



TITLE OF THE SERMON

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





What Shall I Do With Jesus?

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What Shall I Do With Jesus?

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 27:22

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2222

In Matthew 27, Jesus Christ stood on trial before Pilate, and in verse 22, Pilate asked the most personal and pressing question: “What shall I do with Jesus?”

What we do with Jesus is an unavoidable decision each of us will make; what we decide—or not decide—will dictate our eternity.

We must consider Pilate’s decision: as the people cried out for Jesus’ death, Pilate’s voice of reason and conscience raised alarm. He examined the evidence and listened to witnesses, including his own wife (v. 19), and Jesus Himself, who confessed that He was the King of kings. (John 18:37)

Though the voices that confronted Pilate clearly revealed the right thing to do, his warped values pressured him to decide otherwise. Pilate was pressured by the public’s opinion; the people were viciously calling for Jesus’s blood. His boisterous pride, his lofty position, and plentiful possessions were more valuable than the innocent man standing before him.

At first, Pilate ignored the issue, then shifted the decision to King Herod. When Herod declined and sent Jesus back to Pilate, He confessed Jesus was faultless, yet decided not to decide.

However, as Adrian Rogers warns, “You cannot be neutral about Jesus.” Matthew 27:24 says, “When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.”

Pilate’s rejection of reason and misplaced values made Jesus’ trial a mockery of justice. Pilate’s “neutral” verdict condemned Jesus to death, and also condemned himself. We have an opportunity to make a different decision. Analyzing the evidence from Scripture, the witnesses of the saints, of old and of new, we know Jesus is exactly who He says He is. And perhaps the most crucial witness of them all is God the Father.

1 John 5:9 says, “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.” We know that Jesus is Lord because after He was crucified, God reversed the decision of the court and raised Him from the dead!

LIFE APPLICATION

You cannot be neutral about Jesus; you cannot avoid Him, escape Him, or bypass Him: so what will you do with Him?



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea at the time when Jesus was judged and sentenced to death upon the cross.
 - i) Jesus was before Pilate, and Pilate had to make a decision concerning the Lord Jesus.
 - ii) Pilate asked the greatest question that could ever be asked:
 - (1) "What shall I do with Jesus?"
 - (a) Matthew 27:22
- b) At that particular time, Jesus was being judged by Pilate.
 - i) There is coming a time when Pilate will stand before Jesus to be judged by Jesus.
- c) In a very real sense, Pilate represents every person upon the face of the Earth who has asked the same question, "What shall I do with Jesus?"
 - i) As Jesus was before Pilate, Jesus is before us.
 - ii) But one day, as Pilate will stand before Jesus, we too will stand before Jesus.
- d) This is a very important question posed to us today.
 - i) It is a present question.
 - (1) It's not simply about what Pilate did, for each of us have to answer that question.
 - ii) It is a personal question.
 - (1) It's not about what somebody else is going to do with Jesus, but we have to decide what we are going to do with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) It is a pertinent question.
 - (1) Our destiny hangs on our answer to this question.
 - iv) It is a pressing question.
 - (1) We will answer this question one way or the other.
 - (a) Even to decide not to decide is a decision.
 - (2) It is inescapable and unavoidable.
 - (3) Everyone will either accept Jesus or reject Him.
 - (a) No one can be neutral.
 - e) Today's message will look at the tragic decision that Pilate made.
 - i) Prayerfully, we will not repeat the awful decision that Pilate made.

2) THE VOICES THAT CONFRONTED PILATE

- a) There was the voice of reason.
 - i) Matthew 27:18
 - ii) Pilate was reading the hearts and minds of those who brought Jesus before him.
 - (1) The religious leaders of that day wanted Jesus crucified.
 - (2) Pilate knew men, and he knew that "for envy they had delivered Him."
 - (a) Pilate knew that these were trumped up charges against Jesus.



- iii) Pilate knew better than to allow Jesus to be crucified.
 - (1) The voice of reason had spoken to Pilate, and it speaks to us today.
 - (a) If we are reasonable and will examine the evidence and listen to the witnesses, then we will have to say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, worthy of all honor, glory, majesty and praise.
 - (2) For a person to crucify Jesus, he must also crucify reason.
 - iv) We have three options concerning Jesus Christ.
 - (1) We all know that Jesus is a fact of history.
 - (2) Who was Jesus?
 - (a) Was He a liar?
 - (i) Was He someone who knew that He was not God but pretended to be God?
 - (b) Was He a lunatic?
 - (i) Was He a mad man who thought He was God but wasn't?
 - (c) Was He the Lord?
 - (i) Was He who He said He was and claimed to be?
 - b) There was the voice of a loved one.
 - i) Matthew 27:19
 - (1) God had spoken to Pilate's wife, and she went to warn Pilate.
 - ii) Has a loved one spoken to you about Jesus Christ?
 - c) There was the voice of his conscience.
 - i) Matthew 27:23-24
 - (1) Pilate's conscience thundered within him; he knew that Jesus was innocent.
 - (2) Pilate felt dirty and grimy, like he was being soiled by this whole thing.
 - ii) In his conscience, Pilate knew that what he was doing was wrong.
 - (1) Many today have never given their hearts to Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Reason says that they should, and loved ones say that they should.
 - (b) Their own conscience tells them that they need to do the right thing with the Lord Jesus.
 - d) There was the voice of Jesus Christ Himself.
 - i) John 18:37
 - (1) Jesus spoke to Pilate.
 - (2) Pilate heard the voice of Jesus.
 - ii) Anyone who has heard the Word of God has heard the voice of Jesus Christ.
 - (1) The Bible is as much the voice of Jesus Christ as if the Lord Jesus were standing here speaking to us in the flesh.
 - (2) Jesus is speaking out of the pages of His Word, and we have to face the voice of Jesus.
- 3) THE VALUES THAT CONFORMED HIM
- a) There were certain pressures on Pilate that warred against his making the right decision.
 - b) There was public opinion.
 - i) Matthew 27:20
 - (1) There was a multitude of people clamoring for Barabbas, a criminal, to be released



- and for Jesus to be crucified.
 - ii) Pilate was a politician, reading the polls.
 - (1) He wanted to please the crowds.
 - (a) Mark 15:15
 - iii) Public opinion molded Pilate.
 - iv) Today, we are asked to make a public decision for Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Pressure comes upon us, and we wonder what other people will think.
 - v) We are so concerned about public opinion that sometimes we crucify Jesus in order to please the crowd.
 - c) There was pride.
 - i) Pilate was a very proud man.
 - ii) John 19:9-10
 - (1) Pilate was so full of himself that he in essence asked if Jesus knew to whom He was talking.
 - iii) John 19:11
 - d) There was the pressure of position and possessions.
 - i) This was the main pressure Pilate felt.
 - ii) Pilate was governor, and he could lose his job if he did not make the politically correct decision or do the politically correct thing.
 - iii) John 19:12
 - (1) Pilate must have feared that someone might tell Caesar he was consorting with another King, and Caesar would get angry.
 - (a) Pilate might lose his job or something worse.
 - iv) Today, there are people who fear that if they give their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ that it may cost them.
 - (1) It may cost a promotion.
 - (2) It may cost material goods.
 - (a) People say, "A man's got to live."
 - (i) No, a man has to die; and after that, he has to face God.
- 4) THE VERDICT THAT CONDEMNED HIM (Matthew 27:26)
- a) Why did Pilate decide to let Jesus be crucified?
 - i) We know that Pilate had light.
 - ii) We know that there was pressure upon him.
 - iii) He also tried to straddle the fence to try to get through this.
 - b) Pilate tried to ignore Jesus.
 - i) Many today try to ignore Jesus.
 - ii) John 18:31
 - (1) Pilate was in essence telling the Jews not to bother him with this.
 - (a) He was telling them to make the decision.
 - iii) Some today think that simply ignoring Jesus is the solution.
 - (1) But Jesus is inevitable, unavoidable and inescapable.



- (2) The Jesus you try to ignore is the Jesus you will one day face in the judgment.
- c) Pilate tried to shift the decision to someone else.
 - i) Luke 23:6-7
 - (1) Herod was the king of Galilee.
 - (2) Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, so he decided to let Herod decide this.
 - ii) Sin is personal, and so is our decision about Jesus.
 - (1) No one can make this decision for us.
 - (a) Not our parents, not a rabbi, not a priest, not a politician.
 - (b) We cannot shift the decision to someone else.
 - (2) We have a decision to make.
 - iii) When Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, Herod just sent Him right back to Pilate.
 - (1) There is no way to shift the decision.
- d) Pilate sought simply to admire Jesus.
 - i) He thought that if he could simply say some nice things about Jesus that it might be all right.
 - ii) Luke 23:14-15
 - (1) Pilate, who by his own words could have either released Jesus or crucified Jesus, said that he found no fault in Him; and yet, he allowed Jesus to be crucified.
 - iii) Even though Jesus was innocent, it would have been better for Pilate if he had thought that he had found some fault than to have found none and still allow Him to be crucified.
 - iv) It would have been better for Pilate to have never heard of Jesus than to say that he found no fault in Him and then simply ignore Him and allow Him to be crucified.
 - v) Many today try this same route of saying nice things about Jesus.
 - (1) They say that He was a great man and a great teacher.
 - (2) It is not enough to tip the hat to Jesus; we must bow the knee to Jesus.
 - vi) It is not enough to say that we find no fault in Jesus, and yet, we don't accept Him or acknowledge Him as our Lord and Savior.
- e) Pilate attempted to remain neutral.
 - i) He thought he could simply wash his hands of the whole matter.
 - ii) Matthew 27:22-24
 - (1) What Pilate tried to do was to not say yes or no, but to remain neutral and let someone else make the decision.
 - (a) This was the worst decision that Pilate ever made.
 - (i) Matthew 12:30
 - iii) When the gavel fell in Pilate's court, another gavel fell in Heaven.
 - (1) When Pilate allowed Jesus to be condemned, Pilate was condemned.
 - (2) We cannot be neutral concerning the Lord Jesus.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) The first trial of the Lord Jesus was a mockery of justice.
- b) If Jesus were on trial today and you were impaneled on the jury, what would you do with Jesus?



- i) Matthew 27:22
- ii) Witnesses will be called into this trial, and these witnesses will be taken directly from the Bible.
 - (1) John the Baptist
 - (a) Matthew 11:11
 - (b) John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.
 - (c) He knew Jesus from boyhood.
 - (d) John 1:29
 - (i) John's testimony of Jesus is that He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.
 - (2) Simon Peter
 - (a) Matthew 16:16
 - (i) Simon Peter professes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - (3) John the apostle
 - (a) John was a thoughtful person.
 - (b) John 1:14
 - (i) John stated that Jesus is the Word made flesh and the only begotten of the Father.
 - (4) Thomas
 - (a) Thomas was a follower of Jesus, but he had difficulty believing.
 - (b) John 20:28
 - (i) Thomas called Jesus his Lord and his God.
 - (5) Martha
 - (a) Jesus visited Martha's home, and she observed Him in different situations.
 - (b) John 11:27
 - (i) Martha believed that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - (6) A holy angel
 - (a) Luke 2:11
 - (i) An angel proclaimed that Jesus is Christ the Lord, our Savior.
 - (7) A Pharisee
 - (a) The Pharisees were enemies to Jesus.
 - (b) The Pharisees wanted Jesus crucified.
 - (c) Luke 15:2
 - (i) The Pharisees made the accusation against Jesus that He received sinners.
 - 1. Aren't we glad that Jesus does receive sinners?
 - (8) Caiaphas the high priest
 - (a) Matthew 26:57-66
 - (b) Caiaphas wanted Jesus crucified because Jesus said that He is the Son of God.
 - (9) The centurion
 - (a) The centurion helped drive the nails into Jesus' hands.
 - (b) Mark 15:39
 - (i) The centurion said that Jesus is the Son of God.



- (10) Judas
 - (a) Judas sold the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
 - (b) Matthew 27:4
 - (i) Judas admitted that he had betrayed innocent blood.
- (11) Pilate
 - (a) Pilate had Jesus crucified, yet he said that he found no fault in Him.
 - (i) John 19:4
- (12) A demon
 - (a) Luke 4:34
 - (i) Even the demons confess that Jesus is the Holy One of God.
- iii) These testimonies have been provided by Jesus' friends and enemies.
- iv) We have heard the testimony of angels and of demons.
- v) Even today, we hear the testimony of contemporary witnesses proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord and sharing how Jesus has transformed their lives.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 4:17
- vi) Almighty God has given testimony that Jesus Christ is His beloved Son.
 - (1) Matthew 3:17
- c) When they crucified Jesus and buried Him in that tomb, God the Father reversed the decision of the court and raised Jesus from the dead.
 - i) Romans 1:4
 - ii) The early apostles believed that Jesus rose from the grave.
 - (1) Many of them died for their faith.
 - (2) Men may live for a lie, but few men will die for a lie.
- d) Now, you are the jury.
 - i) What is your decision about Jesus Christ?
 - (1) Will you crown Him or crucify Him?
 - (2) Will you acknowledge Him or reject Him?
 - (3) Will you receive Him or deny Him?
 - ii) You will make a decision.
 - (1) You cannot be neutral.
 - (2) Even to decide not to decide is the worst decision you could possibly make.
 - iii) 1 John 5:9
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take God's precious Word and find Matthew chapter 27. I want to speak to you today about the greatest question ever asked. And we're going to find that question in a few moments in verse 22, but I want to give you the setting for that question.

You know that Pontius Pilate was the Governor of Judea at the time Jesus was adjudicated and judged worthy of death, was sentenced to die upon that cross. And Pilate had Jesus before him, and he had to make a decision concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And here is the great question that's found there in Matthew 27 verse 22. Pilate asked this question, "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" I submit to you that no greater question could be asked than that question, "What shall I do with Jesus?"

Now at that particular time, Jesus was before Pilate being judged by Pilate. There's coming a time when Pilate will stand before Jesus to be judged by Jesus. Pilate had Jesus on his hands and in his hands. Now, Pilate is in the hands of Jesus. Now, what does that have to do with all of us?

Well, in a very real sense, Pilate represents every man, woman, boy and girl upon the face of the Earth who's asked the same question, "What will I do with Jesus?" As Jesus was before Pilate, Jesus is before you. As Jesus was in Pilate's hands, Jesus is in your hands. But one of these days, as Pilate will stand before Jesus, so will you stand before Jesus.

So I'm going to ask you today to answer that question: what will you do with Jesus? And let me tell you about that question. It is a very, very important question.

First of all, it is a present question. Not just simply what did Pilate do. You're going to answer that question today. What will you do? And it is not only a present question, it is a personal question. Not what is somebody else going to do with Jesus. Very personally, you're going to decide what you're going to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. And, thirdly, it's a very pertinent question. Your destiny hangs on your answer to this question, what will you do with the Lord Jesus Christ? A very pertinent question.

And it is a pressing question. You will answer. You say, "Nope, I'm not going to answer that question." Oh, yes, you will. You will answer the question one way or the other. You say, "I'm not going to decide." You just decided not to decide and that was your decision. You're going to answer that question. It is inescapable, unavoidable. You will answer the question, what will you do with Jesus?

Everybody in this room today will accept Him, reject Him, confess Him, deny Him, crown Him, crucify Him. Nobody can be neutral today. You will do something with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, I want us to see Pilate's decision. I want us to see the tragic decision that Pilate made. And pray God that you'll not repeat the awful thing that Pilate did.

Now first of all, Pilate has Jesus there in front of him. Jesus is the unavoidable, inescapable, inevitable fact of life. And so, here Pilate is faced with Jesus. And I want you to notice the voices that confronted Pilate on that day. First of all, there was what I want to call the voice of reason. Look if you



will in Matthew 27 verse 18. The Bible says of Pilate, "For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him."

Now Pilate was reading the hearts and minds of those who brought Jesus before him. They were crying out for the blood of Jesus. They wanted Jesus crucified. These were the religious leaders of that day. But Pilate was no fool. You don't get to be the Governor of Judea under the Romans by being a fool. He knew men. And he knew that, "For envy they had delivered," Jesus. He knew that the charges were trumped up against Jesus.

And so, what voice, first of all, spoke to Pilate? It was the voice of reason. He knew better when he allowed Jesus Christ to be crucified. And the voice of reason had spoken to Pilate. And the voice of reason is speaking to you. If you will be reasonable, if you will do what Pilate did, examine the evidence and listen to the witnesses, you will have to say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, worthy of all honor, glory, majesty, and praise. And so, for a person to crucify Jesus, he must also crucify reason.

You see, C. S. Lewis has taught us this, that Jesus Christ is one of three persons. Here is a tri-lemma. Here are the three options you have concerning Jesus Christ. We all know that Jesus is a fact of history. Now, who was Jesus? Was He a liar? Someone who knew He was not God, but pretended to be, for some knavish reason? Do you believe that Jesus Christ was, is a liar? Or else, if He were not a liar, was He a lunatic? Some mad man, who thought He was God, but wasn't? Deranged, guilty of megalomania? Or, was He the Lord? Was He who He said He was and claimed to be? Those are your three choices. Choose one. Liar, Lord, or Lunatic. What does reason tell you? The voice of reason confronted Pilate.

But there's another voice that confronted Pilate, and it was the voice of a loved one. Look in Matthew 27 verse 19, "And when he was sat down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.'"

Now, Pilate's wife was somehow in contact with God. And God had spoken to her and she went to warn Pilate. Is there anybody here who's not had a loved one to speak to them about Jesus Christ? Perhaps a father, a mother, a brother or sister. Is there some man here, you are Hell-bound, but your loving wife, with tears, has pled with you to do the right thing concerning Jesus Christ?

You see, there were voices that confronted him; the voice of reason, the voice of a loved one, but I'll tell you another voice that confronted him, and it was the voice of his own conscience.

You see, Pilate's conscience thundered within him. He knew that Jesus was innocent. Look in Matthew 27 verses 23 and 24, "And the governor said," they were crying out for His blood, by the way, "And the governor said, 'Why, what evil hath He done?' But they cried out the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified.' Then Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands." He felt dirty. He felt grimy. He felt that somehow he's being soiled by this whole thing.

Pilate, in his conscience, knew that what he was doing was wrong, and so do many here today. You've never given your heart to Jesus. Reason says that you should. Loved ones say that you should. And your own conscience reverberates in your soul to tell you that you need to do the right thing



with the Lord Jesus.

But there was another voice that spoke to Pilate, and that's the voice that I really want to bear down on, and it was the voice of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus spoke to Pilate. Put in your margin John chapter 18 verse 37, "Pilate, therefore, said unto Him, 'Art Thou a king, then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.'" Pilate heard the voice of Jesus.

You say, "Well, Adrian, I may have heard the voice of reason, I may have heard the voice of a loved one, I may have heard the voice of my own conscience, but I've never heard the voice of Jesus." Oh, yes, you have. You just heard it. I read it from the Word of God. It is as much the voice of Jesus Christ as if Jesus Christ were standing here in the flesh, speaking to you. You say, "I'm listening to you, Adrian." No, you're not listening to me. I'm just the Western Union boy. I am delivering the message. It is Jesus who is speaking out of the pages of His Word, and you, today, have to face the voice of Jesus. There were voices that confronted him.

But now listen. There were values that conformed him. There were certain things, there were certain pressures on Pilate that warred against his making the right decision. For example, what were some of those values that conformed him?

Number one, public opinion. Look if you will in verse 20 of Matthew chapter 27, "Then the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas." Now, there was a multitude, a crowd now, that is clamoring for Barabbas, who was a criminal to be released, and Jesus to be crucified. And Pilate was a politician. He was reading the polls. He wanted to do the thing that the crowds would want.

As a matter of fact, put in your margin Mark chapter 15 verse 15, "And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified." Think about that, "Willing to content the people." Allowed Jesus to be whipped and crucified. Public opinion. Public opinion. That's what molded this man.

Did you know that when I finish this message this morning, I'm going to ask you to make a public decision for Jesus Christ? I'm going to ask you not only to decide in your heart, but I'm going to ask you to do something publicly, outwardly, openly, unashamedly. And at that moment, a pressure will come to you, and you'll wonder, "Well, what will people think? Not only these church people, what will people think where I work, or where I go to school, or in my neighborhood?" And we're so concerned about public opinion and wanting to please the crowd, that sometimes we crucify Jesus in order to please the crowd.

But I'll tell you something else that conformed Pilate. And it was this matter of pride. Pilate was a very proud man. We read in John chapter 19 verses 9 and 10, that Pilate, "Went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, 'Whence art Thou?'" Where'd you come from? "And Jesus gave him no answer."

Now listen to this, "Then saith Pilate unto Him, 'Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?'" Now, here, here's a man so full of



himself, Pilate. He's saying, in effect, "Why are You silent? Don't you know who You're talking to? I am the Governor. I can have You crucified. I can set You free." It's very obvious that Pilate is an egotist, stuffed full of himself. I love what Jesus said to him. Jesus said in John 19:11, "You don't have any power, but that which was given you from above." Thank God for that.

What was it that's squeezing Pilate? Well, obviously there was pride that's squeezing him in and molding him. But you know, the main pressure that Pilate had upon him, it was the pressure of position and possessions. You see, Pilate had a soft job. He was the Governor. And whatever buttered his bread determined his conduct. If Pilate did not make the politically correct decision, if he did not do the politically correct thing, he could lose his job.

Put in your margin John 19 verse 12, "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.'"

Now Pilate said, "You know, they may go to Rome or send a message to Rome and say that I'm consorting with another king, and everybody knows that only Caesar is lord around here. And Caesar may get angry and I may lose my job, or worse than that."

And there are some of you, you're afraid that if you gave your heart to Jesus Christ and did what you know that you ought to do, that it may cost you. It may cost you a promotion. It may cost some of you material goods. "Well," you say, "Pastor, a man's got to live." No, a man's got to die, and after that he's got to face God. But, again, here's Pilate. He's being molded. He's being squeezed. There were voices that confronted him and there were values that controlled him.

But now I want you to notice the verdict that condemned him. What he did was, he said, "Let Him be crucified," Matthew 27:26. Now, why did he do this? Why did Pilate do this and how did he do it? Well, we know, we know that he had light. We know there was pressure upon him. But I want you to notice how he kind of fence-straddled, how he tried to get through this thing.

First of all, he did what many in this building may try to do, and that was simply to ignore Jesus. Just to somehow put Him off, put Him away. Read there in John chapter 18 verse 31, "Then said Pilate unto them, 'Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law.' The Jews, therefore, said unto him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.'"

Now, what does all of this mean? They brought Jesus to Pilate. They said, "Look! We want you to put this man to death." Pilate said, "What's He done?" "Well, He says, I am the Messiah, I am God." Pilate said, "Oh, look, you take Him. You judge Him according to your law."

Now, what was he saying? He was saying, "Don't bother me with this. I have more important things to do. I am not interested in making a decision concerning this person. You make the decision." Pilate thought that perhaps he could ignore Jesus. And perhaps there's some of you've already tuned me out. You say, "That's for all you folks over there. That's all you religious people. Don't bother me with this." You think that simply ignoring Jesus will answer the solution. That's what Pilate tried to do. He tried to ignore Jesus, but Jesus was inevitable, unavoidable, inescapable. And the



Jesus that you're trying to ignore, one day you will face in the judgment.

Number two. Not only did he try to ignore Jesus, but he tried to shift the decision to someone else. When he heard that Jesus was from Galilee, then he said, "Well, Herod rules up there in Galilee. Herod's the King of Galilee. Let's let Herod make the decision." And so read in Luke 23 verses 6 and 7, "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time." Herod was the King of Galilee, and Pilate said, "Well, that's fine. I'll just let somebody else decide this."

May I tell you something? This is a personal question. Sin is personal, and so is your decision, and nobody can make this decision for you; your father, your mother, your rabbi, your priest, some politician. No one can make this decision for you. You cannot shift the decision to somebody else. You have a decision to make. And so, when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, Herod just sent Him right back to Pilate. And Pilate had Jesus on his hands again. It reminds me of a man who bought a new boomerang and killed himself trying to throw the old one away. Jesus is right back to Pilate. There's no way that you're going to shift the decision.

Now, here's something else he did, and this is the most despicable thing, I believe. He sought simply to admire Jesus. He thought if he could give some platitudes about Jesus, if he could say some nice things about Jesus, then perhaps it would be all right. Luke 23 verses 14 and 15, "Pilate said unto them, 'Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people, and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him. No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him.'"

Now think about it. Pilate, who allowed Jesus to be crucified, who by his own words could have released Jesus or crucified Jesus, said this, "I find no fault in Him." And yet, he allowed Him to be crucified. Do you know what he was doing? He's thinking if he could just say some nice things about Jesus, that would be enough.

Now, look up here and I want to tell you something. It would be better for Pilate to have found fault in Jesus. Of course, there was none. But it would have been better for him to have fault in Jesus, or even to have thought that he found fault in Jesus, than to find no fault in Him and allow Him to be crucified. It would have been better for him to have been a pagan who'd never heard of Jesus than to say, "I find no fault in Him," and then simply admire Him and then allow Him to be crucified.

Now, many try this trick. Many try this route: to say nice things about Jesus. "Oh, I believe that Jesus was a great man. Oh, I believe that Jesus was a great teacher." My precious friend, listen to me. It is not enough for you to tip the hat to Jesus; you must bow the knee to Jesus. It is not enough for you just to say, "I find no fault in Him," and think that, therefore, you're all right because if you find no fault in Him, and yet do not accept Him, acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior, what kind of a knave are you?

Now, last of all. The last thing that, that Pilate did that convicted him so much, the verdict that condemned him, was he attempted to remain neutral. He thought that he could just simply wash



his hands of the whole matter.

Look in Matthew 27 verses 22 through 24, "Then Pilate saith unto them, 'What shall I do with Jesus, which is called the Christ?' They all say unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.' And the governor said, 'Why, what evil hath He done?' They cried out the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified.' And when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, he took water," now, watch this, "and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it.'"

What he thought was, "Look, I'm washing my hands of this whole affair. I am not saying yes, I'm not saying no. It is your decision. I am neutral!" You can't be neutral about Jesus. When Pilate said, "I am neutral," when Pilate said, "I will not make a decision, you'll make a decision," that was the worst decision that Pilate ever made. Because not to decide is to decide not to decide. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12 and verse 30, "He that is not with Me is against Me; he that gathereth not with Me, scatters abroad."

And I'm telling you that an ocean full of water could not have washed the sin from Pilate's hands. And when the gavel fell in Pilate's court, there was another gavel that fell in Heaven, and when Pilate allowed Jesus to be condemned, Pilate was condemned. And I'm telling you today that you cannot be neutral concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot, you cannot.

Now, the first trial of the Lord Jesus was a mockery of justice. So I'm going to put Jesus on trial again today. And I have had this chair put up here to represent the Lord Jesus. He is in the prisoner's dock. And I'm going to take you, this congregation, and impanel you today as a jury. And I'm going to ask you to make a decision that I have already called a pertinent, a personal, a present, and a pressing decision. I'm going to ask you to answer the question in verse 22, "What think ye of Christ?" You're the jury. You're impaneled as a jury. Jesus is in the prisoner's dock, and I'm going to bring some witnesses, first of all, from Bible times. And the words of these witnesses will be taken directly from the Bible, the Word of God. I will not give you chapter and verse in order to save time, but I want you to listen as we call some witnesses and adjure them to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The first witness that I call is a man that Jesus said in Matthew 11:11, "Not greater was born of woman than this man." His name is John the Baptist. Now, John, you baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. You knew Jesus from boyhood. John, would you tell the court and tell the jury what think ye of Christ? Hear John the Baptist as he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." [John 1:29] Thank you, John, for that testimony. You may be seated.

Now I would like to call another who often spoke, sometimes thoughtlessly, but I'm going to ask you, Simon Peter, to be very careful. And I want you to tell the courtroom now, who is this? What do you think, Simon Peter, of the One here in the prisoner's dock? I hear Simon Peter as he says, looking into the face of the Lord that he loves, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." [Matthew 16:16] Oh, big fisherman, Simon Peter, thank you very much for that and for that honest testimony.

And now I'm going to call a sort of a mystic, a man who has a pensive and thoughtful spirit, different perhaps from Peter. I call John the apostle. John, you were with the Lord Jesus. Would you



tell us what you think of Him? Hear the apostle John as he says, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth." [John 1:14] Thank you John, be seated.

Thomas, you were a follower of His. For a while you had difficulty believing. Thomas, you saw the nail prints in His hands and in His side. Thomas, would you tell the court and tell the jury what you think of Christ? Thomas bows his knee and he says, "My Lord and my God." [John 20:28] Thank you, Thomas, for that testimony.

Well, we've had the testimony of men. Is there not a woman who can testify? Martha, would you come, tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? This man spent many happy days in your home. You observed Him in all sorts of situations. Martha, would you tell the courtroom what you think of Him? Martha says, "I believe that You are the Son of God." [John 11:27] Thank you so much, Martha.

Well, but these are humans. Is there some other that we might call? Could we, could we summon an angel? Put an angel here under oath? Angel, would you tell us who this is, holy angel? See the angel as he stands and looks into the face of Jesus and says in Luke chapter and verse 11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

Well, all right, but we've only heard from His friends. Can't we hear from some of His enemies? Can't we hear from others why they allowed Him to be crucified? The Pharisees wanted Him crucified. Pharisee, wrap your self-righteous robes around you and look at Jesus, and tell us why you wanted Him crucified. "This man receiveth sinners." [Luke 15:2] Aren't you glad He did? "This man receiveth sinners." Is that all you have to say against Him? Pharisee, be gone.

Caiaphas, you were the high priest. You wanted Him crucified. Caiaphas, you tell us why you wanted Him crucified? "He said I am the Son of God." [Matthew 25:57-66] Oh? Thank you, Caiaphas. Would you be seated?

Let's call the centurion. You helped drive those scalding nails into His quivering palms. Centurion, tell us now. You watched Him die. The centurion says, "Truly this was the Son of God." [Mark 15:39] And yet you helped nail Him to the cross. Be gone.

There was one who betrayed Him, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. An arch fiend, the lowest of the low, Judas, who sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Judas, would you tell us what you think of Him? Judas says, "I have betrayed innocent blood." [Matthew 27:4]

Pilate! You had Him crucified. Tell us what you think of Him. Pilate says, "I find no fault in Him." [John 19:4]

Wait a minute. You called angels. Why don't you call a demon? All right, I summon a filthy, dirty demon from the pit. Demon, I adjure you by God, tell the truth. "We know Thee, who Thou art, the holy One of God." [Luke 4:34] Back to the pit, demon!

We've heard the testimony of His friends. We've heard the testimony of His enemies. We've heard the testimony of angels. We've heard the testimony of demons. But somebody says, "But wait a minute. Those were all from a different time, way back yonder! Aren't there any



contemporary witnesses?”

Yes, there are. There are some contemporary witnesses. And I'm going to ask some of them to come right now and share a testimony and tell us today what you think of Jesus, which is called the Christ. Introduce yourself and tell the courtroom what think ye of Christ?

Well, my name is Paul Kuhlman, and I was saved January 2, 1977. I was 38 years old. And I was drinking my life away. Sober days were few and far between. And I went to a church service that night. I didn't go because I wanted to; I went because I was trying to get some points with my wife and my family, because my conduct had been so poor over the Christmas holidays. And during the sermon I recognized my need for the Lord Jesus Christ. But during the invitation I did not go forward because of pride and because of embarrassment.

When we got home, my wife and family went to bed, and I was in my family room by myself, and I got down on my knees and I prayed a very simple prayer. It went something like this, "Lord Jesus, please save me." And He did. And I would like to tell you some of the things that He did for me.

You know, the Bible says in Second Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." And the first thing that Jesus did for me was He took away bad habits that I had, the drinking habit, the smoking habit, filthy magazines, lewd and horrible language that I always used. And He took those right away from me.

The Lord Jesus gave me a new appearance. I looked like part of me was backordered when I got saved, and He began to put some meat on my bones and He removed the stains and the smells of the habits that I had had. And He put a new countenance on my face and a new spring in my step, and I really did become kind of a new person. I just looked really different.

And the Lord Jesus, you know, I used to hang around with people. Misery loves company, and I hung around with people that were very miserable. And the Lord Jesus gave me brand new friends, friends that loved me and undergirded me, and some of them are seated right in this auditorium today.

And the Lord Jesus gave me a new relationship with all of my children. And He gave me a new marriage in Christ. And that's one other thing that the Lord Jesus did for me: He gave me a new destiny. Folks, I'm on my way to Heaven, and I'm going to be there with the Lord Jesus Christ for eternity. Thank you.

My name is Steven Holly and this is my wife, Lee. When we first married, I felt like having her would be fulfillment of everything in my heart, the void that was in my heart. It didn't take long to realize that when you put the burden of your total happiness on an individual, like your spouse, it wears down and very quickly.

It also didn't take long for Satan, who's very real, to make his way in our life and to wedge himself between us. In a very short period of time I started seeking out, selfish desires and Satan convinced her that it wasn't worth hanging on to someone that's prideful and selfish like a man like I was. So, we broke apart.

I'll tell you that the void in my life that was there before and then after we became separated was very real and it ached even more, so I sought counsel. And I went to a man who very quickly turned



me to the one true counselor, Jesus.

Jesus who's very real in the fact that He was the keeper of my salvation from an early age. Was nothing more than just that. I figured He wasn't there for my day-to-day life. But then I began to trust Him in my day-to-day life. I started seeking His counsel in prayer and through His Word. And He made me realize that I, alone, allowed Satan into our home and to bind us up and to tear us apart, and I was responsible for it.

So He made me go and seek forgiveness of my wife and of God. And my wife would not, and could not take me back at that time. And then Jesus counseled me in the way that I'd have to accept the possibility our marriage was truly over. And, indeed, we did get a divorce. But Jesus was not through with us yet. He worked in me. He worked in my life. That promise He has of making you into a new creation, He worked in me and I was surprised. And little did I know that all along He was working in my wife's life too, to take her out of the bondage of bitterness and anger. And after a full year after our divorce was final, He brought us back and fully restored our marriage covenant. Jesus healed our marriage, and on top of that, because we heeded His counsel, He has blessed us and honored us with four wonderful little boys. Our marriage, our life, our family is a testimony, a living testimony to the fact that if you are hurting or in need, Jesus is your counselor and your healer, and He will comfort you.

My name is Debbie Gleason. And there are not adequate words to express the awesome, incredible, never-ending and ever-faithful Jesus Christ and what He means to me. That was something I always thought I believed, but never did I believe it so strongly as when my husband, Joe, was diagnosed with colon cancer. And, Joe's incredibly strong faith and never-wavering belief that God is in total control, kept us focused on eternal things.

And through his four year illness, I never once saw him distraught or hopeless because he knew that Heaven was just ahead. I cannot say that it has been easy; it hasn't. I cannot say that I understand why it happened; I don't. And I can't say that there's not sadness in my heart, for there is. But there is one wonderful lesson I have learned through all this, and that is that no one or nothing can take away my joy, for its foundation is Jesus Christ.

I think back over the last weeks of my husband's life, and he kept saying, "I just don't think God is through with my life yet." And now I know what God was revealing to Joe. He wasn't through; He still isn't through with Joe's life, for I know many, many times I have been, and I know others have been, strengthened by the way that Joe led his life and the way that God's faithfulness saw us through Joe's death. One of my favorite verses has become Second Corinthians 4:17. It says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight in glory." I know that my Jesus is faithful, for Heaven is still ahead.

"But Pastor, these are selected witnesses. Don't you have any at random?" Yes, I do. Are there those in this auditorium this morning who would say, "I have found Him faithful, and I love Him with all of my heart?" Would you lift your hand? Praise God. Hallelujah. Take your hands down. Thank you



for that acknowledgement.

But now I want us to get very quiet and very reverent because I call a final witness. With great humility, I call to the witness stand Almighty God. God the Father, would You tell us, who is Jesus? "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:17] And, friend, that testimony is true. The testimony of God Himself.

And let me tell you what God the Father did. When they nailed Jesus up on that cross, and they put Jesus in that cold, clammy tomb, and they said, "He is worthy of death! Crucify Him!" Almighty God reversed the decision of the court and raised Him from the dead. Romans 1:4, "And He is shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

You say, "You believe that?" Yes, I believe it. I believe it. The early apostles believed it. Many of them died for their faith. Men may live for a lie; few men will die for a lie. Men tell lies to get them out of trouble, not into trouble. But these people were so totally convinced that Jesus came out of that grave.

Now it's time. You're the jury, and you're going to register your decision. Take out your invisible ballot. Take out your invisible pen. In a moment, you're going to check a decision. "What will be the decision, Pastor?" Very simple. To crown Him or crucify Him. To acknowledge Him or reject Him. To receive Him or deny Him. And you will make a decision, and you cannot wash your hands, and you cannot be neutral. You will make a decision today. Even to decide not to decide would be the worst decision you could possibly make.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads bowed and eyes are closed. Would you pray? Those of you who've already given your heart to Jesus, gladly you will reaffirm your decision right now. Oh, with thanksgiving you'll reaffirm it. Those of you who've never yet done that, if you believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, if you believe these testimonies and these witnesses, and the witness from God Himself, and, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater," is what the Bible says in First John 5 verse 9, would you say, "Jesus, I believe You're the Son of God. And I believe You died for me on that cross, and I now receive You as my Lord and Savior. And because I believe it, and because I receive it, I will not be ashamed of You. Pilate let pride and public opinion stand in his way. Pilate let position and possessions stand in his way. They will not stand in my way. I will acknowledge You, Jesus, openly and publicly, as my Lord and Savior, regardless of the seeming cost. I will stand with You, my Lord, and I know You'll stand with me."

Father, I pray that many today will say an everlasting, "Yes" to Jesus Christ and not be ashamed of Him. In His dear name I pray, Amen.



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