



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Jesus or Barabbas?

Focus Verse: John 18:40 - Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Lesson Text: John 18:28-40

Truth About God: On the cross, Jesus took our place.

Truth For My Life: I will choose Jesus, no matter the choice.

Jesus' sacrifice is for all. **Sacrifice frees the recipient but binds the one who is sacrificing.** His body was prepared for the sacrifice: *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God"* (Hebrews 10:4-7).

Only Jesus' sacrifice would suffice. As Philippians 2:6-7 shows, though Christ was *"equal with God,"* in taking a human body, He *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."* But when it came to healing men of their sin, Jesus could not just pray our sins away; He could not even just speak our sins away. No, this would require a body: *"A body hast thou prepared me"* (Hebrews 10:5). Jesus threw His body into the awful machinery of sin. *"This is my body,"* Jesus told His disciples at the Last Supper, *"which is given for you"* (Luke 22:19). God incarnate assumed a body just like ours. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15).

How should we respond to Jesus' sacrifice? We should rejoice. Without the cross, we have no hope, but thanks to the cross and the empty tomb, we have hope of salvation. Our sins can be forgiven, and we can be made right with God. Jesus was not caught or trapped by scheming Roman soldiers or jealous chief priests—He willingly laid down His life for us. He lived His own words: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13).

Jesus' last days He ministered to others: washed His disciples' feet (John 13); prayed all night for His disciples (John 17); healed the ear of the man who came to arrest Him (John 18); carried our cross to Calvary (Matthew 27); pardoned a thief, while both hands and feet were nailed to wood, and took him to Paradise (Luke 22) and forgave every one of His murderers (Luke 22). Others abused Him and He was passed from hand to hand as a prisoner, starting with His weakest and lowliest disciple, Judas. Jesus went to the scheming priest Caiaphas, then to the Roman prefect Pilate, and then to silly King Herod. Then He was handed over to the mob.

We too have been called to a life of sacrifice. Paul wrote: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Romans 12:1). Some problems cannot be solved with wishing them solved. Some problems cannot even be prayed away. Some problems require us to lay down our comfort, convenience, security, safety, and even our health and wealth. Some problems require our bodies. The world might ask the church: why do you do the things you do, surrender the things you surrender, and live lives of self-denial? The church, saved by the sacrifice of Christ, answers, ***"A body hast thou prepared me."***

God's people bravely march into prayer, not knowing what battles will befall us, yet we march anyway because we have our mission. And greater still, we have our example. Jesus willingly marched into Jerusalem knowing what He would face, yet He did so because He is our sacrifice for sin.

On that dark Passover weekend, Jesus died so Barabbas could live. But history does not tell us if Barabbas was at the foot of Jesus' cross or in the upper room to receive the Holy Ghost. He faded into the background, and Jesus Christ took center stage on the center cross. Although Barabbas's untold story has already been written, ours has not. **Ours is still being written.** And like the growing crowd in Jerusalem, we have a choice: Jesus or anything else in this world. **We must get this choice right.** Choose an abundant life. Choose eternal life. Choose to live for the one who died for you.