

Attention:

To be great demands struggle. Every great person who has impacted the world endured some measure of pain. *You can't fix what you refuse to feel. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land..." Ezekiel 22:30.*

Need:

People make choices every day. Jim Johnston said, *"The most miserable Christians are those who live with a foot in both worlds."* Some people choose to stay in a difficult situation because they do not want to disappoint someone else. Some remain in misery because they do not want to insult the traditions of others. Sooner or later, you must choose what is right and stand on it. Pilate released Barabbas simply to satisfy the crowd. Believers must stand for truth or they will fall for anything, wrong or right.

Background:

Jesus' trial took place early in the morning, which was standard for Roman officials, ensuring rapid legal proceedings. The Sanhedrin needed Roman authority to execute Jesus because they had limited legal rights to execute justice under Roman rule. *The central charge against Jesus, repeated six times, was that he was "King of the Jews,"* a claim used by the Romans to mock him as a threat to Caesar, the Roman king. The scourging of Jesus was a brutal Roman punishment that typically served as a legal preliminary to every execution. Unlike Jewish law, which limited lashes to 40, Roman law had no fixed limit, and the punishment often continued until the victim was near death. Jesus was likely stripped and tied to an upright post before being flogged by Roman soldiers using a *flagrum*—*a short whip with multiple leather thongs* embedded with lead balls, iron pellets, or sharp pieces of sheep bone. These weighted ends were designed to strike with extreme force, while the sharp objects would tear into the skin and underlying tissues, eventually exposing muscle and even bone.

The physical toll of this torture was catastrophic, intended to weaken the victim to the point of collapse. Medical analysis suggests that the intense pain and *severe blood loss likely left Jesus in a state of hypovolemic shock* (loss of 15% of fluid volume), characterized by a sharp drop in blood pressure, labored breathing, and extreme thirst. His physical torture included psychological torment as soldiers mocked Jesus with a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns.

Jesus constantly stood on the promises of God. He would do this by reciting the Scripture. Christ left Nazareth and made Jerusalem His destiny. He would preach and teach that people might receive eternal life. Our Lord would proclaim the gospel amid hostile groups, and they desired to kill Him. At times, He did not have anywhere to lay His head (*Mat. 8:20*). He became hungry and thirsty. He was rejected by friends, and some of His disciples walked away from Him and no longer followed Him (*John 6:66-68*). Praying in the garden of Gethsemane, He was exhausted, but still in pursuit of redemption. His disciples went to sleep on Him. He was surrounded by temple guards, brought through six trials in 12 hours, weary and worn. He was beaten and mocked. They spit upon him and plucked out His beard (*Is. 50:6*). He went to the whipping post humiliated, but He went anyway. They stripped His clothes, put a twisted crown of thorns on His head, placed a wooden reed in His right hand as a scepter, knelt before Him, and they mocked

Him even more, shouting, “Hail, King of the Jews!” (Mat. 27:29). He was exhausted, but still in pursuit. While on the cross, people called Him names and wagged their heads, but He knew redemption was near (Mat. 26:53). Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels to rescue Him, but He stood the course because He was committed.

1. There is No Alternative to Jesus (v. 15).

- a. Pilate’s authority became compromised to please the people.
 - i. Christ was scourged and then crucified as a substitution for Barabbas’ release.
 - ii. To scourge means to whip, especially for the infliction of punishment.
- b. **Some know how to look alive where God sees you dying**—a body in a building.
 - i. *“He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.”* (Isa. 53:3–4).
- c. **Your solution is found in your belief in Christ**; not in a bottle or an illegitimate thrill.
- d. It’s dangerous when you’re not cold enough to repent and not hot enough to change.

2. Playing with God or Trusting in Him (v. 16-19).

- a. They dressed Him like a king, gave Him a crown of thorns, and spit on Him.
- b. The story of **Little Timmy and Big Tom**.
 - i. Little Timmy was a small, timid boy—poor, quiet, and often overlooked. He was often bullied by Big Tom and others. One day at school, he broke a rule (he couldn’t afford lunch, he was accused of taking something small out of desperation). The teacher found out and declared that punishment had to be given. His discipline was public and painful. Timmy stood at the front of the room, terrified. He knew he couldn’t handle what was coming.

The teacher said, “The rules are the rules. Someone must be punished.” The room went silent. Then from the back of the room, a much older, stronger boy stood up—**Big Tom**. He was known for being tough, maybe even feared. Not someone people expected compassion from. He walked forward slowly and said, **“I’ll take it for him.”** The teacher hesitated. “Tom, he’s the one who did wrong.” Tom replied, **“I know. But let me take his place.”** After a moment, the teacher agreed. Big Tom took the full punishment—every bit of it—while Little Timmy stood there, stunned, watching someone else suffer for what *he* had done. When it was over, Tom walked back, bruised but silent. Timmy ran to him afterward, overwhelmed, and asked, **“Why would you do that for me?”** And Tom said **“Because I knew you couldn’t take it... but I could.”**

- c. Have you mastered church without touching the Master?
 - i. *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (2 Cor. 5:21, NKJV).
- d. Sin always demands justice, but God’s mercy has saved you from your sin.

3. Following the Right Voice Matters (v. 20).

- a. After they were done ridiculing Jesus, they took Him to be crucified on the cross.
- b. **Are you a witness or a wanderer?**
 - i. **Some are following a routine when God is after your heart.**
- c. The voice you follow shapes your future.
- d. What you hear will eventually become what you are.

The Path to the Cross:

1. Jesus eats the **last supper** with His disciples (John 13:2).
2. He begins to **wash His disciples' feet** (John 13:4).
 - a. **Peter refused to let Him wash His feet but relented** (John 13:8-9).
3. **Satan enters into Judas**...and he went out into the night (John 13:27, 30).
4. **Jesus goes to pray** at the Kidron Valley in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:1).
 - a. Prayed again: Father if it is possible let this cup pass from Me. (Mat. 26:39).
5. **Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss** for 30 pieces of silver (Luke 22:48).
6. Jesus stands three different trials: the disciples fled, but Peter followed afar off.
 - a. The temple guards brought **Jesus before Annas** the high priest (John 18:12-13).
 - b. He is **brought before Caiaphas** who recommended He die for the nation (John 18:14).
 - c. Jesus is **brought before Pilate** (John 18:28-38).
7. **Jesus was led to Herod** when they learned He was a Galilean (Luke 23:6-7).
8. **Second trial before Pilate**; he releases Barabbas instead of Jesus (John 18:39-40).
9. **Pilate allowed them to scourge Him** to please the people (Mark 15:15).
 - a. They took a crowd of thorns and placed it on His head in mockery (John 19:2).
 - b. Stripped Him and placed a purple robe and hit Him (John 19:3).
 - c. Pilate washed His hands finding no fault in Him (Matthew 27:24).
 - d. Pilate sentences Jesus to crucifixion (John 19:16).
10. **Jesus is crucified on the cross** (John 19:17).
 - a. They nailed His hands and feet to the cross (John 20-25).
 - b. They gave Him sour wine to drink, but He refused it. (Matthew 27:34).
 - c. They cast lots for His clothing (Matthew 27:35).
 - d. They placed a title above His head: Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews (Mat. 27:37).
 - e. He was ridiculed by religious leaders while on the cross (Matthew 27:41-43).
 - f. Darkness covered the whole land and the sun was darkened (Luke 23:44-45).
 - g. Before He died, He cried, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).
 - h. He said, "It is finished," and bowed His head (John 19:30).
 - i. The Roman centurion said, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).