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This was a very significant custom, of release. And therefore the people might have clamored for it at this time, and the high priest might have helped them to create interest in order to devert sympathy to Barabbas. That the doom of Jesus would be more securely fixed. On the present occasion, it might be more easily to influence the people, since Barabbas belonged to that class, not uncommon at the time.

It was an appeal to the people as appears in Matt. 27:15. He allows their custom for which perhaps they had had a long perscription in honor of the passover, which was a memorial of their release, out of Egypt.

He offers to release Jesus to them according to the custom. If Piolet had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he would not have named an innocent person to the competitor, with a notorious criminal for this favor. If he found no fault in him, he was bound in conscience to discharge him. But he was willing to trim to the matter, and try to please all sides. It seems that Piolet himself suggested the name of Barabbas, a notorious

Judge Christ F. Haynesworth, Jr. was Rejected 55-45  
from serving on Supreme Court Friday. Labor & Civil Rights  
He failed to keep himself clear given the appearance of  
unethical conduct.

### THE RELEASE OF A NOTABLE PRISONER

John 18:39-40

#### Introduction

The past few verses have been given over to the judge who sentenced him. And there was quite a discussion at the close of last Sunday evening's message, on truth. We remember that John 8:32 says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." If these words

were the only record we possessed of the Saviour's teachings it may be that they would be insufficient to prove His personal deity. But, they would be enough to demonstrate the divine character of his mission. The aim was to make all men free. He saw around him men in slavery. Even his own countrymen were in bondage to the Romans, and he was conscious of the great need of freedom. He knew that truth was something that liberated. Truth was able to set men free, in their consciences, and to give them mental independence. That even though they lived in the worse of slavery, they would be able to live in freedom, because of this truth which was able to give them liberty of the soul.

In the (37<sup>th</sup>) verse, he talks about the kingdom of the truth. He told about the basis of the (kingly rule) of the Christ, He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause, came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." The truth is used in in a sense of an equivalent to reality. For truth substitute reality. For the truth is more than a few creeds or dogmas, but for Jesus his life was a witness to the truth, in the sense of reality. Jesus was the truth, because he was true. Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply speak truth, He was Truth. Truth through and through. For truth is a thing not of words, but of life and deeds. Non but a spirit can be true.

John now seems to come to a (new part in the trial) or the event, just before the cross. And he passes over these as quickly as possible, as these (last scenes) brought such horror, and for this perhaps we are to be thankful that he followed this example. There were (certain rules) and regulations perscribed for setting a man free in the Old

Testament, Deut. 21:6 To mark the freedom from guilt for the elders of the city, where untracked murders had been committed. And there are also some expressions of this in II Samuel 3:28, and in Psalms 26:6.

In verse 29 he proposed an expediate way of discharging his responsibility when he recognizes a custom.

It seems that the (Passover) was certainly a very appropriate time for showing mercy, and letting the prisoner go free. And the uncontradicted testimony of all of the writers is ample proof of its existence, during the governorship of Pilate. That at this time the governor would release a prisoner to them, as described by Mark 15:8.

Pilate had summoned from the temple, the rulers and people, the crowd was increasing from the town. Mark 15:8. It was not only to see what was about to happen, but to witness another spectacle, that of a (release of a prisoner). For it seems to have been the custom, that at the passover, the Roman governor released to the Jewish population, some notorious prisoner, who lay condemned to death.

in this nation, and distinction there have been many who have come from the homes of ministers of the gospel. And yet on the other hand there have been unfortunately some unworthy of their inheritance, a discredit to their honored fathers, some of whom have led wicked careers as did Barabbas. Others of whom, unbelief has been their faith. A good religious family background is not always a sure defense against a mis-spent life, or a sinful end. But as a rule it is a great bulwark against the sins of this world.

But this man being the son of a rabbi, or a religious teacher, you would think that his heart had certainly to be lifted by the glorious past of his people. And he had thrilled in thinking that Israel, someday, would be restored to the kingdom.

II. The next significant thing about him is that he led an chambers. As (Luke) puts it he was put into prison for a certain sedition made in the city. As the time of the entrance of Barabbas on his manhood, Jerusalem

criminal, as an alternate to that of Jesus. In the hope no doubt, that the people would be ashamed to ask favor for such a man, rather than Jesus. Matt. 27:17

(Many of the particulars) evidently known to John, were omitted for the sake of brevity, some of them perhaps because they were familiar to the Christians, through the other Gospels. Therefore, in just two statements here, He gives his complete account. How they cried out for Barabbas.

It is a common experience in life to have some man or woman cross our paths, and remain for the briefest space of time, and yet we remember all about them. We have traveled with them in some quickly passing journey, or we have met them for a short hour at some friend's table. Or perhaps there was some deed or some word they spoke, that glued itself to our hearts. We saw them only once, and never again. They were to us but a ship that passes in the night, and speak to each other in passing.

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And yet, many of these scenes remain in our imagination, as well as in our conscience.

In the New Testament, we look at different individuals, for example the rich young ruler who comes on the scene for just a moment and passes away, and there is sadness in our hearts, and yet it is remembered as an important scene. We remember about Simon the Leper. We remember about the "good man of the house." And we cannot help but speculate about the young man in the linen garment who slide out of the garden of Gethsemane, and all of these passed on the scene for just a moment.

This is exactly what happened as we pass over these verses here, as the name of Barabbas. It remains in our memory, and yet there is just so much we see of him. Just for a brief moment. And yet it is very significant.

I. A bit of history concerning his character

1. His name is very significant. This is the first

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thing that we note about him, he is Barabbas. The son of the father, or Master. His father was a teacher of the Jewish law, and an expounder of its precepts. He belongs to one of those Jewish families that had been trained in the traditions of Hebrew history. He had been taught as a member of the commonwealth of Israel, and was proud of the privilege that he enjoyed. His childhood and his youth had been spent amid the influence of a home whose chief interests were the things of God. Whose domination had been steadfastly for the advancement of his kingdom. He was as nearly as possible, in the position of a son of the man, or of the parsonage. The child born within a minister's home is from his early years, a witness of religious observances. With religious motives, there is a preference given to the Lord's day, a deep reference for Holy duties, a high regard for religious knowledge, and a loyal attachment to the church. As we read in history how that one of the dedicated presidents of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, was the son of a minister, and the large company of men of influence

And no doubt, this man's religious feeling died within him. As the man was hunted by Roman soldiers, he hardened and became cruel and brutal. As with the outlaws in every country, robbers became a custom, and murder only an incident of life.

So Barabbas suffered deterioration. To the last, he was no common thief, but he would take sword against the government of Rome. He had hate d more than he had feared God, and he was proud of his ambition. And therefore, he was cast into prison, and he was waiting for the day which he was to die, the death on the cross.

IV The next thing that we know about him from history was that he was preferred above Jesus. The people and the priest, we discover here, had no difficulty in making the choice. It is hard for us to understand such a choice. Here was a man who belonged to their city here was a man who had ventured and risked his life for Jewish independence. Here is a man who had dared to rise up in a revolt, right in the shadow of Piolet's hall. And although his years

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was in discontent. The whole nation was looking for some hope that they might be lifted up with expectation that someone would deliver them. You remember that this was John's message to Jesus. "Art thou he that should come or do we look for another?" And when Jesus was found to be able to sway the multitudes with his words, and feed the hungry with bread, thousands flocked round about him and they felt that the long-looked-for King had arrived on the scene. Therefore, in \_\_\_\_\_ had been plotted and hatched up. There was a fierce and defiant home rule party in Judah, whose unresting aim was to drive the Roman garrisons from the Holy Land. Their chosen name was that of Zealots, because of their unquenchable zeal for the restoration of the Jewish dominion.

Out of their ranks came one of Christ's disciples, Simon Zelotes whom Jesus taught a wider truth and a better way.

These Zealots were the invincibles in the Jewish struggle and it was they who had besieged Jerusalem fought with so desperate a fury that they appalled the

veterans and disciplined soldiers of Rome, In their stubborn courage, they sell in heat, defending the breaches in the wall.

It was this band of Zealots which was ever fostering sedition, and making incorrection in the cities. Among their number was found young Barabbas, the son of the master in Israel, eager to roll away the reproach of his people, hating the Roman rule, with all the hatred possible. And he probably did not launch out on his career as a criminal, he was merely an ins and champion of the HomeRule, or National Party, crusading for emancipation from Palestine, and from the dominion of Rome. He belonged to this political party as did Simon one of Jesus' disciples. He was moreor less like the hero of England, (Robinhood), who lived in Sherwood Forrest.

III. We are told that he was a robber, that he had committed

murder in the inserection. At the outset, Barabbas may have been a dreamer. He ignored what his father had told him about the history of the Hebrew people. He was full of patriotic emotion, and he had more contempt for Rome, than anything else in all the world. And he had pledged himself not to rest until the Roman yoke would be overthrown and the Israelites would again be in the seat of the mighty. And so he longed to play a principal role in this dramatic day, when the Roman eagle would be pulled down from the castle, and the banner of Israel unfurled.

Somehow Barabbas in his zeal, became misled and killed a man in his inserection activities. Now, he is no longer the great champion, or can be. But he ranks among the criminals. Inserection was a dangerous trade in any part of the Roman Empire.

It was stamped out by the iron heel of Rome. The man who took part in it carried his life in his hands. He had to creep through the lanes of the city, or to play the bold part of an outlaw. It was a wild turbulent life

understanding, where true failure and true success lies. The man who has run the gulflet of impure indulgences, escaping its open and shameful penalties, but suffering the desecration of his spirit. The man who has stooped to crafty tricks, and unscrupulous devices, has filled his purse with ill-gotten gain, and now with pride and little understanding that he has emptied his heart of all reverence.

There are others who have dared to be poor without a moment of complaint. Who have scorned to be false to a single conviction, who have refused to touch the muck which others walk in, who have suffered for incorruptable honesty and ansensitive honor. These may seem to have failed. While Jesus was hanging on this cross, hearing this crowd, he trusted in God, let Him deliver Him down. We find that Barabbas was leaving with his companions in social glee, and was the hero of the hour in blinded and fanatic Jerusalem. It is amazing as we think of the contrast. It is difficult to keep ones eyes clear, so as to see the true failure and the true success. How many of us so see it, and so understand it and so accept it?

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had been given to robbery, and his hands are now stained with blood. And he has been given over to moral blindness, amid the heat and the passion which the priests had roused in them, they hailed him as a popular hero.

And they compared with Jesus this man, and crowned him with thorns. They said, "We do not want this man, but Barabbas."

*This happened in* [ ] 7407

The people appeared his enemies as they cried again and again, "Not this man, not him to be released, but Barabbas." There was fierce outrage, there was nothing calm in it all. The enemies of Christ's Holy

religion cried down, and so hoped to run it down with 2 down - that is sign of the Ephesian. But here was to the outcry of Ephesus in Acts 19:34. There was a breaker of the law of God, a robber, and here was an enemy of the public, who was an enemy to personal property and to safety. And Job 35 says, "The men cried after them as after a feast."

yet, here it is for one, thus, those who prefer their sins before Christ. And yet, sin is a robber.

This is what Peter said in his address to the people in the temple. Acts 3:14. "He denied the Holy and Righteous and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you." And now here in simplicity John says, "Barabbas was a robber." Here was a notable prisoner in jail. Down through the years some prisoners lie deserted and forgotten by their fellow men. Known as their long sentences are filled, solely to a few prison-authorities. Some prisoners attain far greater note than their fellows. There are some prisons for conscience sake, though chained in prisons dark, they are still in heart and conscience free. In this noble company there were (St. Paul) who wrote some of his greatest letters from prison. We think also of (John Bunyan) in Bedford jail. Some notable prisoners have gained their fame such as (Sir Walter Raleigh), writing his history of the world in the Tower of London. There he was sent by reason of his opposition to the policy of appeasement towards

Spain adopted by James I.

And here Pilate in his desperate measures to avoid sentencing Jesus to death, resorted to the practice of releasing a prisoner to the people. It was now a issue before the people as to whether they would select Parabbas or Jesus. They clamoured for the liberation of the rough man who had been in jail, but not forgotten.

1. We see here the startling and amazing contrast of their faith. From one door passing before Piolet's judgment seat, is Barabbas smiling in exaltation as the soldiers grasp him by the hand, his friends seize him in joy, the mob hails him with shout of joy. (BUT WE TURN.)

And the other door was held by the hard soldiers looking with eagerness towards Jesus, and not too far away, we see some of his friends with deep compassion in their hearts.

Until this day, men walk our streets; and sit in our high places, with the triumphant pride of Barabbas; and neither they themselves, nor others know how completely they have failed. We seldom see with the eyes of the



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who (chose a robber) and murderer in preference to Jesus, we are certainly amazed and it brings sorrow to our hearts. This multitude did not know whom they were rejecting, and did not know that they were closing the book of their history, fixing their eternal destiny and quenching with their own breath their one hope, when they said, "Not this man, but Barrabas."

(In this hour) when Jesus and his cross, his grace and his trust, his service, and his fellowship are offered to you, and you turn away to some lower life, some unholy choice, some self-pleasing indulgence, This very hour when Jesus in his meekness and lowliness is passing by you, and you turn away and chose some gleaming worldly good, there may be no word either of disdain, or impatience on your lips, when you shout with the other group, in Piute's court, "Not this man, but Barrabas." "Not this man... but my pride" my ease, my worldly success, my sin, is what you are really saying. The folly and the madness of their choice, when we think about it at all costs and

How many of us enjoy keeping step with the mob? How many young men and women, when your eyes look at the glamour and the things of the world, seek after it?

2. I would like for us to note how much Barabbas missed. We cannot help but think but what might have been in the case of Barabbas. As we recall his radiant, his patriotic, his courage, his devotion to Israel, When we think of this man we think of what he might have been had he ought to have been, should he have turned and become a disciple of Jesus Christ. There was one of his company who had cast aside his crude thoughts and violent methods, and entered the ranks of the Apostolic band, and that chosen company had better included the name of Barabbas, the Lotus, than of Judas Ischariot. But here is the heartbreak of it all.

He was so near to Jesus. He heard his name linked with the name of Jesus. He knew himself to be preferred to Jesus. He must have wondered at that strange fate, which

released him and sent Jesus to the cross, and yet he did not turn to look at Jesus. Here was the prince of Israel, He could almost touch him with his hands. Is there a sadder thought about any other of those who stand in the light of Christ Jesus? Those who might have been, or be brought face to face with Jesus. There was one who lay down with him in the prison, and who did not make his lucky escape, but was brought forth to die with Jesus, the penitence male factor, was compelled to look at Jesus, and he saw the King of Israel, and entered the Kingdom of God.

And there are many today, to whom the name of Jesus is familiar, even graciously significant, they have even touched him in some way, and yet they have never looked upon him. There are men and women today who have read in literature who have absorbed his truth in art, who have listened to the music, which tell of his glorious coming into the world. There are those, but today, who are too emmersed in business too ambitious in their careers, so they never really look at Jesus.

There are those who are as eager for honor as Barabbas was, or is. And yet, they never really consider Jesus. They never draw near to his ideals, they never look unto him and glance his way. You hear him spoken of, you pass him nearer than Barabbas in your work in your decisions, in your religious customs, but you do not look at him. Many men today, do not look up to the Christ lifted up on the cross.

When we think that looking at Christ will enlarge the knowledge, widen the thought, purify the hearts, if they will only put their trust in him. If they will look at the one who has lived for truth, the one who has died for men, the one who arose again to lead the redeemer and constant friend. The one whose Kingdom shall widen with the ages, the one who will outlast all empires, the glory and the hope of our poor humanity. The one who can do all things for the soul, and yet we fail to look his way.

3. The folly of the choice of the multitudes

and torture, I shall die before this time tomorrow. And go up to the judgement with all my crimes upon me." Maybe they will let my mother come in to see me before dark. Perhaps he had a wife and children that could come to see him for the last time. He could not sleep at all that night he could hear somebody hammering in the prison yards, they were making a cross. He would start now to thinking that he heard footsteps of officers coming after him. In the morning the light breaks, today, this is the very day they will open the door and lead me away to crucify me. Pretty soon it was no mistake, they were unbaring the iron door, he hears them turning the rusty key, the doors swing open, (Goodbye) to life to hope, to death, the horrible death awaits me. And one of the soldiers says to him, "Barrabas, you are (free.)" He hears the strange words, but they made little impression upon him because of the horror and dread of the death he is about to face. He stands amazed, "Don't laugh at me!" he perhaps says to the soldier. "Don't make sport of me! Take me away and crucify me." And the soldier says,

2 little girls attending a Sunday school had brought home some plastic clay - one little girl with evil spirit 'I'm not my clay' I am going to make a little bird. The other during school, said 'I am going to make out of my clay a little church'. That puts in human hearts the right to choose - make bird or church - consequences, the choice is now (gone forever). The Lord!

Jesus Christ who was there before them was to vanish and be placed on a cross. And when you say, "Not this man...." you are saying, "Let me die in my sins, and let me go on in my own way." "I need you to enjoy our lives". This was the popular choice given by all of the Gospel writers. I remember reading one time of John Wesley, who was discussing this very issue with his sister and Wesley said, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." "Yes!" replied the sister, "the voice of the people cried, 'Crucify Him, Crucify Him.'" Jesus's bestest hour are acclaimed as they were in Jesus' day. Education today, many say, is the thing that is needed by the masses than anything else. There are others, today, who feel that it takes a crowd, it takes a mass of people in order to speak the Gospel. And that if only a handful show up, we are all disappointed. We are all certain that we have failed if the audience is small. This is true in other realms.

The value of (land today) is determined by the number of people that pass by in a period of 24 hours.

... So many times we give the people what they demand rather than what they need, as our Blessed Saviour warned, "Woe unto you." The voice of the people can seldom be accepted as the voice of God. As we note here in the case of this man. We are constantly be compelled to chose between what the world pronounces success and what is true success in the eyes of God. Though it be failure in the viewpoint of men. Barrabas lacked what Jesus had possessed eternally. a lasting influence for righteousness and for good. This choice between Barrabas and Jesus confronts every soul.

Here is a piece of poetry by James Russell Lowell  
"Once to every man an nation, comes the moment to decide, In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side. And the choice goes by forever, twixt that darkness and that light."

within claspman → When Moody & Zerkow conducting services in Manly region of England - Coming out by boat a man sitting under the gallery - Went back to the - M. got down beside he had attended regularly that night he had determined he would not leave the church until he had settled the question of his soul's sal. After prayer & Bible study he settled it. Returned home next day - entered the mine

Tropic explosion he was taken out almost dead - to be removed from mine entrance a trail stopped to rewrite his lips, he was too weak to speak out, but soon & over again & repeated, "it's a good thing it had night"  
So it would be for many one - When God calls, its dangerous to resist. Today we may yield - Tomorrow may he stand by the date  
We are confronted with the choice between the

easy road of falsehood and compromise with evil, to following after right at all costs.

We are compelled to decide between the world's way of selfish, hatred, and vengeance. To Christ's way of love and disciplined living.

We must decide between an outlook between hope and without God, and a life of faith in Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Lord of Life and Light.

Barrabas looked and longed for the kingdom of his people Israel, when the king was in the midst, and he was so very near to him, in the very sight of him, and yet he missed him. You can be very close to Christ, hear his words and still miss him.

How often have you thought and I have thought of how Barrabas spent that last day, as the sun goes down he says to himself, "Tomorrow, tomorrow I must die upon the

cross. They will hang me up before the crowd, they will drive the nails through my hands and feet, they will break my legs with bars of iron, and what an awful tomorrow!

"You are free, here is the door, it is open. Go home, get out, go with your friends! They tell him that ~~Pilate~~ has promised the Jews to release one prisoner that day, and that he is the one that has been chosen. (Now if he had been the right sort of a man, he would have begun to weep. He would have begun to think of the miracles. What, that that just man should die, and here was a thief, a robber, a murderer, to go free."

*But Wait! Some of you are in Prison -  
 your life is sinful as mine -  
 Jesus comes with the key & says you  
 can be free -*

*So. May - Nov. 23, 69 P.M.  
 So. May - Sept. 13, 59 P.M.*