



ISSUE

23.22

May 30, 2021

# Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF  
THE OL-  
SEN PARK  
CHURCH OF  
CHRIST

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

## Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## Choosing Barabbas over Jesus

By Kyle Pope

Scripture records that after examining Jesus, Pilate was ready to have Him beaten and then released (Luke 23:16). When the crowd demanded more, the voices of the chief priests **“prevailed”** (Luke 23:24). Pilate, fearing that a **“tumult was rising”** (Matt. 27:24) sought to **“gratify the crowd”** (Mark 15:15) and at last delivered Jesus to their will (Luke 23:25). Before he did this, Pilate tried to give the people a way to acquit Jesus of the charges brought before him. Drawing upon a custom that allowed the release of one prisoner during Passover (John 18:39), Pilate gave the people the choice of releasing Jesus or a prisoner named Barabbas. Scripture tells that Barabbas was a **“notorious”** prisoner (Matt. 27:17) who had committed murder during an insurrection in the city (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19) and was also a **“robber”** (John 18:40). Pilate might have thought that the people would weigh the accusations against the two men and choose to release Jesus. That was not what took place. The Son of God, by whom all things were created (John 1:3), who shared glory with God the Father before the world began (John 17:5), who came into the world to reign as King (John 18:37), was passed over for a filthy, vile reprobate!

Even the most hardened soul can't help but see the indignity and insult of such a choice, particularly in light of the fact that Jesus offered Himself up to such disrespect willingly for the very sins of those who rejected Him! What we may fail to see is how in our own lives we can make the same choice that the people did that day by choosing in our own lives "Barabbas" over Jesus. We can do this in at least three ways:

**I. By Valuing What the World Demands, Rather than What God Values.** Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. When the crowd yelled,

**"crucify Him!"** he asked, **"Why, what evil has He done?"** (Matt. 27:23; Mark 15:14; Luke 23:22). Yet, in spite of this fact, and his own wife's warning (Matt. 27:19) he **"delivered Jesus to their will"** (Luke 23:25).

When we give in to peer pressure; when we don't say no to that boy or girl's advances; when we take that drink, or take those drugs, because our friends do; when we start to think "what's wrong with being gay?" or "is abortion really a big deal?"; when we use that language we know is wrong; when we don't go to church because our friends want us to do something with them; when we won't invite our friends to church because we are ashamed that there is no band or choir; when we are afraid they might hear something that they won't like—we look at Jesus, standing forsaken, beaten, and alone before an angry crowd and say—"I choose Barabbas!"

**II. By Choosing Sinful Things Over Things that are Right.** If anyone deserved to be crucified on the day Jesus died it would have been Barabbas. Jesus on the other hand, was a **"just person"** (Matt. 27:24). Yet, the people chose a sinful criminal over the righteous Messiah who was sent to them!



Olsen Park Church of Christ

When we give ourselves to sin, we make a choice—*will we value those things which are wholesome, honorable, and respectable, or will we serve and follow those things that are shameful?* When we give ourselves to greed, immorality, drunkenness, vulgar speech, or simply the pursuit of worldly goals we look in the face of a pure, loving, and sinless Lord, who died for us and say—“I choose Barabbas!”

**III. By Choosing Temporal Things, over Eternal Things.** The existence of Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem. In fact, He had been with God in the beginning (John 1:2). He is the one **“whose goings forth are from everlasting”** (Micah 5:2). Barabbas, on the other hand, was only a man. That is not to devalue human beings—after all it is for human beings that Jesus died. But the comparison between the infinitely eternal God and any man, who is but **“vapor”** and whose **“days as handbreadths”** (Ps. 39:5) is absurd. Even so, on that disgraceful day the crowds valued the temporary and finite over the eternal.

When we give place in our lives for all of the multitude of temporal demands that life throws at us; when we have time for that hobby, that evening out, that ball game, that new car, that nicer house, those nicer clothes, the latest electronic device, the newest books, those expensive yard decorations, the finest schools, the latest movies, that expensive desert, our favorite TV show, or the race—but we have no time to read our Bible, talk to our neighbor about the gospel, attend a Bible study or gospel meeting, be faithful in worship, attend a singing, have a brother or sister in our home, study a biblical doctrine we don’t understand, talk to our kids about Jesus, or set aside

time to pray—we look in the face of the Eternal One who became flesh for us and say—“I choose Barabbas!”

### Conclusion

Scripture doesn’t tell us anything more about Barabbas. Did he realize the invaluable life that was taken that day in his place? Did he ever learn the truth about Jesus, the Messiah who was offered that day as **“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29)? Did he use his release as an opportunity to turn his life around and live righteously before God from that day forward? Or, did he return to even greater acts of insurrection and theft? We don’t know. What we do know is that he, as a mortal, corruptible, human being eventually died and will one day stand before the judgment seat of the very One whose life was sacrificed in his place. Paul said, **“we must all appear before the judgment seat**



**of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Of Jesus, on the other hand, we know a great deal. Yes, that day He died a brutal death on the cross, but death held no power over this One who is “the King of kings and Lord of**

**lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:15b-16a). He rose from death and now “is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8:1). He now reigns as “the King eternal, immortal, invisible” (1 Tim. 1:17).**

We can choose Barabbas in our lives—it is up to us. But if we do, what a sad realization it will be one day to recognize that the One we rejected, the One we did not choose, the One we exchanged for temporary, corruptible, and fleeting things that we chose in His place is now before us as our Judge of all that we have done **“whether good or bad.”** Don’t let that happen! Now, as the world asks of us, **“Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?”** (Matt. 27:17), make the right choice. Declare now, “I choose Jesus!”



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