



BARABBAS

Small Group Guide: Barabbas

Key Takeaways:

1. **Jesus' trials were filled with illegal proceedings**, yet He remained silent and submitted to the Father's will
2. **The religious leaders violated their own laws** in their determination to condemn Jesus
3. **Barabbas (Jesus Barabbas) represents all of humanity**—guilty, condemned, deserving death
4. **The Great Exchange:** Jesus, the innocent one, died in place of the guilty so they could go free
5. **We all sit in the seat of Barabbas**, faced with the choice of accepting or rejecting what Jesus did for us

Discussion Questions:

Icebreaker Question

1. What is one thing you've always known about Easter/Resurrection Sunday, and one thing from today's sermon that surprised you or that you learned for the first time?

Understanding the Trials

1. Pastor Allen's sermon outlined six trials Jesus faced. What struck you most about the illegal nature of these proceedings? Why do you think the Gospel writers included these details?
2. *Read John 18:37-38.* Jesus tells Pilate, "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate responds, "What is truth?" Why is this question so significant? How do people today respond to the truth about Jesus?
3. Caiaphas employed the "oath of testimony," which legally bound Jesus to answer, even though it was illegal in a capital trial. Why is it significant that Jesus chose to answer truthfully rather than remain silent?

The Great Exchange

1. Before this sermon, what did you know about Barabbas? How does understanding that he was likely a Sicarii (assassin/terrorist) change your perspective on the exchange that took place?
2. The crowd was given a choice between "Jesus Barabbas" (a guilty murderer) and "Jesus called the Christ" (the innocent one). What does their choice reveal about human nature and our condition before God?
3. *Read 2 Corinthians 5:21:* "He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." How does the Barabbas story help you understand this verse more clearly?
4. Barabbas walked free because Jesus took his place. When you think about your own life, how does it feel to know that Jesus took your place on the cross?

Practical Application:

1. **Pastor Allen's sermon ended with this statement: "We all sit in the seat of Barabbas and we're faced with a choice. Do we want Jesus to take our place?"**
 - i. For those who have already made that choice, how has accepting Jesus' sacrifice changed your life?
 - ii. For those still considering, what questions or concerns do you have?
2. **Read 1 Peter 3:18.** How should the reality that "Christ suffered for our sins once for all time" affect the way we live our daily lives?
3. **Barabbas was set free but we don't know what he did with his freedom.** If you were Barabbas, walking away from that cross knowing someone died in your place, how would you live differently?

Reflection Questions for Personal Study

1. What is one thing God spoke to you about during this discussion?
2. How will you respond to what you learned this week?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for taking our place on the cross, for bearing the penalty we deserved so we could go free.

We pray for anyone in this group who has not yet accepted this great exchange, that you would open their hearts to trust you and receive your salvation. Help each of us live as people who are truly set free, walking in obedience,

gratitude, and holiness. Give us clear opportunities and boldness this week to share the story of Barabbas and Jesus with others, and use that story to draw many to you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Illegal Trials of the Innocent One

Reading: Matthew 26:57-68; John 18:12-24

Devotional: Jesus faced six illegal trials before His crucifixion. The religious leaders broke their own laws: holding court at night, seeking false witnesses, and forcing self-incrimination. Yet Jesus remained silent until placed under the oath of testimony. When asked if He was the Messiah, He spoke truth: "You have said it."

Consider this: The Son of God submitted to corrupt human justice to fulfill divine justice. Every illegal procedure, every false accusation, every twisted law pointed to one reality. Jesus was innocent, yet willingly walked toward the cross. When have you been falsely accused or treated unjustly? How does Jesus' example of silence and truth-telling in the face of injustice speak to your situation? Today, choose to respond to unfair treatment with grace, remembering that Jesus endured far worse for you.

Day 2: The High Priest Who Tore His Garments

Reading: Leviticus 21:10; Hebrews 7:11-28

Devotional: When Caiaphas heard Jesus claim to be the Messiah, he tore his priestly garments in horror, an act forbidden to the high priest. In that moment of religious theatrics, Caiaphas unknowingly forfeited his position, creating space for God to establish a new High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek." Jesus became our eternal High Priest, one who could legally offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice. The old priesthood, corrupted by envy and political maneuvering, gave way to the new. What religious leaders meant for evil, God used for our redemption. Are there "religious" practices or traditions in your life that have become more about performance than authentic relationship with God? Strip away one religious habit today and replace it with genuine communion with Jesus, your true High Priest.

Day 3: Pilate's Question—What Is Truth?

Reading: John 18:28-38

Devotional: "What is truth?" Pilate asked cynically, standing face-to-face with Truth incarnate. Jesus had just declared, "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate found no fault in Jesus. Three times he proclaimed His innocence, yet he lacked the

courage to act on truth. We live in a world that asks Pilate's question constantly. Relativism whispers that truth is subjective, personal, fluid. But Jesus stands as the embodiment of absolute truth. The question isn't philosophical, it's personal. Will we listen to Him? Pilate knew the truth but chose political expedience. He washed his hands, thinking he could escape responsibility. But neutrality in the face of truth is actually rejection. In what areas of your life are you asking "What is truth?" while avoiding the Truth-Teller standing before you? Identify one area where you've compromised truth for convenience. Confess it and choose to align with Jesus today.

Day 4: The Great Exchange—Barabbas Goes Free

Reading: Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15

Devotional: Jesus Barabbas—son of the father—was a murderer, terrorist, and insurrectionist. Jesus called the Christ was innocent, peaceful, sinless. The crowd chose to free the guilty and crucify the innocent. This wasn't a mistake; it was the gospel in living color. Barabbas walked free because Jesus took his place on the cross. He represents every one of us, rebels against God, in bondage to sin, deserving death. Yet Jesus stepped forward: "Release Barabbas. I'll take his cross." This is the great exchange: Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but He died for sinners to bring us safely home to God (1 Peter 3:18). You are Barabbas. Jesus took your cross. How does this reality change how you live today? Thank Jesus specifically for taking your place. Then extend that same grace to someone who doesn't deserve it.

Day 5: The Choice Before Us

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Romans 5:6-11

Devotional: "He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is the heart of the gospel, the innocent condemned so the guilty could go free. Like the crowd before Pilate's palace, we face a choice: Will we accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf? Will we let Him take our place? It's not complicated theology, it's a simple yes or no. God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). The exchange has been offered. Jesus has already taken the cross meant for you. The only question remaining is: Will you accept His gift and walk in the freedom He purchased? Have you truly accepted the great exchange, or are you still trying to earn your freedom through good works? If you've never accepted Christ's sacrifice, do so today. If you have, live in the freedom He purchased, stop carrying guilt He already bore.