

Mark 15:6-14

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There is so much going on around our text that I decided to do something different. We will have 9 people read the combination of all the parallel texts. This will give us the full picture of what is happening that coincides with the passage Brad already read this morning. So let's begin with Angie-

189. Jesus Sentenced Before Pilate

Matt. 27:15–26a; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:13–25; John 18:39–19:15

^{MT} Now ^aat the feast the governor was ^baccustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner, ^{MK} whomever they requested. ^{MT} And at that time they had a notorious prisoner, ^{IN} a ‘robber, ^{MK} named ^dBarabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in ^{LK} a certain rebellion made in the city. ^{MT} Therefore, when they had gathered together, ^{MK} the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. But Pilate answered them, saying, ^{IN} “You have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. ^{MT} Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? ^{MK} Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over ^abecause of envy.

^{MT} While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.” ^{LK} Then Pilate, when he had ^ccalled together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, ^aneither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*” (for ^bit was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).

^{MT} But the chief priests and elders ^{MK} stirred up the crowd, so that ^{MT} they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” ^{LK} And they all cried out at once, saying, “Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas. ^{IN} Not this Man, but Barabbas!” ^{LK} Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, ^{MK} answered and ^{LK} called out ^{MK} to them again, “What then do you want me to do with ^{MT} Jesus who is called Christ ^{MK} whom you call the King of the Jews?” ^{LK} But they ^{MT} all ^{LK} shouted [and] ^{MK} cried out again, ^{LK} saying ^{MT} to him, “Let Him be crucified! ^{LK} Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Then he said to them ^bthe third time, “Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. ^aI will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go.”

^{IN} So then Pilate took Jesus and ^bscourged *Him*. And the soldiers twisted a ^c“crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a ^apurple robe. Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.”

Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, “Behold the Man!” Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, ^{LK} they were insistent, ^{MT} [and] cried out all the more, ^{LK} demanding with loud voices, ^{IN} saying, “Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him*!” Pilate said to them, “^aYou take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him.”

The Jews answered him, “^aWe have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the ^amore afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus answered, “^aYou could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore “the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"^{LK} And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

^{MT} When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."^{MK} So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd,^{LK bb} gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them,^{MK} Barabbas,^{LK} the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison.

190. Further Mockery from the Roman Soldiers

Matt. 27:26b–30; Mark 15:16–19; John 19:16

^{MT} When [Pilate] had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him^{IN} to them^{MT} to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor^{IN} took Jesus and led Him away^{MK} into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison^{MT} around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.^{MK} And they clothed Him with purple; and^{MT} when they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand^{MK} and began to salute Him,^g "Hail, King of the Jews!"^{MT} And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him [and]^{MK} worshiped Him.^{MT} Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.

191. Jesus' Journey to Golgotha

Matt. 27:31–34; Mark 15:20–23; Luke 23:26–33a; John 19:17

^{MT} And when they had mocked Him, they took^{MK} the purple^{MT} robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away^a to be crucified.^{IN} And He, bearing His cross, went out.^{MT} Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name,^{MK} the father of Alexander and Rufus^{LK} who was coming from the country^{MK} and passing by,^{LK} and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to^{IN} a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,^{MT} they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.^{LK} There they crucified Him.

Mark was very brief in what he said about Christ and his trial during this time. The other gospel writers filled in a lot of the details.

Remember where we are in Jesus's trial. We started with Annas, then to Caiaphas and the Sanhedren. Then we went to Pilate. Pilate sent Christ to Herod. Herod sent Christ back to Pilate. And here we are.

Now Pilate is in a pickle. **He is a political man looking for a political escape.** He is not a principled man. Doing the right thing is never really the top priority to Pilate. I think it was Samuel Clemens who said you will never go wrong by doing the right thing. That is how a principled person thinks. That is not how Pilate thought. Pilate thought that the best path is the one that most benefits Pilate. Right off the bat we have a wonderful application point. Do you have choices this morning that present a dilemma to you? If you do the right thing, it will cost you. But you can avoid the cost by choosing a different path. Learn from Pilate here. Do the right thing, even if it hurts. If not, you will find yourself making decisions whose repercussions are worse than you ever imagined.

Now Pilate may have been without principles, but he was clever. He is looking for an easy way out, a way that would not require him to make a stand. I have seen people in this same dilemma in the work force over and over again. A manager has an employee who is not doing their job. They have taken the correct steps to inform the employee **what they are not doing correctly** and **how to do it** correctly. But the employee keeps behaving badly. I can't tell you how many times I have watched managers trying to get around firing a person. Rather than doing the hard thing and the right thing **for the business** and **all the other co-workers** and **even for they person being fired**, they try to accomplish their ends by clever means or by avoiding the conflict. Having principles makes things easier. You do the right thing because it is right. And you don't have to rely on being clever.

So rather than Pilate saying, I will not punish this innocent man, Pilate does something clever.

Mark 15:6-20

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Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. ⁹ But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰ For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

So Pilate would show some goodwill at the Passover. Since he had arrived evidently he had made it his practice to release a prisoner at the people's request at Passover.

Now Pilate understood the motivation of the rulers. The rulers were **envious** of Christ. Christ had authority they did not have. He had wisdom they didn't have. He had the approval of the people that they didn't have. And He had spiritual power and wisdom that they didn't have. They hated Him because they wanted what Christ had.

Envy is a very despicable sin.

Proverbs 27:4

⁴ **Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, But who is able to stand before envy (kjv)?**

Proverbs 14:30

³⁰ **A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones.**

Envy is in many of the lists of sins in the New Testament.

Envy is in the middle of the divisions in the Corinthian church- **1 Corinthians 3:3**

³ **for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?**

Love does not envy. Love can be **grateful** for a person having what we would like to have.

Titus 3:3

³ **For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.**

James 3:14-16

¹⁴ **But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.** ¹⁵ **This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.** ¹⁶ **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.**

Who is there in your life that you find yourself disliking, maybe distaining them because they have something that you would like to have? Maybe they have more money than you. Maybe they are prettier or more handsome than you. Maybe they have more status than you. Maybe they are in the inner circles you would like to be in. Maybe they have more spiritual power or wisdom than you. Maybe they are able to get away with wicked things that you can't. Maybe they do less and get more praise than you do.

Envy can slip in and ruin our relationships and ministries without us even being aware of what is going on. The first thing we need to do is **identify envy**. Think about any relationships where you might be distant from the person. Ask yourself the question. Is it because of envy? If so we need to call it what it is. And where it has harmed relationships, we need to confess it. We need to bring it out in the

open and get rid of it. Don't believe that you can allow envy to thrive without it causing harm. It will cause harm, both **to you**, and when possible, **to those you envy**. Envy is like that.

Envy is the human motivation that sent Christ to the cross. Keep that in mind next time you are tempted to envy someone.

Now Pilate has an idea. He knows he has Barabbas locked up. Barabbas means son of the father. There is a great irony here. Barabbas is a notorious sinner who represents the human race his father brought him into. He is a sinner who is a son of a sinner. That name could have been given to any man. We were all born son of the father. In fact, Barabbas, represents us all. We are all born sons of our human fathers. We all trace our lineage to Adam. If we were to put ourselves into this story as one of the characters, Barabbas is our guy.

The people were going to get to choose between the sinful son of the fallen human race and the **sinless** Son of the Heavenly Father. By birth we have nothing in common with the second man. But we have everything in common with the first one. We are the condemned criminal. We are the one with nothing to commend ourselves with. We are the ones with only one hope. We need someone **not guilty** of a crime to take **our place**. We are Barabbas. That is the powerful picture God saw fit to place in our text to show us His wonderful grace. **Christ is the only chance for Barabbas to be set free from the just penalty of his crimes.**

There is something interesting to consider here. Why was Christ's cross ready in a moment's notice? They didn't have to wait for a cross to be made ready. It was already there. It was probably because it was prepared for Barabbas. That makes this interaction even more profound. Christ died on the very cross that was prepared for Barabbas. Again, it is **we** who are Barabbas. That cross was really **ours**. But Christ died on it anyway.

Now when Pilate hears that the people are remembering **they get to pick a prisoner** to be set free, he is probably thinking, this is working out very well. Good. Now, who is the pick that they will most not want? Who has the best chance of rejection? I have just the man. Barabbas.

Barabbas was trouble. He was the kind of guy that would do things that would put everyone around him in jeopardy. He was a murderer and an insurrectionist. While the Jewish people may have liked the idea of freedom from Roman rule, they also knew that failed attempts may result in innocent people being killed or, worse yet, crucified. Barabbas would have represented danger to any Jewish person who just wanted to live out their lives in peace. Barabbas would not have been a person the Jewish man on the street would have been for. He would not have won the hearts of the Jewish crowd. Pilate had a good feel for that. He knew what he was doing. Pilate was offering a choice between someone that the

Jewish people would definitely not want out on the streets, and someone that they seemed to love just a few days earlier.

But Pilate had failed to understand the power of darkness. This, coupled with the fickleness of people took him by surprise. Pilate knew that the crowds seemed to love Jesus while the leaders hated him. The leaders were driven by **envy** of **Christ's appeal to the masses**. The leaders were even **afraid** of Christ's appeal to the masses. The masses had enthusiastically welcomed Christ into Jerusalem as the Messiah just days before. No doubt Pilate knew that. So it was natural for Pilate to think that Pilate could play on that. But that assumes that people's sentiments **can be relied upon**. But, just as we saw in Peter's case, they cannot. We see the same thing in our country. Our elections are showing the insanity and fickleness of the populous. People can be swayed by the most flimsy of promises and the deep appeal to their fears. What they do makes no rational sense, but they do it anyway. **People who have no spiritual anchor, no spiritual conviction, will always drift with the tide of human opinion.**

While the religious leaders had no spiritual authority, they were, after all, very politically minded. They know what works with flesh. They are the master manipulators of flesh. They are better at what they do than Pilate thought they were. So what do they do?

They spread lies. They press the flesh and play on people's base motives.

When Pilate said

"Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

He was probably betting on the people to pick Jesus over the Jewish leaders they had presently. He probably thought Christ's popularity would win the day. He bet on the idea that the populace would show their disdain for their leadership and would like the idea that Pilate was sticking it to the Jewish leadership by his statement. When Pilate referred to Christ as **King of the Jews**, he was intending to make the leaders sting by it. And he was appealing to the rebellious kids.

Pilate probably thought he had this cat in the bag. But he had met his match in this bunch of unprincipled political manipulators.

. ¹¹ **But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.**

Now, what **Matthew** tells us here is amazing. Pilate gets a message from his wife. **'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.'**

Why did God do this? It is very clear that God inflicted this dream upon Pilate's wife. But why? It obviously did no good for Pilate. He did what **he was destined to do** and **what he chose to do**. This message did nothing to change his mind.

But it did do two things. First it was another testimony to Pilate that he should do the right thing. Maybe he wouldn't listen to his conscience, but maybe he would

listen to his wife. It is difficult to know how many men have done the right thing, not so much from fear of their own consciences but in deference to their wives. Usually with the thought of either gaining pleasure or avoiding pain.

The second thing it provides is another evidence that Christ was completely innocent of all charges and Pilate should have known better.

And ladies, this application does not prove that men should always listen to their wives. Job's wife advised Job that he should curse God and die. Men, our wife's advice is not always from on high.

Whatever the case, Pilate, to his downfall and probable regret, blows off his wife's advice. I wonder how many time this became an "I told you so" in the future of this marriage.

Back to our text.

¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

How did the chief priests manipulate the people? We don't know. But we can safely guess that they appealed to that which worked. Maybe they threatened the people with cutting them off from worshipping at the temple. Maybe they pressed the issue of what a perceived King would cause Rome to do to the populace. Maybe they told them they were all sure to die from a Roman sword if they allowed Christ to escape. Maybe they appealed to the pride of these Jews implying that Christ was an inferior person to lead such a proud people. We don't know. But we can know for sure that they appealed to the flesh of the populace. And the populace's flesh responded as expected.

¹² Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³ So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!" ¹⁴ Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Now, Pilate was responsible for justice. That was his job. He was not supposed to take a survey at this point. The fact that he is asking this bloodthirsty crowd what their preferences are already shows that Pilate was not fit for his position. I love the westerns where the sheriff is going to carry out justice no matter what the town's people want. The lynch mob always shows up outside the jail and the lawmen face them down. That is what should have happened. But instead we have John Wayne looking at the lynch mob asking just exactly how would you like this assumed criminal killed?

Pilate is now acting like he is powerless. But that is a lie. But don't we use the same lie. We do wicked things and we act like we are powerless. No. We might be gutless. We might be spineless. We might be faithless. We might even be Saviorless. But we are not powerless.

Now the crowd yells “Crucify Him”. Pilate is as free to ignore their requests, just as he was free to ignore his wife’s request and just as he was to ignore the innocence of Christ. But now **he pretends** that he must do what they say. And what he does next is just pure foolishness. He appeals for reason at a lynch mob. Immediately what comes to my mind is the adult that tries to reason with a 2 year old throwing a tantrum. There is a place for reason. But this isn’t the place. Pilate, like the parents of the two year old, are play acting the part of a victim. They aren’t victims. But they are pretending to be.

The very fact that the crowd was not willing to answer the question “Why, what evil had he done?” should have been enough to end the conversation. He should have walked into the room Christ was in and said, let Him go. But Pilate was gutless and self seeking.

The Jewish leadership knew Pilate. They knew they had him over a barrel. One more letter to Rome and Pilate would be sent packing. Pilate had handed them the power over him by his indiscretions. And they already knew Pilate was for sale. So they are cashing in.

Pilate made an appeal to the people and Matthew tells us what they said.

“And all the people said, ‘His blood shall be on us and our children!’”

Angie made mention of this in Sunday School. Can you imagine bringing your children to account for some obvious sin you are committing. Yet that is exactly what they are doing. It is bad enough these adults are responsible. But in their evil and arrogance they bring their children into account for this hideous sin.

I know it isn’t popular to even consider, but is it possible that is what the holocaust was about? Really, what nationality has suffered more atrocities than the Jews? Maybe there is people group who have suffered more, but I don’t know of one. Over the years lots of people have tried to cast the guilt over Christ’s crucifixion onto the Romans. But that is not what Christ said.

Christ said that the one who delivered me (the Jews) to you (Pilate) has the greater sin. Jesus clearly held his own people to the guilt of delivering Him to His death. That does not free us. Everyone who has ever been saved by Christ was the reason He had to die. So we cannot play some arrogant superior card. But it was the Jewish populace who delivered Christ to His Roman crucifiers without reason.

One application from this text is similar to last week’s application. We can never afford to compromise. If there is a right thing and we can see that it is a right thing, we must do it. If there is a wrong thing and we know it is a wrong thing, we must refuse it. If we compromise it will lead to someone’s harm, either our own or someone else’s. We cannot allow the cost of doing the right thing to deter us from doing the right thing. Consider that there is always a cost for doing the wrong thing as well. We cannot blame our cowardice on some kind of

victimhood. God doesn't seem to pity people when they make the right choice and it costs them. Nor does He seem to pity those who make a wrong choice to avoid that cost. Christ told his disciples that they needed to consider the cost up front. He never apologized for the cost. He never tried to mediate the cost. Why. Because Christ promises that whatever we go through will be worth it. The reward is worth the sacrifice.

Christ said in Matthew 5:11-12

¹¹ **"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Doing the right thing often costs you dearly.

As an elder or a father or a mother or as a child, doing the right thing often costs you. As an employee or an employer or as a co-worker doing the right thing often costs you. As a friend or an enemy doing the right thing often costs you. As a **minister of Christ** or **someone wanting to come to Christ**, know that the right thing will cost you.

But Christ says that even though it may cost you, **the reward is worth it**. Great is your reward in eternity in relation to the small price you may be asked to pay now.

Ultimately Christ said, if you love Christ you will obey Him. You will do the right thing.

Sing "When you believe"