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What Will You Do With Jesus

MATTHEW 27:11-22

Introduction

1. Recently, in our Wednesday evening Bible study, we have looked at the question, "Who is Jesus?"
2. Today, I would like for us to examine a somewhat different question, but one equally important.
3. It is found on the lips of a first century Roman procurator named Pilate who is responsible to maintain peace in the region of Judea.
4. His assignment is a thankless one, and one which has already gotten him in trouble with the Roman emperor, Tiberius (14-37 A.D.).
5. On this occasion a particular Jew is brought to him by the ruling body of the Jews known as the Sanhedrin, a group composed of the chief priests and the elders.
6. His name is Jesus, and they want Him executed, but Pilate is the one who must give the orders.
7. As the events play out, Pilate asked them a question, "what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22).
8. At the end of our Scripture reading, we heard the answer that Pilate was given, "Crucify Him!"
9. This morning, I would like for us to look more in-depth at the various attitudes held toward Jesus by the people of His day.
10. More importantly, I want each of us to consider our own attitude toward Him.
12. The question which each of us must answer is this, "What will you do with Jesus?"
13. Your answer has eternal consequences.

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What Will You Do With Jesus?

A. WILL YOU REJECT HIM OUTRIGHT?

1. This was the response of the chief priests and elders.
2. Early on in Jesus' ministry, they began looking for a way to get rid of Him.
3. In chapter 5 and verse 16 of John's gospel, following Jesus' healing of the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda, we read that "the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath."
4. Two verses later (v. 18), John adds, "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."
5. The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead caused many to believe in Jesus.
6. This in turn prompted the Jewish chief priests and Pharisees to convene a council — one of them said, "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him" (John 11:48).
7. "From that day on they planned together to kill Him" (John 11:53).
8. Why did they reject Jesus?
 - a. He didn't fit their expectations of the Messiah (i.e., a king who would set Israel free from her enemies, not a suffering servant).
 - b. He was stealing their following:
 - 1) In Matthew 27:18, Matthew tells us that Pilate knew they had handed Jesus over to him out of envy.
 - 2) Large multitudes followed Jesus because he healed their sick, fed their hungry, and taught them with authority, not as their scribes taught (Matthew 7:29).
 - c. He threatened their religious pride and self-righteousness.
 - 1) In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the crowds that unless

their righteousness surpassed that “of the scribes and Pharisees,” they would “not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).

- 2) In Matthew 23, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for a number of things, one of which was that “they do all their deeds to be noticed by men” (v. 5).
9. Even today, there are those who allow their religious pride and self-righteousness to keep them away from Jesus.
10. Remember, the Pharisee in the temple that Jesus tells us about in Luke 18:11-12, “God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.”
11. It is easy for us to take pride in our own church attendance, morality or good deeds and look down on those who, outwardly, do not appear as good as we think we are.
12. It is important that we remember we are each saved by God’s gift of grace, “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:9).

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B. WILL YOU TRY TO AVOID MAKING ANY DECISION ABOUT HIM AT ALL?

1. This is what Pilate did.
2. When the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, he asked them, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” (John 18:29).
3. They responded, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you” (John 18:30).
4. After Pilate interrogated Jesus, he went out to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in Him” (John 18:38).
5. When Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean, and thus fell under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, he tried to avoid becoming entangled in this whole affair by sending Jesus to Herod (Luke 23:5-12).
6. However, after questioning him at length, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

7. Pilate then attempted to placate the Jews and free Jesus by bringing up the custom of freeing a prisoner at the time of Passover.
8. He gave them a choice between Jesus and a notorious robber (John 18:40), murderer and insurrectionist (Luke 23:19) named Barabbas.
9. When the crowd chose Barabbas over Jesus, Pilate then had Jesus scourged hoping that this punishment would satisfy the Jews.
10. After the scourging, he again said to the crowd, "I find no guilt in Him" (John 19:4), but the crowd demanded that Jesus be crucified.
11. Pilate told the Jews, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him" (John 19:6).
12. At this point, the Jews did two things which forced Pilate's hand. First, they said, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God" (John 19:7).
13. Pilate became afraid. He took Jesus inside and asked Him, "Where are You from?" Jesus did not answer.
14. Pilate said to Jesus, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" (John 19:10).
15. Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11).
16. Pilate tried to release Him, but the Jews' second statement which kept him from doing the right thing. They said, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar" (John 19:12).
17. Pilate caved under the pressure. He took a basin of water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, as he said, "I am innocent of this Man's blood" (Matthew 27:24).
18. Today, we make the same choice as Pilate when we let others decide for us

what we will do or believe about Jesus.

19. There are many points across our country today where our faith in Christ is being maligned and to call ourselves a Christian is to be viewed with suspicion and disgust.
20. In the end, if we refuse to take a stand for our Lord, we like Pilate have rejected Him.

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C. WILL YOU MOCK HIM?

1. This is what the Roman soldiers did.
2. After they had scourged Jesus, they made sport of Him:
 - a. “They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him” (Matthew 27:28).
 - b. They twisted “together a crown of thorns” and “put it on His head” (Matthew 27:29a).
 - c. They put “a reed in His right hand” (v. 29b).
 - d. “They knelt before Him and mocked Him saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”” (v. 29c)
 - e. “They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head” (v. 30).
3. Unlike the Jews, these Roman soldiers didn’t willfully reject Jesus.
4. Neither did they, like Pilate, cave to the pressure of the crowd.
5. It is likely that none of them knew anything about Jesus at all.
6. They were indifferent to Jesus.
7. They saw themselves as soldiers in service to the greatest empire on earth at the time simply carrying out their duties, at least in their minds.
8. So what, if they had a little fun in the process?
9. There were at least two other groups who mocked Jesus:
 - a. The passers by:
 - 1) Down in verse 39 of Matthew chapter 27, we find them “hurling

abuse at Him” and “wagging their heads.”

- 2) In verse 40, Matthew tells us they were saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

❑ Little did they know that the temple of which Jesus spoke was His own body and that He must remain on the cross if He as “the Son of God” was to pay the penalty for our sins.

b. The chief priests, the scribes and elders of the people:

- 1) “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him” (Matthew 27:42).
- 2) “He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matthew 27:43).

10. Some mocked in ignorance, others with the knowledge of the Scriptures and the refusal to accept their testimony.

11. One thing I know. Those today who choose to mock Christ and refuse the witness of the Scriptures, if they do not repent, will one day face the wrath of God.

12. As Hebrews 10:31 tells us, “it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

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D. WILL YOU STAND UP FOR HIM?

1. This category includes many people.

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2. Those who stayed with Him: The four women at the cross (His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene, John 19:25), the apostle John (John 19:26).

6a

3. Those who fled, but later returned — the eleven disciples (Matthew 26:56;

Mark 14:50).

6b

4. Those who were martyred for their faith — Stephen (Acts 7:59-60), James, the brother of John (Acts 12:2).

6c

5. Those who persecuted Him, but later proclaimed Him — Saul who later became Paul the apostle
 - a. “Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison” (Acts 9:3).
 - b. (To Agrippa) “not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them” (Acts 26:10).
 - c. “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4).
 - d. “Who are you Lord?” (Acts 9:5).
 - e. “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting . . .” (Acts 9:6).
6. They remained faithful to Christ, even though they knew that . . .
 - a. It is “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).
 - b. “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Conclusion

1. You and I have a choice to make today.
2. What will you do with Jesus?
3. Will you reject Him outright?
 - a. If so, you will remain in your sins.

- b. You leave yourself with “no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).
- 4. Will you try to avoid making a decision for Christ?
 - a. If so, you may wait until it is too late.
 - b. Jesus said that if we deny Him before men, He will also deny us before His Father in heaven (Matthew 10:33).
- 5. Will you be among those who mock Him and make light of what He has done for us?
 - a. I pray not.
 - b. As I shared with you earlier, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).
- 6. Today, let me encourage you to proclaim Christ as your Lord and Savior?
 - a. “Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32).

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- b. May we make the words of Isaac Watts our mantra:

**I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Nor to defend His cause;
Maintain the honors of His Word.
The glory of His cross.**

7a

- 7. If so, His promise to us is secure.
**Then will He own my worthless name
Before His Father's face,
And in the new Jerusalem
Appoint for me a place.**