

I Am Barabbas. and So Are You

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the parallels between Barabbas and our own struggles with sin, temptation, and the necessity of true repentance.

Duration: 43:04

Scripture: Matthew 27:1

Topics: "Repentance", "Grace and Redemption"

Description

Shane Idleman delivers a powerful sermon titled 'I Am Barabbas. and So Are You,' emphasizing the profound truth that we, like Barabbas, are guilty and deserving of death, yet Jesus took our place on the cross. He explores the nature of sin, temptation, and the difference between remorse and true repentance, urging listeners to recognize their need for God's mercy. Idleman highlights the dangers of being bound by sin and the importance of turning back to God for redemption. He draws parallels between Barabbas and ourselves, reminding us that Jesus' sacrifice offers us freedom from guilt and shame. The message culminates in a call to embrace the finished work of Christ and to live in the light of His grace.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 27, the title of the message is, I am Barabbas and so are you. And that's going to make sense once we get to the end of the message. But right now I'm just going to read in Matthew 27.

I can tell you what page it is in my Bible, but that might not help most of you. Matthew chapter 27, now let's set up the backdrop for a minute. Jesus has been taken.

He was in the garden of Gethsemane. Judas betrayed him with the Judas kiss, the betrayal, the kiss of betrayal. They took Jesus and he asked them, why have you come out to get me like a thief and a robber? I was talking with you daily in your temple and why are you here now trying to capture me? And they captured him, they took him.

Of course he could have called down 12 legions of angels and wiped them out, but he went according to God's will. So now chapter 27 verse 1 says, When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

A little background, if you recall from a few weeks ago, the nation of Israel had been conquered by the Romans. They were under Roman governance, the Roman officials were actually in charge, and the Jewish leaders could not put anybody to death. That ability of the death penalty was taken away from the nation of Israel.

So they had to seek out a Roman official. And this really caught my eye this week. I shared last night, and a lot of people I think were helped because of it, but it says that Jesus was bound and then led away.

He was bound and led away. And for some reason this week the thought came to me, it kept reoccurring, that that's exactly what Satan does to us. He will bind you and then he'll lead you in a direction you don't want to go.

And the definition of bound is a movement, your movement is restricted and we are led to places we don't want to go. So the first thing Satan wants to do, in case you're wondering, yes, he's after you. He's after you today, he's after you this week, he's after your family.

And he comes in three different ways. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. So you think you've got your lust mastered and your eye mastered, well here comes the pride of life to take you out.

Those three areas is where he attacks. And the demonic element here we saw in Jesus' time, you realize, right, demons don't die? These demonic influences that were alive then are just as alive now and working in our culture and in our world and in our church. So what the enemy does, he wants to bind you and once you're bound, you know exactly what I'm talking about if you've been there, then he leads you in a direction you don't want to go.

Why? Because you're bound, you're caught in sin. And that's the whole point, that's what sin wants to do. And I want to read James, many of you have heard this verse before, but I want to read James 1.13 and tie it in here.

Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God. And this is important, many people get mad at God. They say, God, why are you allowing this? Why don't you take this desire away? Why don't you take this addiction away? Why don't you take this from me? God, it's your fault.

I've heard that before. But James says, 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.

Now there's a big difference between a temptation and a testing. If we had time, we could uncover that. But just know that God doesn't put that temptation, he doesn't force you to be tempted.

But here's what happens. But each one of us is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. That's why I often say, I'm not as worried about the devil as I'm worried about the devil within.

Because you know where he's coming, but this one, this temptation, this desire within is constantly there. It's constantly pulling us away from God. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires, and then he's enticed.

Then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. So if you're ever wondering where is this sin going to lead that I'm playing with, it's going to lead to

some type of death, death spiritually, death physically.

Death is separation, separation from God. And the reason many people feel distant, I can name a dozen people in my family right now who are very distant from God because they have allowed besetting sin to bind them and trap them and lead them away. You're like, oh goodness, what's the answer? Well, temptation isn't wrong.

It's the door. It's whether you walk through that door and you enter into temptation, or you walk through the exit door and you leave. See, it's a very interesting concept here.

Each one is tempted when he was drawn away by his own desires and enticed. So I have a desire and I'm enticed in my mind. Where my mind goes, my feet follow.

So if I say that's a wrong thought, that's a wrong temptation, I'm closing the door on it and it's not going to lead me astray. I'm walking away from it. Or, what does it go on to say? But when that desire has conceived, that means there's birth there.

I'm thinking of it, now I'm going to do it. Now it's conceived, the end result of that is to bring forth death. So that's how the enemy works.

He tries to get you bound in something. You can go from pornography to eating too much. I mean, the list is long and extensive, but he has no new tricks.

He will go in an area of weakness that he's already won in an area of your life. The last place you were defeated, he's going to try to go into that area. And it's not just physical sin.

Sometimes it's mental. Have you ever been so angry and envious and jealous that it just eats you up? And your critical spirit, unteachable attitude, it's all consuming. That's actually where church division comes from.

When a church usually divides, I'm not talking about healthy church division, where the pastor says, I don't really believe this anymore, and I'm just going to give you my opinion, you just run for cover. But I'm talking about most church divisions that shouldn't happen are because the enemy gets in there and brings a critical spirit, an arrogant spirit, an unteachable spirit, an envious, a jealousy, an angry spirit, and we fight and we bicker and we just say, well, then I'm leaving. And with churches split over this.

So he works in that area as well. It's not just physical things that we do in the flesh, but also our mental capacity. So be careful there.

Once the enemy binds you, he wants to lead you astray. But thank God all you have to say is, this is wrong. Lord, I'm repenting.

I'm turning my life back over to you. But repentance isn't just sincerity. Anybody can say what I just said and not repent.

Actually, it happens quite a bit. Lord, I can't do this again. You ever say that? I can't do this again.

A month goes by. I can't do this again. Lord, help me now.

And you're like, it's been a year. What is going on? That repentance, see, that's just being sincere. Repentance says this is wrong and I'm turning from it.

That's actually the definition of repentance. It's a change of mind that leads to a change of action. So now picking up in verse 3, then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that he had been condemned.

So I guess apparently Judas didn't think Jesus was going to be condemned. Because once he saw that he was condemned, he was remorseful. And he actually brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.

Saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us? You see to it. Then they threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed and went.

And Jesus, I'm sorry, then Judas threw down the pieces of silver in the temple, departed and he went out and he hung himself. And it's interesting because we have this image of Judas. Nobody names their son Judas, I've said before.

And this terrible person, which he was. The Bible says it was better for him to never have been born. But somehow I feel sorry for this guy because he realizes Jesus is condemned.

I've betrayed innocent blood. And he's trying to give back the money. People say, well, did he repent? Well, that's up to speculation.

But when the Bible says it's better for him to have never been born, he betrayed Christ, I have a feeling he's not in a good spot. Because he tried to handle this problem also on his own. Like Peter though, we need to run to God's mercy, not our own solution.

See, that's the difference. Peter denied Christ three times we read about earlier. What did he do? Did he go out and hang himself? No, he said, I deny the Lord.

I'm going to repent and become a strong pillar of the church. I'm going to learn from this and God's going to bless it. Judas, on the other hand, felt sorry, remorseful, and went out and hung himself.

And you have to be careful because there is a difference between remorse, worldly sorrow, and genuine repentance. Sometimes they look the same. How do they look the same? By little water things coming out right here.

Oh, goodness gracious. Both have tears. But the remorseful side is sorry I got caught.

Sorry my reputation is on the line. Sorry people are going to think this way about me. And this person is usually remorseful, but they also have a lot of excuses.

Well, she made me do it. Or he made me do it. Or mommy keep getting personal.

It's excuses, but, but, but. And they're remorseful, but they're not repentant. Peter showed genuine repentance.

And I like what J.I. Packard said about repentance. Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past. Repentance is a change of mind and a change of heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior.

That's exactly what repentance is. Now, there's also two kinds of repentance. I might as well touch base on this.

There's repentance where a person, if you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that God is not Lord of your life, you know about Him, but you don't know Him, the Bible says you must repent. You must repent. Basically, you must see sin as God sees sin.

You must see your need for a Savior, and you repent. You acknowledge that. God, I need you.

I'm repenting. I'm changing my heart. I'm changing my mind.

And God, somehow, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the conviction, the drawing, that new birth takes place. But then believers are often in a state of repentance. Lord, I'm sorry for that.

That's not right how I treated that person. I need to repent and refocus my mind, my thoughts, towards your will, towards your way. Because a believer can walk in the wrong direction as well.

So it takes repentance to turn us back and to be walking the right path. And you can usually tell if a person is genuinely repentant because the fruit will follow. At some point, there will be fruit.

This person will tell you everything you want to hear. Everything you want to hear, this person will tell you. But then in about three days, you'll get a call from this person's spouse saying, Nothing has changed.

Nothing has changed. They're back to their old ways. Nothing has changed.

They just told you what you wanted to hear. They were sorry because they got in trouble. You see the difference? Repentance wants to fix what they broke.

A repentant person wants to renew what they broke down. A person who truly repents wants to restore that broken relationship to God or others. So it's a very important piece here that Judas, he was obviously remorseful.

He saw that Jesus would be condemned. Maybe he didn't think Jesus would be condemned. Maybe he thought, I'll take 30 pieces of silver, they'll take Jesus, and Jesus will just vanish.

But now he understands that that's not happening. You know, I'm reading a book I wanted to share with you. If you have read this before, you might want to read it again.

It's called Finishing Strong by Steve Farrar. It's a men's book about finishing strong. Because most people who start out in ministry don't end in ministry.

Most people who start out strong in their faith don't end up strong in their faith. Why? Because it's a yearly battle. And finishing strong is very important.

So I just want to encourage you in that area as well too. Finishing strong is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your family. Look at Judas versus Peter.

Look at how they're looked at now, Judas versus what Peter did. So finish strong. The enemy is going to try to knock you off track.

Yes, it's very important to start well. Please start well. But the whole point is to finish strong.

I think it's like 1 out of 10 pastors who get involved in ministry in their 20s do not end up in the ministry in their 60s when they retire. Only 1 out of 10 does. Nine of them fall by the wayside.

And that book explains why. It's also a great resource for men. Verse 6, But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, It's not lawful to put them into the treasury because they are the price of blood.

And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called to fill the blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took thirty pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced and gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me.

And I thought it was interesting. Just a side note. It's not a real relevant thing.

But it wasn't, the Bible says, spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. It was actually spoken by Zechariah the prophet if you look at that. But why did the Bible mention Jeremiah? Well, that could take a little while to unpack.

But there's some people that feel that the Bible, the scribes would often go after, they would mention the major prophet. Or they'd say the prophet Isaiah, meaning all of the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were the four major prophets.

Or if you look at the Greek prefix for the word Zechariah, I believe it's Z-O-E, Jeremiah is I-O-U. So there might be in the transcribing a little variance there where the scribe didn't translate it correctly. But in your Bible, this passage is actually not Jeremiah, it's from Zechariah the potter's field.

So if you want more information on that, let me know. We can email that to you. We've got videos on that and different things.

But what I wanted to really point out from this is it's not lawful, they said, to put the money back into the treasury. It's the price of blood. So it was okay to take it out of the treasury to pay Judas to betray Jesus, but we can't put it back into the treasury.

Isn't that weird? I don't know, maybe it's just me, but they can use it to betray Jesus, but they can't put it back in. Here's one of the reasons why. Justifying sin is a very slippery slope.

Be careful. Do you know what a slippery slope is? Sometimes go outside on your back, if you have a sloping backyard, and put down a trash bag and put water on it. And try to stand on that slippery slope.

That's what happens when we try to justify sin. And we all have done it in the past, and we should repent if we continue to do that. But justifying sin is a slippery slope.

They pick and they choose what they wanted to believe. They pick and they choose what they thought was right. And we do that.

We justify, and here's how that usually starts, yeah, but. Yeah, but. I know what the Bible says, but.

And I know I need to work on that, but. Or I know I've got this, but. But yeah, I do that, but this.

And we justify this, but we won't justify that. And some of the people who are the hardest on judging people are often compromising in other areas. They'll tell their tax accountant, yeah, I had 55,000 miles of

write-offs.

Really, how about 5,000? Or they'll kind of justify all this stuff, but they'll be the hardest in this other area. And a lot of times you find where it comes out later where somebody's caught in sexual sin, and you go, oh, my goodness, how did that happen? These were the most godly people I knew. Well, were they, or were they most judgmental and harsh? And just, oh, the Word of God and the Word of God, but they're justifying, but over here they're not keeping this area in check.

So one thing I glean from this is don't justify sin. Don't justify wrong behavior. Take it before God and let God change that and work that in you.

So here's today's self-examination. Paul asked the Galatian church, you ran well. You ran well, church in Galatia.

Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. So Paul was saying, what happened, church? You were running so well, but you allowed a little sin to come in, and that little, please understand that sin does not stay static.

It does not just stay still. It either grows in your life and in my life, or it withers and dies. And it all depends on whether you're feeding or starving it.

And that's a big lie we think, well, I can just hold this. I mean, I hear people say, well, Shane, it's my one little vice. One little vice.

I've heard Christian couples try to excuse pornography in their marriage. Husband and wife. It's like, hello.

Boy, I didn't get too many amens in there. I hope this doesn't happen here. My goodness.

But we try to hide certain sins, and it grows and it grows. And I like what David Wilkerson wrote. He's asking, what in your life, and this is a good look at your life.

I looked at mine yesterday. What in your life, is there anything in your life that's keeping you from going on in the full blessing of Christ? You were doing so well at one time, especially as we get older. I'm talking now even to the 40 and up crowd or 50 and up crowd.

You were doing so well at one time. What happened? What hindered you? What has stopped you? You were on fire for God. You were witnessing.

You were reading your Bible. Something is stopping that. Something is in there, and it's infiltrating your life.

You were doing so well. I know you to be a praying people, laboring, but something is wrong. I don't see you growing anymore.

Instead, you've gone back to rely on your flesh. I don't sense the sweet aroma of Christ you once had. Something is hindering you.

What could have persuaded you to settle in this condition? And he continues, Whatever it is I tell you, it's not of God. I know so many Christians today who once were mightily used of God. These people were devoted.

They were praying. They were believing saints. But then something happened to them that somehow caused them to be hindered from experiencing the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Often, that hindering leaven was a single besetting sin. To all such people, Paul says, What happened? What's hindering the flow of Christ in your life? What leaven has crept in? A little leaven leavens a whole lump. And sometimes we can excuse things by saying, Well, I'm not caught in all those bad things, Shane.

But we have a very critical heart. And a heart that should be loving and teachable and broken and filled with joy has now hardened. And there's a hardness about us.

There's not a love for Christ. There's not a love for others. And we need to see that.

We need to see, Lord, I've become hard. I've become cold. I've become calloused.

I don't like what's happening in my life. And I don't like other believers. And Paul's asking, Where did that go? Where did that go? That's not Christ.

So something has crept in. You have to be careful because the enemy, I don't know about you. Maybe it's just me.

But he loves to just plant all this dissension in my mind. All this complaining and bickering and anger. It's like, Where is this coming from? And this situation and this situation.

A critical spirit and being angry and upset. And God says, No, break. Break before me.

Humble yourself before me. Because a critical attitude, a prideful, arrogant attitude is just as dangerous. As the man or the woman who looks at something they shouldn't on the Internet.

It's just as dangerous. Actually, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. And if we know our heart's not right before God, if we've grown cold and callous, we need to repent this morning.

Because that's a deadly sin. Well, Shane, how do I know? Well, how many times have I said this? Ask your spouse. Ask others.

I mean, as Christians, we should be the most loving, forgiving, understanding, gracious people on the planet. But why is it often the opposite? We walk around angry and critical and judgmental. It reminds me, like, of a contractor going through his home that he built, spec home, before he sells it.

And he's picking apart everything. You see that stucco up there? You see that paint job right there? You see the lighting fixture? You see the concrete work? You see the foundation? You see the sink? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that's how we come into church sometimes, critical and judgmental, when we should be joy-filled.

And as I'm preaching to you, I can be sitting right there. Because that happens to me just as easy as it happens to you. Why? Because those thoughts come in, right? There's that person again.

They don't like me. Oh, no. Oh, no.

Here we go. We start getting these, I mean, this morning, I mean, not this morning. I think it was the other morning.

God just really rocked my world when you look at what's going on in the news. You look at Afghanistan or Pakistan or Iraq or Iran. You look at the conditions people are living in.

And I can go to my wall and punch in a number that keeps my house at 80 degrees. I can go put a little, turn a little knob in my garage. It will heat my water.

I've got some cushion underneath my carpet. Look at this church we're sitting in. If you stop and you think how blessed you are, how blessed we are.

Why are we not more joyful and happy? God, thank you. Thank you for everything you've done. Instead of complaining and bickering, that's the heart of Christ is that we come together.

Why is unity so important? Because that's what keeps the church together. See, if I can get 10 or 12 or 15 of us to pray together, that's unity. One puts 1,000 to flight, but two, 10,000 to flight.

There's strength when we come together and we're not concerned about all these little things, but we're concerned for the cause of Christ. Even if you don't live in a big home, look at your house. I've got a timer that turns water on to water the green grass.

You realize, right, that 99% of the world does not have sprinklers and grass to go play on. Do you realize that? There's not a lawnmower guy that comes over and mows the lawn. Two cars? We're so blessed, and here's the problem.

The more blessed you get, the more prideful you can get. The more arrogant you can get, you think it's my right. It's my right.

I'm American. Haven't you read the Constitution? Well, I've read this. This precedes the Constitution.

Does it not? As patriotic as I am, I love our country. That's why that is on that side and the cross of Christ is on that side. Anybody who knows their flag knows the flag should be on the right side, but we say that Christ takes preeminence over the flag, and we acknowledge that God is higher than patriotism.

I love our country. I love our soldiers. I love everything about America.

I love that God has blessed us, but our blessing has become our curse when we think it's our right. Do you know the Bible talks about suffering for Christ? It does? Yeah. It talks about being suffering for God and putting down our rights, and that's what happens.

We can become so prideful and so arrogant that God can't work and God can't move. And people ask me weekly almost that, Shane, why aren't we seeing God move in America? Why aren't we seeing the churches broken before Him? Why are we so in a hurry? We're not worship nights, prayer nights. They're old news, and I don't have an answer other than hearts have grown hard, because when a heart is soft and God is working in a heart, you can't keep that person away from God.

Verse 11, Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus said to him, It is as you say. And while he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered, Nothing. Then Pilate said to him, Do you not hear how many things they testify against you? But he answered him not one word.

So the governor marveled greatly. Now you have to understand this setting. This is amazing.

Pontius Pilate is the person who can execute the person or let them go. So anybody in front of this executioner is going to be pleading their case like there's no tomorrow. They're lying.

They're this, please, I've got family, I've got friends. So he's never had anybody stand before him silent. Don't you want to answer anything they say against you? No, because I was born to die.

And later we'll read that Pontius Pilate says, Answer me because I can take your life or I can set you free. And Jesus says, You would have no power over me at all unless it was given to you from my Father above. So you better just stop this impression of Jesus as this weak, passive carpenter.

No man in this room could stand before their executioner and say that because we all know what we'd be doing, right? We'd be on our knees crying. Let me go. I have kids.

I have a family. No, it's not true. They're being mean to me.

Please, please, Pontius Pilate. And Jesus just stands there beaten. So Pontius Pilate is marveling.

I've never even seen this before. Why? Because you have total meekness in Christ. Do you know what the difference between meekness and weakness is? This is important because all of us in here need meekness.

Meekness is not being a doormat. Meekness is strength under control. It's like a little 12-year-old picking on Mike Tyson.

Right? Remember that guy? He's not going to win. But using that strength under control. Or you've got to use an example before.

You've got a big Dodge Hemi motor. You guys, 560 horsepower. It's strength under control.

It's under your control. It's not just running crazy. That's what meekness is.

Jesus could have wiped out that entire army. He could have evaporated Pontius Pilate. Right? Dust.

He could have said, let's start over. And bye-bye humanity. So that's meekness.

That's having the strength but holding that strength in. Verse 15, Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Brabus.

Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, Who do you want me to release to you, Brabus or Jesus who is called the Christ? For he knew that they had handed him over because of envy. The religious leaders handed Jesus over because of envy. Do you know what envy is? It's terrible.

It's deadly. Run for cover and repent. If there's some of that growing in your heart.

Because it doesn't just stay a nice little baby. It grows and has fangs and teeth. The green envy, right? It's just terrible.

Because it's just wanting what somebody else has. They lost all their followers to Jesus. This man spoke like no other man.

He taught like no other man. They said, who is this doing all these miracles? They were losing some of the religious leaders from Nicodemus to Joseph of Arimathea. All these people were going after Jesus and they were envious.

Same thing happens today. The devil will use envy every chance he gets. Every chance he gets.

So be careful there as well. For he knew they handed him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat.

So here you have Pilate sitting on the judgment seat. Jesus is not answering him anything. So he's sitting there going, what is wrong with this guy? Now to top it off, his wife comes running to him and says this.

Do not have anything to do with this just man. For I had suffered many things today in a dream because of him. And for the wife to go during this mock trial and stop what's happening.

Or go and call for Pontius Pilate and tell him this is unheard of. He's probably facing now this major decision of he's a just man. They handed him over for envy.

And now my wife is telling me she had a dream not to hurt this just man. So that's an incredible setting. And very difficult to make a right decision.

And just for a minute, I want to talk about this area of dreams. Let's just say dreams, be careful. Because I've seen people have dreams and get weird.

Okay, so be careful. However, I'm not one of those people who say, no, no, God will never use a dream. Because I can take you to Genesis where God led Abraham.

I can take you to Moses. I can take you to David. And then when we get in the New Testament, how about Joseph being warned in a dream to take Jesus away.

How about the wise men being warned not to go back to Herod. How about Peter having a dream about what is unclean and clean. So there's some scriptural evidence there for people having dreams.

Now this would take a whole sermon to unpack. But let me say this, just be very careful. A dream would never be, in my opinion, something that you would just act upon on its own.

Much like a word of wisdom or somebody gives you some advice. Like, hey, I really feel God's leading this. It always confirms scripture.

So if I have a dream of myself preaching in Illinois, I'm not going to move to Illinois. Right? Also what you look for is a continual pattern. Like, oh gosh, Daniel when he was, or Joseph also.

See, there's lots of dreams in the Bible. You think of, they call for Daniel. They call for Joseph because the pharaoh and that other king were having dreams.

They've had it twice. So you look for consistency. Sometimes, man, if I'm having the same dream.

And a lot of times I've noticed God will use it for warning. He'll warn or he'll confirm certain things. Interesting thing, my wife will remember.

I have it actually in my journal. This is probably 2001. Don't worry, I'm not getting into weird land here.

But I kept having these dreams where, I don't know why, and I still picture, I know when I see that building, I thought I saw the building. I'm not sure if it is yet. Time will tell.

But I would walk out the right side and this curtain, I'd move this curtain and there would be just a sea of people. And I'm going to speak to these people. You have to remember, this is 2001 or so.

I'm not a public speaker back then. I'm like, what is that all about? That is just weird. I'd wake up and a couple days later and the same kind of, you know, it happens.

So I'm reading at this time now Billy Graham's biography. It's a big, thick book. And I get to the part in there where it talks about Billy Graham would have dreams and he would see these areas or these groups of people that he would actually speak to and hasn't spoke to them yet.

So I just confirmed it because I'm praying this time, Lord, do you want me to go into health and fitness? Do you want me to do this? So I use it, that was a great confirmation for me to be, oh, okay, God's calling me to speak to people. It confirms so much and it just puts so many things to rest, especially when I read it in his book. Does that make sense? Those kind of things, oh, that's a confirmation of what's going on.

Or, you know, if you have this dream of, I mean, there's tons if you read about in the mission field. I've got books, if you're interested, where people have dreams about not going to a certain village and it would be reoccurring and they just, I can't do that. And God would warn them and something would happen.

So he can use and work in dreams, but just be careful. Because here's another illustration of going back or different sides. But on this side you have this group that doesn't believe in dreams at all.

I mean, just what I just mentioned would be like, no, no, no, I don't think so. Like, does it happen today? The gifts of the Spirit don't happen today. None of that stuff happens today.

All we have is the Word of God. We worship the Father, the Son, and the Word of God. We might mention the Holy Spirit now and then.

But so the dreams, visions, all that stuff is gone. Then you have this other side. They live for their dreams and visions.

You know what I'm talking about? It's all about the prophets are saying this and I have this dream and this dream and this dream. It's like, be quiet. Abraham went 10 years on one dream.

You didn't get to go one week. It's just all about dreams and visions and dreams and visions and dreams and visions. Right? That's not healthy.

I think I told, I don't know if I told it here or a while back in Lancaster. But there was a pastor in Lancaster. He had a guest speaker come in.

I was there. And he said, this person said, I had a dream that if we go to war with Iraq, remember that war a long time ago, that America won't have enough body bags. And I go, oh, my goodness.

Everybody said, oh, no, we can't go to war. And I think it happened. It was over.

And, you know, the casualties, even one life is sad. But the casualties are very low, very minimal. I don't remember, 2,200 or something.

But so he was way off base. And I asked the pastor back, oh, yeah, but not all the time. They don't get it right all the time.

Like, well, really? You're going to live like that? I mean, so what do you take and what don't you? So it's a very interesting topic. I'm not really into dreams and visions. I don't, other than what I just mentioned, I don't, I can't share dreams or visions much.

I don't have, you know, anything concrete. But I don't want to discount God. I mean, God has given, we've had dreams about, you know, maybe having another child and different things.

But vision is different. A vision would be like somebody is awake and they see just, they see something where God is opening up the spiritual eyes and they see a vision. Moses, the burning bush, people, there's tons of verses on people having visions.

But see how we can make that weird when God says this is how I want to speak sometimes to people? Because I love the Bible, but it didn't tell me, you know, to be a pastor. I would have never came across that at all had people not spoken into my life. And God gave me the dream or vision to confirm what he was doing.

So on this area of dreams and visions, this, and she, God gave this woman a dream to warn Pilate. So Pilate had all the warning. Regardless of what Pilate did, though, God's ultimate will would be fulfilled.

So maybe we'll do a sermon on dreams and visions someday. I said all that to say this, be careful. Be careful.

Because you can get off into a weird area. There's no other better way to word it. I can't find a better word, so I'll use the word weird.

Is that okay here? If you can think of a better word, let me know afterwards. Verse 20, but the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, Which one of the two do you want me to release to you? They said, Barabbas.

And Pilate said, What? What has he done to you? What shall I do with this person called the Christ? They said, Let him be crucified. Then the governor said, Why? What evil has he done? Can you see? Pilate's like, Come on, guys. Pontius Pilate's like, What evil has he done? I'll give you Jesus instead of Barabbas.

But the people do not want Jesus. And we sit here and go, That's amazing. Well, no, it's not.

The same thing applies in our culture, doesn't it? They don't want Jesus. Unless it's the Jesus they want. You know the Jesus, the genie in the bottle.

That Jesus. That's the Jesus they want. Three wishes.

God, Jesus, here's what I want, here's what I want. But they don't want Jesus or the Bible. Then Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that an uprising was occurring.

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. And all the people answered him and said, His blood be on us and on our children.

God, help us. Then they released Barabbas to them, and when they had scourged Jesus, he delivered him up to be crucified. And really the whole point of the message was this last part about being Barabbas.

You have your comparison. You have a murderer, a murderer, somebody who's been condemned to death. Barabbas was condemned to death.

He was a murderer. He was part of an uprising. And then you have Jesus, the perfect Son of God, the light of the world, all truth, everything is embodied in Jesus Christ.

And he's telling the people, Choose. Which one do you want? And they say, Give us Barabbas. Give us the darkness.

Give us the corruption of the world. We love Barabbas. That's what they wanted.

And the same thing happens in our world. Give us Barabbas. Give us the darkness and kill the Son of Glory.

If the world hates Christ, they will hate you. I'm just going to close on that point with Barabbas. Because I was thinking, we kind of skim over this.

Oh, that's wonderful. I wonder what will be next week. But you have to understand something.

Barabbas, I wonder, do you wonder if he watched Jesus carrying that cross? Because that should have been him. And you wonder, do you see Barabbas? Watching the nails go into Jesus' hands? Watching that cross fall into the dirt and his body jerks and that crown. And Barabbas is sitting there going, Oh, my goodness.

That was a close call. And he sees that should have been me. But the interesting thing is this is a parallel.

Actually, Barabbas, it was part of God's plan that Jesus Christ took the place of Barabbas. That's why theologians call it the substitutionary atonement of Christ. God took.

And it's hard for me to explain it because I'm like, How is this possible that God took my spot? So Jesus took Barabbas' spot on the cross. He let him go. And that's a perfect foreshadowing of what he does to us.

Listen, guys, this isn't a time to get bored. This isn't a time to go, Oh, I'm hungry. Realize that Jesus took your spot.

You're Barabbas and so am I. The same thing, I should be on that cross. I should be hung. The wages of sin is death.

That's what the Bible says. So if God's love wasn't so vast and so great, what we just sang about, that cross, a place of killing and a place of death is my victory. So we get all mad at Barabbas, but I am Barabbas.

All of us are Barabbas. He took the spot. He took that penalty.

So now we can stand before God righteous and saved and delivered. I want to encourage you as well, let the guilt, let the shame go. Because as many Christians are holding so much guilt and shame, I haven't been set free.

God doesn't love me. I've done too much damage. How can he love a person like me? How can he? And we carry this guilt and shame.

But understand, when the Bible talks about the finished work of Jesus Christ, there isn't a little bit left. There isn't God holding guilt and shame. It's the finished work of Jesus Christ.

It's done. There's no other name that says under heaven or earth the sins have been cast. As far as from the east is to the west.

It's been paid. It's been full. He took our place.

That should force us to worship. That should cause our hearts to break and say, Jesus, thank you. Thank you for taking my place.

I still can't fathom it. I can't even preach it, what it deserves. I have a love so vast.

And people say, that's hogwash. That's phony. You show me.

You show me proof and evidence that this is incorrect. You will come up with nothing other than the fact I don't want to believe it because I am Lord of my life. That's why people reject the gospel, quite honestly.

I can lay out a perfect gospel and say, nope, nope. I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

And as we all know, that that unbelief will keep scores of people out of heaven. So I just encourage you this morning, God took your place. God took your place.

At some point in life, you have to make a decision. If you say, God, I repent, I repent. God, I repent.

Thank you for taking my life and place of my life and not taking my life.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32086.mp3>

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