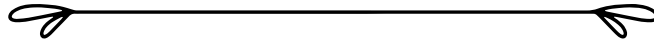


# unending grace for someone like me



I was probably in high school when I first read this passage and at least understood the story. I remember being flabbergasted then, and even now, that people chose a "notorious prisoner" over Jesus. As someone who believes in the greatness of God, I couldn't fathom how anyone would trade the Son of God for someone who probably murdered people. I was very quick to judge, and I still do now.

But then - when I reflect on my own sin for one little second, I realize that I am the same as the people who chose Barabbas. I always feel like my sins are "not as bad" as others - my idols of comfort and security, to name a few. I ask myself, "Who am I hurting? I'm not murdering anyone." One commentary said that the people chose Barabbas because he demanded nothing from them: no self-examination, no repentance, no acts of mercy or forgiveness. If this is true, I have chosen Barabbas over Christ more times than I can count - scrolling on my phone rather than reading the Word... keeping my mouth shut when maybe I shouldn't in order to keep my job safe... saying people are just "different" when really I think I'm better than them... In these moments, there is certainly no self-examination, repentance, or acts of mercy and forgiveness. And in this admission, I realize that not only am I just like the people who chose Barabbas, I am just as guilty as Barabbas himself.

As the gospel becomes more personal to me, I keep coming back to this concept of "God seeing the heart." This goes both ways -- He sees our intentions when we are being Pharisees, and He sees our hearts when we bring our two coins. I am grateful for the moments when God reveals my sinful heart so that I can repent, and I am grateful that He urges me to try again and gives me a thousand more chances. The more I see how much I need Him for both, I am that much more astounded by the beauty of the gospel and this amazing gift that He gave to someone like me.