts 3:12-15

Barabbas is a very important figure in the gospel because he is a picture of EVERY lost sinner in the world; BUT ALSO of EVERY saved sinner.

You and I are Barabbas! How so? Barabbas was a notable sinner, condemned before God to die for his sins! Just like you and me!

John 3:16-18

If Christ would not have taken Barabbas' place on that cross between those two criminals, Barabbas would have rightly died on that cross as a condemned sinner. And so, for every sinner here; if you have not turned from your sins to Christ, you are condemned/guilty before God.

But here's the best part of all of this; God loves sinners and sent His Son to die for guilty/condemned sinners! Matthew 1:21, Romans 5:6-11

The crowd wants Barabbas released, and Christ executed; and it was so!

The guards go to Barabbas' cell where he is shackled in chains and awaiting execution; (a condemned and guilty man); but in that moment he heard the best news that any condemned man could ever hear:

Barabbas! You're being released, set free! There is another man out there that is going to die in your place. That cross that was for you, the one in the middle, a man named Jesus is going to die on that cross in your place! Go! You are a free man!

What was going through Barabbas' mind? What did he think? Did he go out to see the Man who was taking his place? Understand here that Barabbas did NOTHING AT ALL to deserve His release; he still deserved to die for His crimes, but justice would be paid for by this other Man named Jesus.

What perfect picture of the Substitutionary Death of the Lord Jesus Christ in the place of condemned/guilty sinners like us!

Christian, understand that Christ suffered and died IN YOUR PLACE and FOR YOUR SINS; JUST LIKE THIS, in this REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE of Christ dying in the place of, (or instead of) Barabbas.

2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9

What a picture of the substitutionary atonement and death of Christ for sinners!

But for Barabbas, this was no picture, Barabbas could actually say with all certainty that Christ died in his place! Barabbas could say, I was released, freed from my condemnation because of Jesus! Barabbas could look upon the cross of Christ and say, that should have been my cross, my punishment, and my death!

But Barabbas was released, and Christ died as a condemned man,

and He was not guilty of even one sin: He completely innocent and perfectly righteous. Mine, Mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain!

At the time of Jesus' death, the Centurion GLORIFIED GOD saying this: Luke 23:46-47. Mark 15:39: This man was the Son of God!