

Pilate and the Crowd

by Robin McKeown

The greatest choice you will ever make is about Jesus Christ and salvation, and it's a choice that has eternal consequences.

Duration: 23:11

Scripture: Matthew 16:26, Matthew 27:11, Matthew 27:19-20, Luke 23:12, Luke 23:16, John 1:11

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Pilate and how his choice was influenced by the crowd. The preacher emphasizes that the crowd had a great sway on Pilate's decision. He then relates this to the present day, stating that when it comes to preaching the gospel, the crowd still plays a significant role. The preacher urges the audience to make the right choice and not be swayed by the crowd or the world, as their eternal destiny is at stake.

Transcript

Now turn with me please tonight for a fairly short reading to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 27. Matthew's Gospel in chapter 27. Verse number 11.

Matthew 27 and verse number 11. And Jesus stood before the governor, that's Pontius Pilate, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou seest. Now further down please to verse number 19.

When he, that is Pilate, was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Hath thou nothing to do with that just man? For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude, or the crowd, that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whither of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Now here's our text for tonight. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why? What evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

Now verse 22. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? Now that's our reading. May God bless it to every heart with what will follow.

Now this part of the meeting tonight, I want to speak to you about the greatest choice you will ever make. I mean, we have to admit that life, really, to a large extent, is taken up with making choices, and some of them are very important. Sometimes there's an issue for parents in regard to their children.

I mean, what school shall we send the children to? And there's an issue of choice. Then some of that responsibility subsequently passes to the children. They have choices to make.

At a certain stage in their life they have to make a choice about what subjects to pursue. Then they maybe get to, if they go as far as their advanced levels, I mean, what subjects do I take? And that's usually linked to what career do I pursue or shall I choose? Then other responsibilities come, and sometimes they're faced with a choice in regard to a great issue, even of marriage, that biblical institution. It is a major issue.

Even for believers it's a major issue in regard to a choice, say, for a young woman of a husband or for a young man of a wife. Life has largely to do with making choices. Sometimes an issue arises, where shall I live? Where shall I settle down? And there's an issue again of choice.

But my friend, tonight the greatest decision and choice you will ever make because all those things that I've talked to you about have largely to do with life on earth. This certainly has to do with life on earth but this has implications for eternal destiny. What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? You know, in this verse it's very interesting.

Even Pontius Pilate has acknowledged I know he was a Roman governor and as such he was judged on that occasion. I believe his choice was much deeper than that. What shall I do? It's individual.

There's not a man or a woman or a boy or girl in this tent tonight who has not if you haven't already done it to make a choice in regard to Christ the Lord Jesus Christ. What shall I? It's personal. It's individual.

What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ? This choice is about the Saviour who came into the world this very day that Pilate made his choice was the day the Lord Jesus Christ would hang on the cross at Calvary that you might be saved. Oh, I can see him descending the sky seeking for me, for me. He came to die on the cross that you might be saved and you have a choice to make.

Maybe you will make that choice tonight. I want us to think of four issues that influenced this man's choice and I believe today when it comes to the preaching of the gospel these four issues or elements are still involved. Here's Pilate facing a choice and I want to tell you something that had great sway with Pilate in regard to the choice he made was the crowd.

The crowd! We see its impact on this man. It's very interesting in this version he said unto them and he never should have asked the crowd. He never should have asked them.

He said unto them really he had to make his own choice. You know I want to say this to you. If you were to go down the Wimslow Road tonight and go into some of the places of entertainment and if this were possible for you to call order in a bar and get the people to listen to you and say look I'm faced with a choice can you folk help me tonight what I should do? I heard in the gospel of the man who died on the cross that I may be saved and I have a choice to make about that man.

What do you think I should do? Well you might be ridiculed or possibly even laughed out of the bar. You want to hear a true story? Back in Ireland there was a man, this story was told by a preacher called Fred Bingham who's now in heaven. He told it when he was preaching in a town called Macrophel.

He told this story about a man called John whose mother was saved. And every night John went out after his evening meal and he went to a pub. And when he went out his mother got down on her knees to pray for John.

One day I wouldn't say she grew weary with praying but one day she could take it no longer. She got up from her knees and put on her coat on the winter's night and out she went. She went to the first pub and she couldn't find John.

She went to the next pub and she didn't find him. Eventually she found John in the crowd sitting over at the bar with his pint. She caused a stir.

She stood at the door when she went into the pub and she called, John! And he looked round and he said, yes mother. She said, John come out of here and come home. John put down his pint in the bar.

He got off the bar stool and he started to walk out. And then the taunt started, John you're tied to your mother's apron string. John turned round and he said, I have a question to ask you all tonight.

Which of you men will go to hell in my place? One of them answered on behalf of the rest, John we don't want to go ourselves and we're certainly not going to go for you. He said, I'll never be back. I'm going home to trust my mother's Saviour.

John made the wise choice. Maybe there's a man sitting here tonight and this may be relatively new to you. That's why we like to keep it simple and focused and plain.

Come make your choice. For life or death eternal. It's Christ or the world.

The broad or narrow way. The father's house or the abode infernal. Hell itself.

The father's house or the abode infernal. Eternal joy or sorrow, you must choose today. This is on my heart tonight.

And I believe God is speaking to someone here. You see the crowd or the world if you want to call it that. Do you know what the Bible says? Do you not know that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

My friend, make the choice tonight. Let the language of your heart be Christ for me. Christ for me.

You know Robert Murray McShane, the great Scottish preacher. Some of you believers here will have that book, *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McShane* by Andrew Bunnar. Well, I love his poetry.

The back of that book there's several of his poems, some of them related to his visit to the Holy Land, as it's sometimes called. But he wrote another one near the beginning of the book. As far as I can recall it was a relation of his, a young woman.

And her parents came to Robert Murray McShane very distressed about her because she said, as regards getting saved and trusting Christ. Here was her language. I am going to stay with the world.

She made a choice. She chose the crowd. Robert Murray McShane wrote a poem.

Does this describe you tonight? Whether a young woman or maybe a young man? She has chosen the world. And it's paltry crowd. She's chosen the world.

And an endless crowd. She's chosen the world with its misnamed pleasures. She has chosen the world before heaven's own treasures.

She has launched her boat on life's giddy sea. And her all is afloat for eternity. But Bethlehem's star is not in her view.

And her aim is far from the harbour true. When the storms descend from an angry sky, ah, where from the winds will her vessel fly? When the stars are concealed and the rudder is gone. And heaven is barred to the wandering one.

My friend tonight, if you choose the crowd and the world, you can't get into heaven. This is about making a choice. And we would to God tonight that you would make the right choice.

Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Did you not know tonight your soul's eternal destiny is at stake? I love the words of the little hymn. I don't think it's in this book.

Decide for Christ today. And God's salvation scene yields soul and body, heart and will to Him who died for thee. The man was swayed by the crowd.

I'd like to stay with that, but our time's going too quickly. You know there was more than the crowd involved in Pilate's choice. If we were to turn to Luke's gospel, chapter 23, you needn't turn to it.

In verse 12, you'll read these words. The same day, literally means that very day, Herod and Pilate were made friends together. Friends together.

For before they had been at enmity between themselves. Not the crowd. It's a companion.

A friendship. Mind you, there are people in hell tonight because a friendship kept them back from Christ. That's a big statement.

Would you like me to illustrate it for you, would you? I'll never forget some years ago mentioning this illustration in the town of Dunganon. And I didn't know in the meeting that night, there was a husband and wife called John and Mary sitting in the meeting. This is a story about a man called John and his wife called Mary.

He was reared with a gospel background, but he didn't get saved. And he started to court this woman and he eventually married her. And when they got married, she says, John, you will not be back to any gospel meeting.

I don't want anything to do with the gospel. One night they were coming home in their sports car. Left the road and down into a deep ravine.

The woman climbed out of the wreckage virtually unscratched and she leaned in to pull out her husband. And he was lying, just dying in the wreckage of the car. And he screamed at her.

He said, Mary, get away! She couldn't understand it. He said, you've barred my way to heaven. You wouldn't let me go to hear the gospel, but he made the choice.

Not altogether fair to blame his wife, was it? He made the choice. You know, I want to tell you a young woman called Diane. She's the exact contrast.

Just over a year ago, preaching in Balamine in some gospel meetings. This young woman was 21 years of age and she was coming really well and I thought, Diane has an interest in getting saved. That's why you're here tonight.

You've an interest in getting saved. Well, it was a Thursday night. And Diane was in the gospel meeting and after the meeting she got a phone call from her boyfriend to say, we'll go out tomorrow night.

Diane says, I'm not going out tomorrow night with you. She said, but we go out in a free afternoon. You've got to come with me.

He says, I'm not going. He was angry with her. But his anger didn't influence her.

She said to him, I'm going to the gospel meeting because I want to get saved. She made a choice and Diane got saved. This is about making a choice.

Come make your choice. It may be now or never. Tis worse than madness.

Longer to delay. Now is the hinge of all the vast forever. Tomorrow never cometh.

You must choose today. A companionship. What about you tonight? Is there a relationship that means more? Do you remember, do you remember the parable of the great supper in the bible? In Luke's gospel chapter 14 a man says, I've married a wife and I cannot come.

That was a relationship. I don't believe there's any relationship on earth that is more important than you getting saved. Do you know what I feel as I stand here? I think God's speaking to somebody here tonight.

Think of eternity. You know in our hymn book back home there's some solemn hymns about eternity and I love them. I really do because you've got a, you know, eternity, time soon will end.

Its fleeting moments pass away. Won't be long to stay and you have this choice to make. And there's a man who died on the cross that you might be saved and he laid down his life, the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

I'm saying to you tonight, you have a choice to make. There was a companionship, a friendship forged. You know there's a poem that was written about Judas Iscariot but part of it could have been written about Pilate.

Sold for a godless friendship. Sold for a selfish aim. Sold for a fleeting trifle.

Sold for an empty name. Sold with the awful bargain. None but God's I can see.

Ponder my soul the question. Will he be sold by thee? Come on my friend tonight. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Will you receive him tonight? That's a choice you have to make. It's very interesting when we look at Pilate. Do you know what was troubling the man? It was quite a factor over these hours of the trial.

Do you know what it was? It was his conscience. Pilate knew what he should do. The Bible's very clear about that.

We even read the verse tonight. He challenged it. Why? What evil have they done? He said to the people, I, having examined them before you, touching those things whereof you accuse them have found no fault in this man.

It is no cause of death in him. He called him this righteous person. See, he knew what he should do.

He got a message from his wife. Some people would criticize Pilate's wife. I don't.

I take it very positively what that woman did. Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man? I have suffered many things in a dream this day because of him. In other words, Pilate was getting it.

He was getting it again. And he said, I am innocent. You know, he wore innocent in the blood of this righteous person.

He was just like you in the tent tonight. He knew what he should have done. There are people in hell tonight who knew what they should have done when faced with the claims of Christ.

Oh, how can you reject such matchless love? Oh, how can you the Saviour's claims disown? Come, bow your heart in gratitude and claim this Saviour as your own. Choose him tonight. I have a brother in Venezuela, and if he was standing here tonight to tell you how he could save, he could save when he was sixteen.

Noel was sitting up near the front of the Gospel Hall that particular night. I had a brother who got saved at the beginning of the year 1963. Then I got saved on the 24th of November, 1963.

Then my brother Stephen got saved three days later. And Noel, this was coming very close to him. He says, I sat in a Gospel meeting.

Just the way you folk are sitting tonight. We have to give credit for the way you listen. We appreciate it deeply.

But Noel wasn't just listening. He was thinking very seriously. He said it came to him like this.

I have a choice to make. He said, sitting in that Gospel meeting, I bowed my head and I chose Christ. And he's now telling others about the Lord Jesus Christ out in the land of Venezuela.

He's telling them of the Saviour. Mate, if you get saved, there's no telling what God could do with you, and how he could use you, but don't expect him to use you if you're not saved. Choice.

Deeply influenced by the crowd. Swayed by a companion. The forging of a friendship.

Conscience speaking to him. Then do you know what he tried to do? Just whatever a sinner tries to do. It doesn't work.

He tried compromise. You see, what do you mean? Well, I'll explain exactly what I mean. He tried compromise.

Twice in Luke chapter 23, I think it's verses 12 and 16. Twice, he says, I will therefore chastise him. He thought that'll please the crowd.

And release him. That'll salve my conscience. That's compromise.

I will therefore chastise him. That'll keep the crowd happy. And release him.

That'll keep me happy. But I want to tell you, the crowd would not compromise, and the crowd never compromises. Would you be bold enough tonight to say in the very language of your heart, my old companions, very well, I will not go with you to hell.

I mean with Jesus Christ to dwell. I will go. Now I want to bring it right down to what you've got to do tonight if you're going to be saved.

I'm going to move to the gospel of John for this. You know the beginning of the gospel of John in chapter 1. It says of the Lord Jesus Christ, He came unto His own and His own received Him not. They made the wrong choice.

But as many as received Him. That's how you get saved. You see, Pilate wouldn't do that.

He took sides with the crowd. But as many as received Him. That's how you get saved.

To them give ye power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name. My friend, you have a choice tonight. You could receive Christ in the very seat where you sit.

Or alternatively, what you might do is John 12 and 48. The language of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what He said? He said, He that rejecteth Me.

There it is. There's your choice. He that rejecteth Me is one that judgeth Him.

The word that I have spoken the same shall judge Him in the last day. There's your choice tonight. Christ is before you.

He died on the cross to save you and you can either receive Him or reject Him. Now what are you going to do? Do you remember what Zacchaeus did? He received Him joyfully. That's what you should do and get saved even this very night.

Oh, what rejoicing it would be in your heart if you trusted Christ. Receive Him as your Saviour. May God bless His Word.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23561.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robin-mckeown/pilot-and-the-crowd/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net