

Luke 23:13–25

Substitution: Christ Condemned So Sinners Could Be Released

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Main idea: Because God was determined to save sinners, and because their sin must be fully punished, One Who had not sinned had to suffer the punishment in their place.

¹³ Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, ¹⁴ said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; ¹⁵ no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. ¹⁶ I will therefore chastise Him and release Him” ¹⁷ (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). ¹⁸ And they all cried out at once, saying, “Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas”—¹⁹ who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

²⁰ Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. ²¹ But they shouted, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”

²² Then he said to them the third time, “Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.” ²³ But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. ²⁵ And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Introduction: Someone has to be released, and someone has to die.

1. Jesus deserved to be released.

- a. Pilate’s testimony (and Herod’s)
- b. God’s testimony in words and signs
- c. Your testimony? Beware cowardice, indifference, or hostility to Christ. They all end in the same place.

2. Barabbas (and Pilate, and Herod, and the Jews) deserved to die.

- a. Barabbas, upon which Rome and the Jews could easily have agreed, v19, 25
- b. Pilate, Herod, and the Jews. Barabbas’s crime exactly descriptive of theirs
- c. Peter (v22a) and the rest of those being redeemed. How about you?

Conclusion: The love that would not release Jesus. God was more determined that His elect would be saved than the priests and rulers were that Jesus would die. Turn to this Jesus, and be saved by Him!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Luke 23 verses 13 through 25 then pilot when he had called together, the chief priests and the rulers. And the people said to them, you have brought this man to me as one, who misleads the people, and indeed having examined him in your presence.

I have found no fault in this man. Concerning those things of which you accuse him. No, neither did Herod for. I sent you back to him and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by him. I will therefore chastise him and release him for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast, and they all cried out at once, saying, away with this man and release to us.

Barabbas who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city and from murder pilot. Therefore wishing to release Jesus again, called out to them, but they shouted saying crucifying crucify him.

Then he said to them the third time. Why? What evil has he done? I have found. No reason for death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go. But they were insistent demanding with loud voices, that he be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.

So, pilot gave sentence that it should be as they requested and he released to them. The one that they requested who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison. He delivered Jesus to

their will so far the reading of God's inspired and errant worked. We rejoice to know that he has promised to bless the preaching of it.

Please be seated.

Someone has to be released and someone has to die. Someone has to be released at the feast. Verse 17 says, there were some early copies and in which verse 17 was dropped, but the ones that continue to be compared to the original for hundreds of years and producing the majority of the copies that was used through the church throughout the ages, has verse 17 for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast.

So pilot felt a necessity to release one. Believe, in more importantly, someone had to die roamed didn't necessarily require that someone die Rome was glad to do it on a regular basis. And depending on who the particular official was, but someone had to die because of the sins of those who God was saving.

So, someone has to be released in our passage. And that can't be Jesus. Not so much because of pilots cowardice or so much because of herds and difference or so much because of the priests and the scribes and the rulers and the crowds hostility.

But especially because God was saving sinners.

And so one, who is as great as their sin had to die, that's what's in our passage as you read it, probably you could already hear and tell most of the sermon yourself, we read it carefully. If you were listening carefully to the careful, reading you could hear that.

The whole tension of the passage is pilot trying to release Jesus instead of Barabbas and pilots, and the people's different reasons and sins and weakness. All combining to be the way that at the end, Barabbas is the one whom they request and whom pilot releases verse 25A. But Jesus says, delivered up to their will verse 25 B.

And yet we know as we have been noticing throughout the entire passage and especially in the apostles use of verse 12 and Psalm 2, which we've been noting for a couple of weeks that this is especially according to God's will, whether or two main points to the sermon. And that, is that the one who died was the one who deserved to be released.

Think that's pretty plain in the past, Jesus deserved to be released. And maybe as plain but hopefully, we'll see it. More plainly the Barabbas and pilot and Herod and the Jews who deserved to die. In one of the things we'll see when we get there. Is that in God's providence?

Exactly those things of which Barabbas is guilty and of what Jesus has been accused are the things of which the people are guilty, but they are not. The only guilty ones and there is and intentional parallel that Luke gives us so that it's not just Barabbas and pilot and Herod and the Jews who deserve to die.

When especially those whom Jesus had come to save people like Peter, who deserved to die. So, the first place Jesus deserved to be released verse 13. Then pilot when he had called together, the chief priests the rulers. And the people said to them, you have brought this man to me as one who misleads the people.

And he's not accusing. He's not saying they brought Jesus to them as a televangelist, although you can hardly think of anything more misleading than a televangelist, but they are, he is reminding them that they had accused Jesus of making himself. A king to lead a rebellion to mislead that as to lead the people, in rebellion against Rome, probably continues verse 14, and indeed, having examined him in your presence.

I have found no fault in this man. Concerning those things of which you accuse him.

So there's pilots testimony. Feels like he's got back up from Herod Herod, didn't produce and accusation or a charge or refining. Remember pilot had been glad that to hear that. Jesus was from Galilee because that was Aaron's jurisdiction. And in true bureaucratic fashion, he had sent him to Hera to get off the hook but Herod had sent him back to pilot in verse 11.

So he says no neither did Herod for. I sent you back to him and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by him. So that's number one. Number two verse, 20 pilot, therefore wishing to release Jesus again, called out to them. So, he calls out to them, wishing to release, Jesus twice.

And then verse 22, then he said to them the third time. Why? What evil has he done? I have found. No reason for death in him. So pilot here in our passage this morning, testifies three times that

Jesus does not deserve to die. That he is innocent of that, which he of which he has been accused pilots testimony, is that Jesus deserved to be released.

God gives the same testimony. God has given the testimony of Christ both at his baptism and his transfiguration. This is my beloved son with whom. I am. Well, please God has also testified alongside Jesus and we have seen this several times. We could turn, however, to the book of Acts.

Chapter two in the sermon, on the day of Pentecost.

Verse 22 men of Israel. Here these words. Jesus of Nazareth. Amen a tested by God to you by miracles wonders and signs which God did through him. In your midst, as you yourselves also, know him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands have crucified and have put to death.

And then the passage that has become familiar over the last couple of weeks in chapter four,

The apostles being released for Peter and John being released from their trial and giving testimony being let go verse 23. They went to their own and reported all that the chief priests and elders said to them. So when they heard that they raised their voice to God with one accordance had Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that as in then who by the mouth of your servant, David have said, why did the nations rage and the people plot vain things.

The kings of the earth, took their stand and the rulers are gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ for truly against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles. And the people of Israel were gathered together to do, whatever your hand and your purpose determine before to be done.

And then Jesus several times, especially in the gospel of John challenges, those who heard him who are refusing to believe what he has said about himself that if they do not believe on account of the words that he is spoken, that they should believe on account of the works, that God had given him to do.

This is the first way that we are to read the signs that Jesus performs in his life. We call them miracles. But the Bible word behind the, the word miracle, at least in the gospel context is usually sign that God is testifying that Jesus is his son. That Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus is the beloved one with him.

He is well please, this is very good news for those who are hoping in price who for those who are hoping for this exchange that takes place because there is a greater exchange taking place in Luke 23, then Barabbas for Jesus. As far as Rome is concerned and that is Jesus for his elect for those who whom he sent him.

As far as God is concerned, this is according to God's purpose and God's foreign knowledge. God having testified who Jesus is and that Jesus is the beloved son with whom. He is well, pleased, that he is the Christ that he is the righteous one. All of these things. God has testified both by his word and by the signs.

Jesus is a righteous one. Who des heard to be released?

But what is your testimony about? Jesus Christ. You may not think it matters now, but there is coming a day when Jesus Christ will sit on the throne of glory and render judgment. And you will stand before him and what you have believed about him. And what you have confessed about him will be the entire difference maker, whether you belong to him through faith, whether his sacrifice is death on the cross, under the curse, under the wrath of God, was counted against your sin, or not.

And so whether or not you sit here this morning, and you think that what you believe, and what you say about Jesus Christ is a crucial matter. You will know it to be true on that day.

And so I urge you not to be a coward like pilot who because he was afraid of what might happen, what the people might do, what the people might do to him, or, perhaps, what Rome might do it in, was unwilling to act upon that which he knew, but took no action, because you can sit in the pews for five 10, 50 years and you can agree that Jesus is the righteous one.

These are all, I've heard this before. This is you know what they call the gospel. God became a man, How did humanity to Himself? He lived a righteous and obedient life that we couldn't live and he died a sacrificial, atoning death. That was the only way that sin could be fully paid for because otherwise it will be eternally paid for in order for it to be fully according to the justice of God.

And he rose again from the dead. On a count of having made righteous having having produced that perfect righteousness and that full atonement for all those who trust in him and you can sit here in the pews, your whole life and you can agree that those things are true.

And you will not have gotten further than pilot because pilot agrees with you. Jesus is righteous. And in fact, if we were going to look at other gospels and compare what pilot is figuring out, there's a point at which pilot realizes that Jesus is a king and he does have authority.

And that authority is higher than Romans, and he is urgent to release Jesus. Luke gives us to us very compactly. One, two, three. Think there's a reason for that. That will consider when we get to Peter, some of you probably already figured out what that reason is one, two, three acknowledgments and acquittals of Jesus by pilot, but if you agree with the truth about Jesus and you do not act upon it, he will be in no better place than pilot.

So beware either cowardice because you don't want to be known as or give up in your life. What it might cost you if you reject all sin and if you own Jesus Christ and you belong to him and he becomes more to you, then any other relationships then any other pleasure than any other security or property, all of which you might lose for him, most of our costs are actually rather low but cowardice being what it is.

Apart from grace, we still find ourselves on willing to pay them or indifference like Herod. It was an interesting curiosity until he couldn't get what he wanted out of him. And so when he couldn't get the, you know, the magic tricks, and when he couldn't get the interesting conversation, this was a man who enjoyed interesting conversation and he had had interesting conversation with John and until he threw a party made a rash promise and ended up beheading his conversation partner.

He had looked for interesting conversations from Jesus and didn't get it. He decided to mock him. Instead, he's rather indifferent to whether or not. Jesus is righteous, didn't even bother to send a statement with him back to pilot pilot. Just infers here that Herod must not have found him guilty since since there was no verdict scent or even hostility those who reject Jesus's claims simply because they hate him and the chief priests and the rulers or maybe just popularity, you know, social media was not the beginning of people just going along with what they see a bunch of other people saying there are many in the crowd who are stirred up to hostility to Christ, simply because that's what everyone was saying.

What is your testimony about Jesus? And how are you acting upon it? How have you acted upon it? If he is the righteous one, if he is the son of God, if God is, well, please with him. And if despite all of these according to God's plan and foreign knowledge, he is going to across in this passage, then you must act upon that you must turn to him and rest in him because he did not deserve this death.

He was dying it because it is what those for whom. He was dying deserved Jesus. Deserved to be released the second place, Barabbas and pilot and Herod, and the Jews deserved to die. Barabbas pilot heroin and the chief priests and rulers are all actually guilty of the charge repeated in verse 14.

You have brought this man to me as one who misleads. The people Now pilot is misleading. The people, it is his job to be a governor and he states here. Three times. That Jesus is an innocent man, but he doesn't just offer to release Jesus as if those under him.

Have any say in it? It's his duty, as the as the governor. As the and can't remember his title, it's not pro console, but it's his duty as a magistrate here to not only release Jesus, but protect him from those who are attacking him. That's what those who are in authority ought to do with the innocent.

A pilot here, actually proposes to scourge Jesus to whip him.

Three times at least in the first, on the third time, he says, I will therefore chastise him and release him. The second time just says he's wishing to release him and calls out to them. It's implied that it's with similar language because the third time he says again for at the end of verse 22, I will therefore chastise him and let him go pilot is misleading.

The people Herod has misled those who are around him. You remember that when Herod couldn't get what he wanted out of Christ in last week's, passage in verse 11 Herod, with his men of war, treated him with contempt, mocked him a raid him in a gorgeous robe and sent him back to pilot The chief priests and the rulers have misled the people, and you can, especially see that in verse 18, In our passage, in the entire number one that pilot offers to release Jesus or asks, or tries to release Jesus.

He says, I will therefore chastise him and release him for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast and they all cried out at once, saying away with this man and release to us Barabbas. Now that's very different, doesn't it? Then and they began to cry out saying, know, the spirit intentionally says they all cried out at once saying and those who have their thinking caps on and they're observing that that says they say that doesn't occur without planning.

That doesn't occur without conspiring and to organization and leadership. This was something that was planned ahead of time, prepared for and coordinated. Many of you have observed such things in your life or perhaps recently in the nations life and it disturbs you, you see things that occur and they're presented to you as if they are spontaneous and it's obviously planned and coordinated.

Well, turn your attention away from those things. And notice that least for this moment, this is coordinated. They are misleading the people in rebellion, not against Rome but against the king of kings against Jesus Christ himself. It is actually specifically said a barituce in both verse 19. And verse 25 verse 19.

He had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city and for murder verse 25. He released to them. The one they requested who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison. Here was a man who had actually led rebellion against row and so he's guilty of something punishable by death.

As far as the Romans are concerned. Here's a man who is guilty of murder. And so those who care about the sixth commandment in the fact that murder is wrong because man is created in the image of God and he who sheds man's blood, God commands by, man his blood shall be shed.

And so you see, even in the way that Luke sets this all up for us, not just that, Jesus deserved to be released but that the people who are murdering him and the one who actually is released, are all actually guilty of that for which Christ is being condemned.

This is how it works for us. We are actually guilty of that, which of which Christ has been condemned. Not just before, man. But before God Second Corinthians 5:21, says that God made him. Who knew no sin. He deserved to be released to be sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him in Christ's identification.

With his people who he was saving for whom he was dying. He was made as if sin itself on the cross, so that before God as he dies on the tree, the cursive death of on the cross. He is not just receiving some kind of random penalty for our general sinfulness.

He has receiving, according to exactly what we deserve. There is a one to one and the justice of God demands that the wrath of God fall in its fullness, upon the Son of God, because of what you and I who believe in him have done. Hope you can see that in the exact parallel between that of which Jesus is accused and that which Barabbas and pilot and Herod and these Jews who are guilty of participating in his murder have done.

There's another hint here that comes closer to home. And that is in verse 22. When it says, he said to them the third time. Why? What evil has he done? It's interesting that Luke says the third time because he is narrowing, the scope. Just to the portion that's in front of us.

Because you remember, before he sent Jesus to Herod in verse 4, pilot had said the same thing. So this would actually be the fourth time. So pilot said to the chief priests in the crowd. I find no fault in this man. Now for us, we are going through things slowly, there's so much in the word that as we bring it out and consider it and respond to it by God's help.

It takes several weeks to go through a few paragraphs, but it was just a few paragraphs of ago and chapter 22 that Jesus had told Peter that he was going to deny him. How many times three times and he denied him those three times and now pilot is acquitting Christ, these three times.

And so we can even see in the flow of the passage how God's providence sets before us and God's word calls attention to the fact that God's providence does this, then he said to them the third time a contrast between what Peter ought to have done and what pilot did.

You see, Jesus gave the good testimony. Peter denied him pilot. Acquitted him. One, two, three times.

It's not just Barabbas and pilot inherit, and the Jews that deserve to die Peter deserved to die.

Peter deserved hell and that's especially why Jesus is here. We don't know how many among the crowd are being saved. Think we can presume based on something. Jesus says next week and you can go ahead and look at next week's passage that there are some of whom Christ is certain.

Even as they murder him, that they are his for him. He is dying.

But this passage draws an intentional contrast to Peter because you and I are guilty. You and I are guilty of rebellion against God. You and I are guilty apart from him. We love ourselves with all our hearts, all mind and strength and therefore we love our neighbor so far as it is convenient for ourselves.

We corrupt the two. Great amendments. Don't we we are hostile to God and we are hostile to others. So it tightest three says that we were hating and being hated by one another. But when God's mercy, when God's loving kindness appeared in the Lord Jesus Christ, he saved us, not by righteous things that we had done.

But by his mercy is very easy for us to read this and say oh that pilot, oh that herit. Oh, those chief priests and rulers. Oh, those people.

Then we realize

He has done. No evil is done. No evil is done. No evil. He says he said to them the third time. So, Peter and Peter in the gospels often has this role where God makes him to be the one that many of us know, we would have just been like that.

Oh me, I'm the one. I'm the one who deserved to die. I have denied Christ on many of and occasion, I have been in many a conversation, perhaps even having prayed for an opportunity to say something about the Lord Jesus to this person. And it comes up and I'm afraid or it feels inconvenient or I'm interested in something else at the moment.

Might let it pass out of love for self instead of love for Christ or even love for the person in front of me.

Jesus came to die for Peter. Jesus came today for sinners. Who deserve what he got? He didn't come to die for sinners, who deserve pretty good, but they just need a little bit of atonement to get them. Over the top, he came to die for sinners. Who deserve hell?

That's what we deserve with. The reason. Jesus couldn't be released is because God was determined to say particular. Sinners, who deserve hell? This is why Jesus had come to begin with God, demonstrates his love in this, that while we were still sinners Christ died for us, he dies for his enemies and we will see the love of Jesus specifically in next week's passage.

But in this passage being reminded recently in comparing scripture with scripture that this is according to the plan and purpose of God, and you see, Jesus is the one who deserved to be released. And you say, why wasn't Jesus released? It was because the love of God was determined that Christ would die.

When Jesus is coming to this hour. He prays to his he praise. He says, shall I pray save me for this from this hour? No, it's for this that I have come. The reason he was persona nongraded but he was not welcome. Among the Samaritans was the scripture says, because he had set his face to Jerusalem.

The Son of Man came to die for sinners.

You see this is a passage not so much about how the chief priests were more determined to kill Jesus than pilot was to release him. That's the what's on the surface. But what's behind it? As you read the gospels because the gospels are not an account of what the chief priests were trying to accomplish The gospels are an account of what God is accomplishing through Christ.

So this is not an account of how the chief priests and the rulers were more determined to kill Jesus than pilot was to release him. This is an account of how God was more determined that Jesus would die on the cross for our sins. Then even the priests in the rulers were determined to kill him.

Now, if you are a sinner, who deserves hell, This should be the greatest of news to you, that God loves sinners and had his son go to a cross and bear, not just a Roman crucifixion. But the wrath of God, for a sinner. Exactly. Like you are Some of you don't know.

You're afraid to say it out loud but you've been sitting in church and you lack assurance and you're not sure if yourself, you're pretty sure of Jesus Christ, God. It's a good indication that you're converted. But you say I may be one of those sinners. I don't think I'm a saint.

I don't know if I must say it or perhaps you have an accusation from the devil and you are questioning whether or not you belong to him he and you and you get wrapped up in the question. Am I, am I a saint or am I a sinner? Am I a believer or a self-deceived unbeliever?

If you're a sinner, Jesus came to save sinners. If you don't know that you're a believer. You still know what to do because if you are an unbeliever, then the answer is to die for him or to trust in him. Who died for sinners. All it does is put you in the category of the kind of person for whom Jesus died.

And you don't have to know if you're elected, you make your calling an election. Sure. After trusting in Jesus, that's the way the Bible describes it. So behold the God who is more determined, that Jesus should die for his sheep than Pilate, was to release and behold the God?

Who is more, determined that his son would die for his sheep than even? The chief priests were determined to kill him.

And trust in the one who died that his death wasn't because of anything else, except that, in order for sinners to be released from the wrath of God, their sin had to be paid for, and it had to be paid for, in this way that the Son of God who's the righteous would die in their place, turned to this Jesus and be saved by him.

Let's pray.