

*Morning Sermon August 18, 2019*  
*"Choosing Barabbas" John 18:39-40*

<sup>39</sup> "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" <sup>40</sup> Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber. John 18:39-40

*I. A custom connected to the Passover –*

1. *The Passover was popular, even Pilate, a Roman knew it well, and would (had) shown some respect for it.*

2. *The Passover, ordained by God*

A. *A memorial of Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt –*

<sup>14</sup> 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Exodus 12:14

B. *It was a type of Christ's Work to save us from slavery to sin –*

<sup>7</sup> Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 1 Corinthians 5:7

*Slavery in Egypt prefigures slavery to sin –*

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. John 8:34

3. *The Passover provides the perfect backdrop for Christ's death on our behalf, according to God's time –*

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born <sup>d</sup>of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4-5

4. *This custom mentioned by Pilate was not prescribed in Old Testament Law, but it agreed with the Passover's merciful intention –*

<sup>39</sup> "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. John 18:39 A

"I deserved Hell; Jesus took my Hell; there is nothing left for me but his Heaven." Donald Grey Barnhouse

*II. A chance for Pilate –*

<sup>39</sup> "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

<sup>19</sup> While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." Matthew 27:19

*Though John does not mention it:*

1. *Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod / Herod sent Him back*
2. *Pilate's wife had a terrible dream because of Jesus – **Matthew 27:19***
3. *Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, wanted badly that He would be set free –*

*III. A choice made by those called God's people –*

1. *God is sovereign in the people's choice of Barabbas for mercy, leaving Jesus to suffer death on the cross, this was God's plan –*

<sup>27</sup> "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 <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Acts 4:27-28

2. *Yet the fact of God's sovereignty did not take away the fact of man's sinfulness in this choice / this wrong judgment –*

A. *This wrong judgment is seen in who Barabbas is, especially in contrast to Jesus.*

- **Now Barabbas was a robber. John 18:40**
- <sup>16</sup> **And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Matthew 27:16**
- *He was a murderer - <sup>7</sup> And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. Mark 15:7*

*Note, Barabbas was a murderer in the rebellion (against the Romans). In this he (Barabbas) was truly the kind of criminal against the Roman Empire that the Jews falsely accused Jesus of being.*

- *The name Barabbas meant son of his daddy!*

*Barabbas was son of his earthly daddy / In contrast to Jesus Who was and is Son of His Heavenly Father –*

**<sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17**

*B. Barabbas is symbolic of our sins which we often refuse to mortify –*

*We are called to put to death our sinful members –*

**<sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. Colossians 3:5-7**

*We are called to mortify, put to death, mortify our sins and sinful passions but too often we cry to spare these sins, like they were our dear little children!*

*When we spare and indulge in sin, we CRUCIFY CHRIST in stead of the sin which deserves to die!*

3. *The fact, that the Jews of Jesus’ day chose Barabbas and yelled “crucify” about Christ, gives us a vivid picture of the horror, the wrongness, the sinfulness of our sin nature –*

**<sup>10</sup> As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;**

**<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. <sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” <sup>13</sup> “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; <sup>14</sup> “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” <sup>15</sup> “Their feet are swift to shed blood;**

**<sup>16</sup> Destruction and misery are in their ways; <sup>17</sup> And the way of peace they have not known.” <sup>18</sup> “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

**<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:10-20**

*When Romans 3:20 mentions “every mouth” and “all the world” ... “guilty before God” it includes each and every one of us in wretched, sinful choices, yelling “crucify” in regard to Christ and being soft with sin! It is WHY the only way of salvation is Christ’s death –*

**<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:21-26**

### Application

*Ask yourself, are you gentle with any sin? Do you procrastinate dealing with sin? Do you have a Barabbas sin, one that is dear to you like a child? One that you PREFER to Christ?*

*We don’t choose sin because God forces us to –<sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15*

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. <sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Romans 6:12-13**

*“Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it while you live! Cease not a day from this work! Be killing sin or it will be killing you!” John Owen*

*Arnold Brevick*