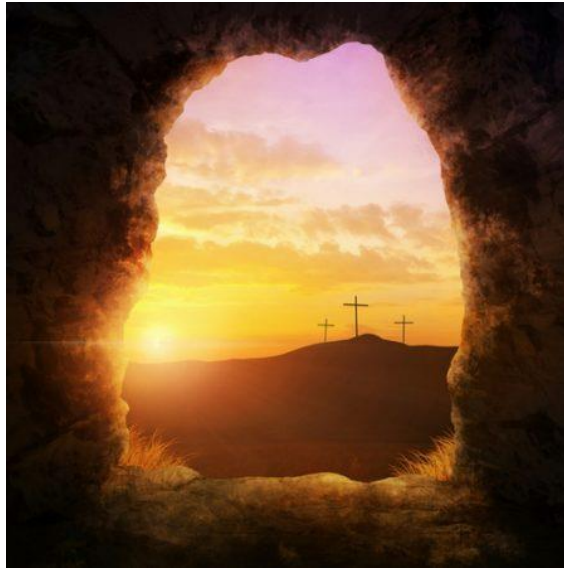


Matthew 27:11-26 “What Will You Do With Jesus?”

8.12.18

If you had to think about what is the most important question of life, what would you say? What is the most important question of life? Is it whom you'll marry, where you'll live, what kind of job or work you'll do? What would be the most important question of life? As you're thinking...might I add something to consider...would the most important question of life have anything to do with **what happens when this life ends?**

You know Jesus Christ offers an answer to that question. He said: “I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the father, except by me.” And do you know why He can say that? Because of this...



An empty tomb after death on a cross! Jesus Christ, got up from the dead...proving that He has the power over death and He offers eternal life to anyone who will follow Him.

So, might the most important question of all of life be this question: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS? Yes...I believe and am convinced that is the most important question that a human being will ever ask and answer, because that question and the answer to that question will determine every single human being's eternal destiny. What will you do with Jesus...that's what this man had to answer...

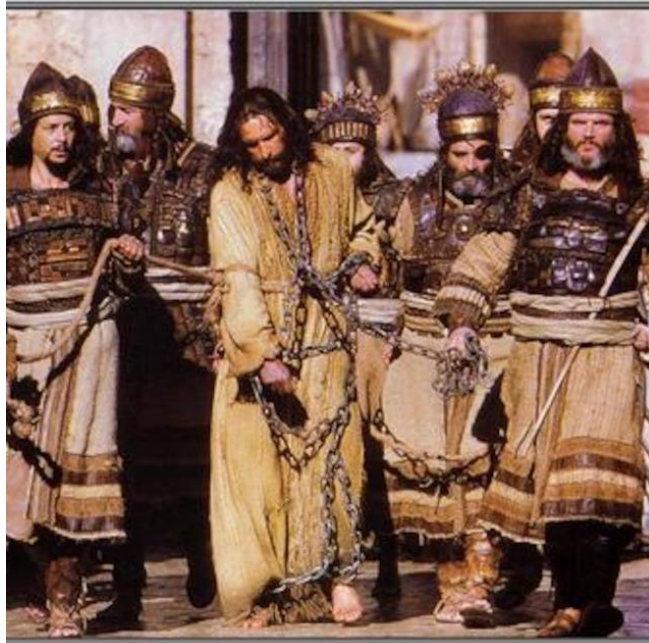


That man of course, would be none other than Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Israel. And he would ask the question: “What shall I do with Jesus?” Follow along with me...

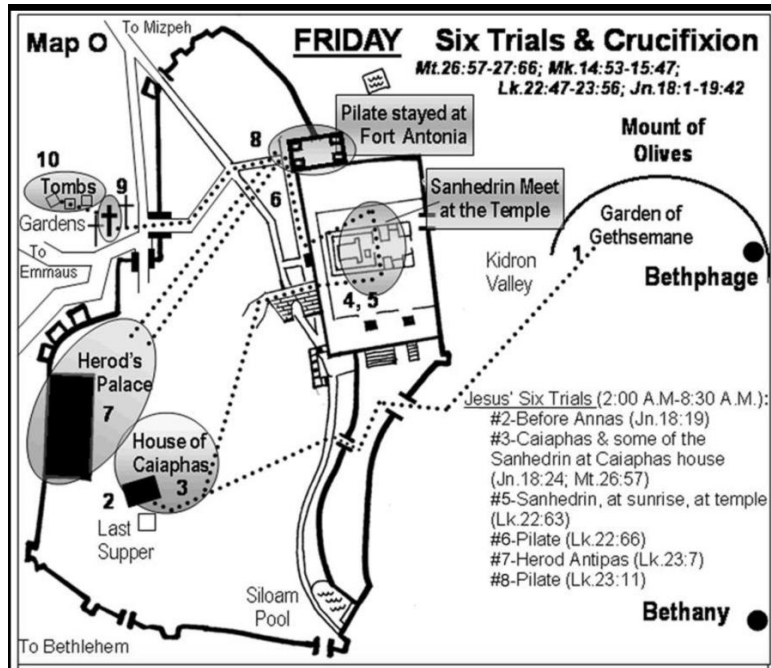
Matthew 27:11-26

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²² Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³ And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Jesus has been through the kangaroo court system of the Sanhedrin and been found guilty, even though He was totally innocent and now He's being led to Pilate...by the Temple Guard...



He's bound and has been taken from the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple, where He has been sentenced and He arrives to Fort Antonia. See the map...



Look at the center of the map? That's the Temple compound and Jesus is being led north to Fort Antonia, the military garrison where Pilate is staying during the Passover Celebration. Remember, there are over 2 million people in town for the Passover and Pilate is there to keep the peace. He wants no problems. But, a problem is heading his way. **As we've told you, the Sanhedrin doesn't have the authority to execute Jesus**, but Rome does and that's why the Sanhedrin and the High Priest Caiaphas need Pilate...the Roman Procurator (governor). And so they arrive to Fort Antonia...See the image...



Oh, it's an entourage of people: the Sanhedrin, the many scribes, the chief priests, the Temple guard...it's a mass of people that have come to Fort Antonia. The Jewish leaders stay outside and wouldn't dare go inside the Fort, because it's the Passover and the Romans are Gentiles and that would defile them from eating the Passover meal. Again...I find this so hypocritical. The Jewish leaders have already defiled themselves by convicting an innocent man! Let me show you a model of Fort Antonia.



You will see it rising up in the background and you'll see the steps coming down from it. At the bottom of those steps is what is called "Gabbatha." Take a look at this depiction...



Jerusalem in Jesus' Day

14

Gabbatha is an Aramaic word, which means: "elevated place." That's the place where Pilate sat in Judgment. The Greeks had another name for the place: "Litho-stro-tos," which means "pavement." This is where the criminals would stand and be judged. This entire area is known as the Praetorium, or judgment hall of Pilate. I got to stand on the pavement where Jesus was judged when I was in Israel in 2007...



That was a surreal moment to say the least! Knowing that I was standing in the same area where Jesus stood 2000 years ago. It was hard to wrap my mind around that fact! See it again...

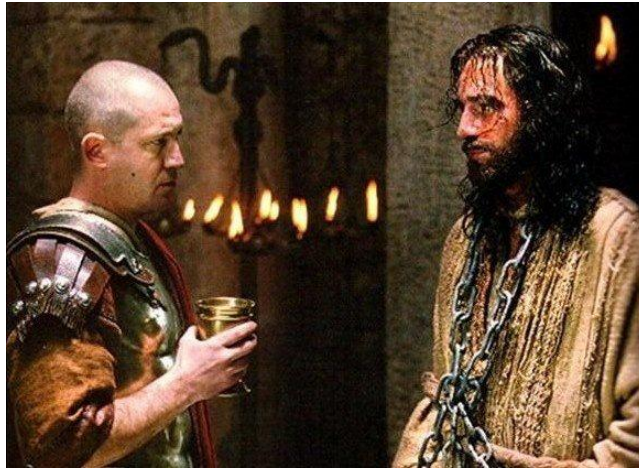


There Jesus stood before Pilate and the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas and all those people. As you look at that picture...understand what the Sanhedrin wanted...they wanted an EXECUTIONER! They know they can't kill Jesus, but Pilate can. **So, in front of all of those people Pilate** asks Jesus a question: **Look at verse 11 again...**

Matthew 27:11

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so."

You see, that was what the Sanhedrin had told Pilate also...but, they were trying to convince Pilate that Jesus was trying to take over as a King...that He was insurrectionist...a grave threat to Rome and the Emperor. But, of course this was a joke! Jesus had never proved to be a threat to Rome. In fact, when He was asked to weigh in on the politics of the day... "Should we pay the taxes?" Jesus responded: "Render unto Caesar's that which is Caesar's." **Ultimately, Pilate would have Jesus brought up those steps into what we would call his headquarters...**a "deliberation area," where he would meet and counsel with people. See the depiction:



In John's Gospel for a part of the conversation Pilate had with Jesus in his headquarters...we get to be a fly on the wall. You see, I believe Pilate was trying to determine if Jesus was indeed innocent or guilty. I really believe that. Oh...how ridiculous it must have seemed to him that the man standing in front of Him was perpetrating a Kingship, because He sure didn't look like a King to anyone!

John 18:33-38

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

Pilate asked, "What is truth," and THE TRUTH was standing right in front of him, and yet he wouldn't admit it. So, he goes back outside and tells those bunch of religious thugs... "He's done nothing wrong...I find no guilt in Him!" But of course, they didn't care...they weren't looking for truth...they were looking for blood! They wanted Jesus dead because He was destroying their false system of religion and they were afraid they would lose their position with Rome.

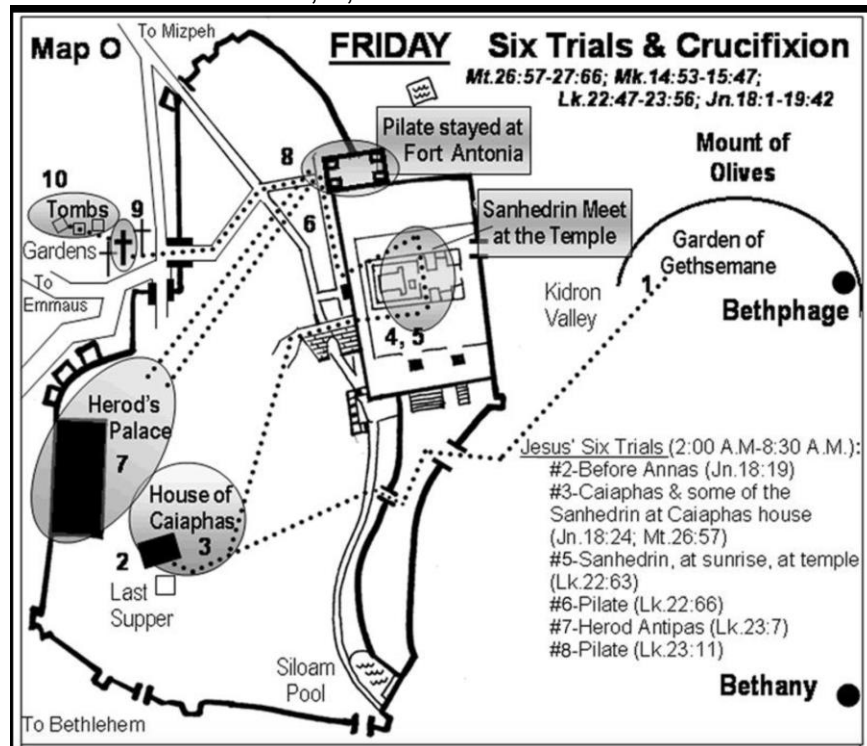
Meanwhile, Pilate learned something in talking to Jesus. And we see this according to Luke's gospel. **Turn to Luke 23** and this is where we'll see that Jesus will be taken to King Herod. Why? Because Pilate will learn that Jesus is from Galilee. Now as you are turning, remember, Jesus is going through 6 trials. Herod will be #5. See the chart...

OVERVIEW OF JESUS' TRIALS

	Trial	Scripture	Judge	Decision
Religious Trials Jewish	First	John 18:12-14	Annas	OK to proceed
	Second	Matt. 26:57-68	Caiaphas	Death sentence; charge of blasphemy
	Third	Matt. 27:1-2	Sanhedrin	Death sentence made legal
Secular Trials Roman	Fourth	John 18:28-38	Pilate	Not guilty
	Fifth	Luke 23:6-12	Herod	Not guilty
	Sixth	John 18:39-19:6	Pilate	Not guilty; turned over to the Jews

There had to be two types of trials because the Jews could not carry out the death penalty under Roman law

Jewish trials...and now trials #4, 5, 6 before Pilate/Herod. See the route He took...



watch now these encounters with Pilate and Herod...

Luke 23:4-16

⁴Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."⁵But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.⁷And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.⁹So he

questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other. ¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him."

Pilate thought he was done with Jesus, but He couldn't get rid of Him! Oh...one comment about Herod. What a lousy guy. Remember, he's the one that had John the Baptist beheaded. **Remember, John the Baptist had told Herod** that he was living in sin. See the depiction of that.



John named the sin...most people are afraid to do that you know...they dance around the sin...trying to make it palatable. Cowards do that...John said, "You have stolen your brother's wife and you're living in adultery." Well, that made Herod's wife mad and the plot was formed to have John's head on a silver platter and that's exactly what happened! An innocent man was killed for telling the truth and now it's happening again!

Oh how Pilate wished, (don't you know), that Jesus would have been guilty, but Herod sent Him back...because He's innocent. Now Pilate is stuck with Him again. What can he do? What can Pilate do? He's got to come up with another plan. Jesus is innocent and he knows it...but, Pilate also knows the Sanhedrin is not going to let this thing go... By now the crowd has grown enormous! He's got to do something! Wait a minute! He's got it!!

Matthew 27:15-18

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.

"Out of envy"...don't miss that... Pilate knew! Remember who is standing down there in the crowd...



Caiaphas and his buddies are so envious of Jesus! Envy that has turned into a guttural hatred!! Why? Because, in their eyes, Jesus has pulled the people away...the crowds have been following Him and they're afraid of losing money and position and power. After all the Sanhedrin heard the crowds just five days earlier, the people were shouting, "Hosanna to the King" as Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

Pilate is no fool...he's on to them and he knows Jesus is innocent and he knows the Jewish leaders are crooks! So, he's come up with a new plan. The crowd will call for the release of Jesus. ENTER BARABBAS...



One of the most notorious criminals of the day! He is described in John 18 as a robber and insurrectionist...he's the one that wants to overthrow Rome...not Jesus! Pilate is desperate! He needs a way to release this innocent man and he believes the crowd will choose Jesus over Barabbas. YEAH...they'll pick Jesus for sure! Or so he thought...

Stop for a moment... There's something else here that we can't miss...while Pilate is working to set Jesus free...a message comes from his wife...

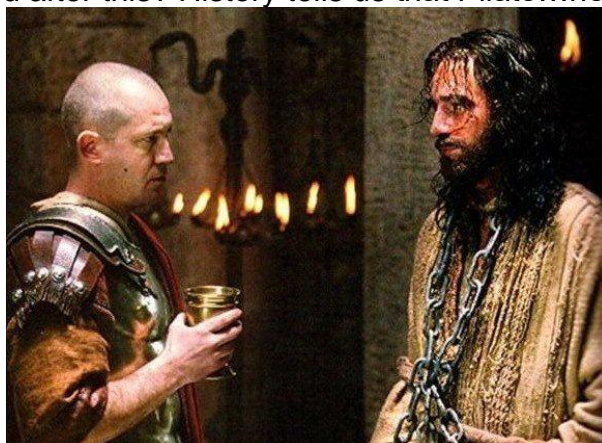
Matthew 27:19

19 Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream."

Oh my! Now Pilate's wife is weighing in! She says... "This guy is righteous, He's innocent...have nothing to do with Him." Apparently she had a dream about Jesus and it must have been a nightmare, because she said she'd "suffered because of it."

Would Pilate listen to his wife? Tell me church, what if Pilate had listened to his wife? What if he listened to her counsel? Was she right? Yes...and if he had listened...he could have saved himself a lot of grief! How much grief?

Do you know what happened after this? History tells us that Pilate...here he is again...



History records that Pilate would serve for three more years after this event, as the Governor, but from this point forward, his power and position would begin to crumble beneath him. Rome would lose confidence in Pilate and he would eventually be replaced. Do you know what Pilate did after he was replaced? What did Judas do? Yep...he committed suicide! If only Pilate had listened to his wife (men take note of that...they are our helpers...they see and know things we miss and can't see). **Pilate didn't listen...**

Instead, he goes back out before the people...**AGAIN**...but, the chief priest and elders have been at work in the crowd during this interlude...

Matthew 27:20-21

²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."

Can you see it... Pilate asked: "Who would you have me release?"



He was sure the crowds would say: Jesus. He was wrong! The crowds have been bribed... The Jewish leaders have had time to move through the crowds while Jesus has been at Herod's palace and then brought back to Pilate. See the depiction...



Oh the behind the scenes politics that was going on. If you think Washington is corrupt, there is no way to describe the corruption of the Sanhedrin! Pilate is trying to maintain order now and you know his anxiety level is going through the roof... See verse 22... Here comes that most important question of life...

Matthew 27:22-25

²² Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³ And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Pilate thought he could wash his hands of the whole situation. Instead of doing the right thing, he took the easy way out... See it...



He was saying, "He's innocent and it's on you!" Yet, I'll say it again: Pilate is a coward! He is the one who had the power to do the right thing and yet he listened to the people. It didn't matter what the people were shouting: "His blood be on us!" Why? Because Pilate knew Jesus was innocent! You don't act as a righteous procurator by listening to the people...NO...you follow the Law. That's why he thought bringing out Barabbas...the true criminal, would work. See it again...



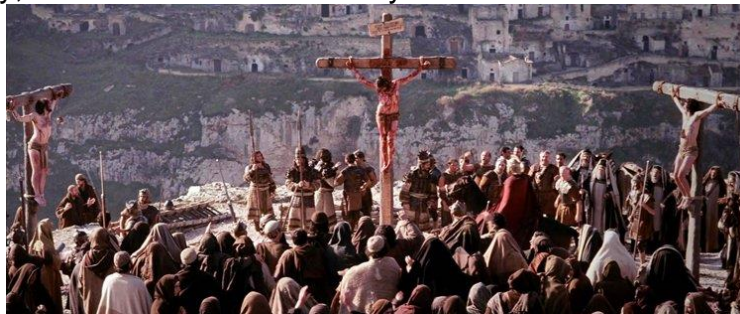
Pilate hoped the crowd would pick Jesus and then Jesus would just go away. Pilate hoped the truth would just disappear and he could get back to his life. **The truth disappear?** The truth never disappears. You can try to dance around it. You can try to bury it. You can try to distort it. You can try to kick it sweep it under the rug. You can pray to God that no one ever finds out the truth... You can try to soften it, excuse it, or refuse it, but the truth NEVER goes away.

Jesus was still standing there and now Pilate had to do something with Him! They had chosen Barabbas. The Sanhedrin is now shouting at Pilate: "If you don't execute him, we'll tell Rome!" And on top of that, the crowd is about to break into a riot... But PILATE HAS AN INNOCENT MAN ON HIS HANDS...What will he do? He can still change his mind and do the right thing. But, he doesn't! Verse 26 is one of the saddest verses in all the Bible...

Matthew 27:26

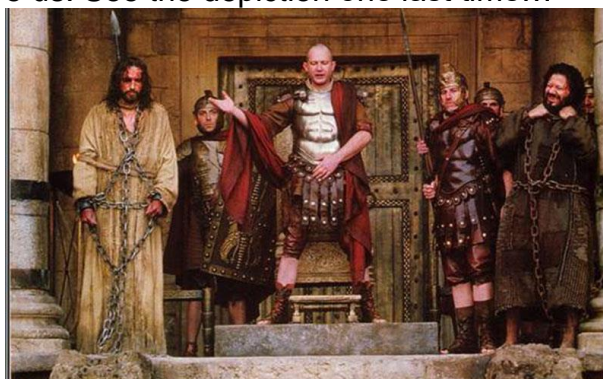
26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

You know church family, that third cross on Calvary was meant for Barabbas, not Jesus.



You see, on the docket for that Friday there had been a call for three crosses...the two thieves that were ultimately crucified beside of Jesus...and Barabbas...Barabbas was to have been the man in the middle. Whether Barabbas ever realized it or not...Jesus literally died for in his place! Jesus once again shows mercy. Jesus show mercy to someone who didn't deserve it...just like you...just like me...

Let me ask you this question, as we close: What truth are you wrestling with today?? What are you waffling on... What are you trying to find a way to soften it...compromise...excuse it...explain it... Listen, whether you realize it or not...we're all Pilate in many, many instances in our lives... And we have standing before us. See the depiction one last time...



Jesus and Barabbas. We have before us the truth and the easy way out. Listen, truth is always the most difficult way in this sin-cursed world and you're always going to be tempted to take Barabbas: the easy way out.

Think about Judas, the Sanhedrin and Pilate. What did they ALL do? They all took the easy way out. Their KING was convenience and compromise! Judas took money, the Sanhedrin chose position, and Pilate washed his hands...

What about you? Are you going to take the easy way out...Barabbas? Or will you choose Jesus?

Please don't compromise the truth today? Don't bury your head in the sand...hoping the truth will go away? Don't wash your hands of the truth? You can't! The truth will always remain...forever! Would you instead, surrender to Jesus today? Would you choose the truth? Would you give Him your heart?

What will you do with Jesus? Yes, that's the most important question of life!
