

"LIFE'S SUPREME QUESTION"

Matt. 27:22

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Buntley April 12, 1921 A.M. ✓  
Lake Drummond Am April 14, 96 ✓

Some decisions are small - and some are of little importance. And some of the questions that we face in life, are different from other questions which we face in life.

Some people can work like a horse - but they cannot make decisions. They are like the farm hand who proved that he could do the work of three men. But one day the farmer asked him to divide a pile of potatoes - into large and small ones. At the end of the day, the farmer found that he had done nothing. When asked his problem he said, I can work - but making these decisions between large and small potatoes is killing me.

A Big ? Pest Week - Jessica Dubroff 7yr. old Pilot  
Plane crash Cheyenne Wyo. (Calif - Mass) Father & flight instructor -  
(3) die After take off, plane stalled, fell straight vertically to ground - Rain storm.  
Bad weather - Mother "Wanted all my children die in state of joy!"  
Many Q - Rye - Distance - Motor stopped -

Now some of you would sympathize with that poor fellow. You can ignore some decisions -- but others, you cannot escape. We are considering today - life's supreme decision. And every boy, every girl, every man, every woman needs to pay attention to this text. It is a personal question. From which there is no getting away. An old question - and it is a question asked by Pilate. What shall I do with Jesus.

Pilate had to face that question. He trifled with it and he made ship-wreck out of his life. That question is yours - and that question is mine. The Roman's built a fortress right in the corner of the temple area. It was called Fortress of Antonio. They stationed troops and soldiers there. And that Fortress, the Governor sat. And looked over the temple area and kept an eye on the Jews. Now, they have excavated the pavement area of the Scripture and they have found the courtyard.

The very steps that lead up to the official quarters. From the very street - the stones are serrated and scarred. To keep the horses hooves from slipping, On a trip to the Holy Land you can go 15 feet under ground to this place - to this very spot where Jesus was brought. And you can see the stones in the street where he took the cross to go to Calvary.

Now the situation that we are talking about happened on the night of the Passover Season. The knock came on Pilate's door. They got him up from his sleep. And said we have a criminal here. And we want you to come and pass judgement upon him.

It was a dark night and they pushed a prisoner before Pilate. They brought their charge. Blasphemy. Pilate said, it is not my problem - it belongs to the Sanhedrin. Don't bring him to me. They said we have already had him before the court and they found him guilty. And their report of the law could not impose a death penalty. And they passed it on to Pilate.

Pilate asked, what have I to do with Jesus, Crucify him - put him to death.

He looked around for an excuse - what has the man done. Tell me about this. Well, he is a Galilean. He is the Governor of all of Galilee. And I will do nothing with him. So they take Jesus away. Pilate felt that he had escaped that issue. Herod plays with him about an hour - and decides that he wants nothing to do with Jesus. And sent him back to Pilate. He said I find him innocent. You take care of this yourself. He says - what shall I do with Jesus.

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And he had an idea - well, I'll give him a good beating. Scourge him, and this will satisfy the crowd. But that did not. He said, I find him innocent. Finally Pilate said our custom is to grant to you a prisoner - during the religious feast of the Passover. And we will set free some man and pardon him. So he suggested the prisoner Barabbas. Literally he was the son of a rabbi. He had gone bad - he was a religious man of some faith. We might say a church member. He was a murderer and a thief.

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Pilate says I'll offer you Barabbas and Jesus. They will have a choice. And they will be able to decide. And they said, well, set Barabbas free. And Pilate says, well now, what am I going to do with Jesus. And they said - go ahead and crucify him. Bring me a basin of water and bring me soap. And before the people, he washes his hands and says - I will not have his blood on my hands. I will make no decision about this. This is your decision - remember it is yours, it is yours. It is yours, not mine.

Life's supreme question - is the same question faced by Pilate. What shall I do with Jesus - which is called the Christ.

This scene before Pilate is one that causes us to shutter. Some men came very close to entering the Kingdom of God and yet they failed. He came very near taking his place on the side with Nicodemus. If, when he knew that Jesus was the son of God, he had taken his stand, or had gone himself to be crucified there. Would have been no name in the history of the church to out shine his.

George MacDonald, a Scottish preacher, there was a story of Pilate. Who in the

lost world - washing his hands in a running stream. He keeps on - it would seem almost for ages. Someone touches him and says, Pilate, what are you doing. Lifting his hands, which become red like crimson as soon as they leave the water - he cries out with echoes and re-echoes throughout the world of the lost, will they ever be clean. Will they ever be clean. Poor Pilate, they will never. For the blood of the son of God is on them. Take Thee then and crucify him for I find no fault in him. He is still washing his hands today - but in vain.

What shall I do then with Jesus. The reference is - we must do something. We cannot be indifferent. The man who says that he will not accept Christ - will he reject him. He has rejected him in the very position that he takes. There is no middle ground in this matter. You are either for or against.

And this expresses that religion is a very personal matter. And judgement will be too. There is no one whose lives shall light upon this printed word, but who shall one day be called to an account. For the rejection of the son of God. Poor, high, low, wise and ignorant. All - what shall I do. Then there is another word in this text. It is not some future thing, what shall I do in the day of judgment about Jesus Christ. Or when the moon shall be turned to blood. And the sun blackened. And the elements shall melt with the heat. What shall I do then. Rev. 6 - we read that in the last days, men will cry out - for things to fall on them and to hide them from the face of the one that sits on the throne.

With Jesus, that name describes his earthly life. He shall save his people from their sins. And he is crucified. And Christ is the anointed name. But he is a mediator. He is the one that sits at the right hand of God the Father.

Here is a question - what can I do with Jesus. I must do something with him. I cannot avoid it. I cannot escape it. Now what can I do. I can accept him as my Saviour or I can reject him and turn away from him. I can crown him as Lord. I must do one of two things. Or three things. I shall either be his friend or his foe. I shall follow him or turn away from him. Say yes, or say no.

Now Pilate had three things that he might have done. (First) he could release Jesus and set him free. And say, I believe you.

Second, he could condemn him and crucify him.

Third, he could not make any decision. Or escape the decision. But even though he did that - he would still make a decision against him.

Who is to decide this question for me. / What shall I do then with Jesus. Who is to decide that question for me. There is but one somebody in all the world who is going to decide that question. Who is that someone. Certainly it is not my foes - somebody that I could not trust. Certainly it is not my friends - and I have some trusted friends. But however few or many, I cannot ask my friends to decide this for me. I, myself, must decide it. Nor will I be forced to decide. I will not be pushed into deciding it. Jesus comes and stands. What will you do with me. And do something with me, you must. What is it going to be.

This is the thing about every person here - that you have the privilege and the dignity of doing this.

→ Listen to God as he says - as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. But the wicked turn from the way he lives. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways. For why would you die, oh house of Israel. Certainly Jesus is never at fault - that a soul misses the upward way.

Jesus wept, over the city of Jerusalem. How often, he says, I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her brood, under her wing. And you would not. Behold, your house is left desolate - it is not the fault of Jesus that souls miss the way. And God forbid that any of us should miss this way - and it is not God's fault.

One other question. What does it matter what I do with Jesus. Does it matter at all, what Pilate decided. I have already said that you must do something. And as certainly as you live - it does matter as to what you do with Jesus.

→ In three directions.

First, it matters to you personally - your own life, what you do with Jesus. He comes offering the forgiveness of your sins. If you will trust him, Jesus offers to give you a new heart. And if you trust him - he will be your saviour. There must be a change from within you. If you would meet God in peace - Jesus does all of that. If you come and give yourself up to Jesus, as your Saviour, then in his own

way, he will change you and forgive you of your sins. And put his power within you and give you his great salvation. This will determine whether you will be saved. If you do the right thing with Jesus - you will be saved. If you do the wrong thing, you will be lost.

*Roanoke Rapids, N.C. a retired Merchant 56 years old Finished Merchant  
Ballot - election - Dropped Ball Near Altar - Ballot clutched hand - Wife asked if Ballot - he  
dropped - Signatur A.E. Abers. Complined - last act in life voted candidate - They cast  
Vote for Jesus on cross*

2 - One other thing - that matters is, your relationship to everybody else. What you do with Jesus is going to influence what you do with others in your contact in this world. And how you live in this world. You want to save your influence. And this will greatly be touched in this world.

An old man was saved when he was just 80 years old. Not many people live to be that old. Of course, today, there are many that live to that age and beyond. Perhaps, very few of us will live that long. Three score and ten is man's allotted time. But this man had lived to be 80 and he was gloriously converted to Christ. Like a little child, he said yes to Jesus - when Jesus called him. He lived four more years. He lived to be 84. And you might say, and ask him - when he was 84 how old he was. And he'd say he was just four years old. His grandchildren would sometimes get around him and say, Grandpa, how old are you. And he would say with a trembling voice - my children, Grandpa is four years old. And they would laugh and joke about it. Why, Grandpa, you are 84. And he'd say, I'm just four years old - and they would laugh again. Grandpa you are 84. And then he would stop and explain to them every time. Grandpa has lived 80 years without God. But Grandpa lived 80 years without Jesus. And he lived 80 years going on the wrong road. And putting his life on the wrong side - on the side of Satan and sin. And he has lived just four years on the right side - on the side of Jesus. Therefore, he insisted - he was just four years old. Now there is a deep truth in that illustration. And it makes a point tonight - that Jesus wants to save our lives. And save our influence. But if we refuse Jesus - if we reject him - if we turn away and refuse

to follow him--then we have lost our influence.

3 - A third thing that matters is your (salvation) - what does it matter what you do with Jesus. Where we are going to spend eternity depends on what we do with Jesus. That great eternity there.

In the mission in New York City - they used to have a striking motto that was in plain view - (if I should die tonight - where would I go.) Jerry McCauley in that mission - they put that up because every man and every woman that comes in - sees the card on the wall. If I should die tonight, where would I go. And I could ask you that question. If you should die this night - where would you go.

You would go into eternity according to your relations with Christ here. Christ said to some people - ye shall die in your sins. Where thy go, ye cannot come. And this is the thing that Christ taught - if we reject him - as a tree falls - so shall it lie. The Bible says, let him be unjust still that is unjust. He that is filthy - let him be filthy still. He that is holy - let him be holy still. What I do with Christ in time, or this side of the grave, will determine where I shall spend my eternity.

also 1:18 Come let us reason since he is seated - he will be white as snow

There are a number of other things that depend on what we do with Jesus.

What we do with him depends upon what happens to our salvation. He that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not, is condemned already. He that hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. John 3:18.

Peace - Joy - Eternal Life



Another thing - what we do with Jesus depends upon what happens with our salvation. But as many as receive him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God. Even to them that believe upon his name.

Another thing that hinges on this question is your peace. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5:1. We think of peace as a deep abiding thing that he gives.

Another thing that hinges on this question is your joy. Whom, having not seen, ye love - and in whom though - now you see him not, ye believing - you rejoice with joy unspeakable. I Peter 1:8.

And these words have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain with you. And that your joy might be full.

So what to do with Jesus and this question depends on what will happen about eternal life. He that believed on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life. But the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3:36.

We must either accept him or reject him. We must either let him come into our hearts or shut the door and keep him out. We must either confess or deny. There is no middle ground in this matter.

What we decide, Pilate was not aware that he was making a decision perhaps.

And so often in life, we try to avoid the issue - like Pilate. There is a tradition that Pilate's body is up in Mt. Pilatus. In the mountains of the Alpine. And that when the wind blows - there is a whistling sound that they can hear in that wind - the cry of Pilate, as his ghosts rises up and washes his hands and says - I am innocent of this blood.

About a 100 years ago, Moody was preaching in Great Britain in the 1870's. He had a great service for atheists, in London. In Royal Albert Hall, 400-500 of them came to hear him preach on the very text that we are using this evening. What shall we do with Jesus.

And when he had finished - he said, now the invitation is yours. What will you do with Jesus which is called Christ. I want to ask you to stand up and declare your answer. I will accept him. Or I want you to stand up and say that I won't. I will and I won't.

They began to rise - I will. And then he had those who would say - I won't. And finally about 10% had stood and taken their stand. They had made a decision one way or another. Moody then said - the other 90% of you have made a decision also. You do not think you have - but you have. That you did not rise up and say I accept. You have said that you would not accept him. There is no way for a man to be neutral in this matter.

The last question is - when should I decide this question. What shall I do with Jesus. It is an inescapable question. Yesterday is gone and shall never come back again. Shall we decide it tomorrow. We do not know anything about tomorrow.

We have no promise of tomorrow. The Bible prohibits us from waiting until tomorrow. Boast not thyself of tomorrow. For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. When then should this decision be decided. There is only one time. The Bible tells us that time. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time. Today if you hear his voice, harden not your heart. The time, wherein, this question of what I am to do with Jesus, will be settled right today. Because this is God's time.

Why should we settle this question of what we are going to do with Jesus - today, and now.

I have already said that it is God's time - and whenever we know God's time. We should adjust ourselves to his time. He knows the best. He tells us - it is good for a man. That he bears the yoke in his youth. He tells us, remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say that I have no pleasure in them. This is God's time. And therefore, my concern grows deeper every hour. There are people all over this city and this land of ours, as surely as we live. If we do not sound out this note to the world - that this is the time. Middle life is not the time to do it. The time is in the freshness of youth that we should do it. While the evil day has come not. Our Lord says, I have no pleasure in them. The time when boys and girls are happy and hopeful. And young men and women. Their habits are not set. Who have come to Christ. A preacher once was preaching, in a building with 1200 men the actual count in that building. They were Christian men. And they had a special message for them. And he asked them to give a witness. He asked that group - how many of you came to Christ after you were 45 years of age. How many do you suppose stood up - only 3. After they were 45.

How many after 40 - there were 13. How many after 30 - less than 50. How many

came to Christ before we were 21.

Now that truth councils us - that we need to gather into the fold, the young people, boys and girls - during the habit forming time of their lives. While life is like plastic. And as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined.

And it will grow that way. That is why parents, teachers, - God's time to win young people to him.

Did you know that while you are young - this decision needs to be made. Because it is like the story of a certain king, who ordered a chain made by a blacksmith. He ordered it a certain length. The blacksmith brought it to him. And the king ordered him to go back and make it twice that long. He obeyed him. He brought the chain twice as long. Once again, he ordered him to make the chain twice that long. And the blacksmith obeyed. And he brought the chain back to the king. And the king said to the other subject - take this man and wrap him in this chain. And bind him and destroy him. Now that is a parable of the picture of habit. That gets a hold of a man. Satan does this his best. To keep boys and girls and young men and women from coming to Christ, in the early time of life. And if they do not come. Then habit gets longer, heavier, and stronger. And tougher with every passing year. And finally when a man gets 50-60 years of age - he is so fixed in his ways that he will never come to worship. Never enter God's house. God's time is while you are young.

I've already said. And it is a useful time. One little life that you have down here - 40, 50, years - more or less. Why live it at all if you are not going to live it in the right way. The glory of living for Jesus Christ.

You should come to Christ and settle that question - what you are going to do with Jesus now because it is the only safe time to do it.

*Feb* A classic story out of the life of Dwight L. Moody, has to do with which he gave his hearers the opportunity to leave the service. And meditate on this very text - what will you do with Jesus. He closed his sermon - I wish you would all take the text home, turn it over, and we'll come back next Sunday - and we'll come to the cross. And we'll decide what we are going to do with Jesus. And he turned to Sankey to sing the closing hymn. Today, the Saviour Calls For Refuge. Draw nigh. The storm of justice falls. And death is nigh.

The next morning, Chicago lay in ashes. For that night, Sunday night, October 8, 1871 Mrs. O'Learies cow kicked a lantern over and the great Chicago fire began. To his dying day, Moody regretted that he told the congregation to wait. He later said, I have never dared to give an audience a week to think about salvation. They were lost, and they might rise up in judgement against me. I have never seen that congregation since. And I will never meet those people until I meet them in another world. But I want to tell of one lesson I learned that night - which I have never forgotten. Is when I preach - to press Christ upon the people then and there. And try to bring them to a decision on the spot. I'd rather have my right hand cut off, than give them a week to decide what to do with Jesus.

This ultimate question - Jesus stands before you and asks the question. And it is the supreme question of life.

*Feb* I remember a story Dr. Truitt told about this text. He had a service with the

young people in the Sunday School. He said it was a service in which no one would be disturbed and he preached a sermon of about 25 minutes. And he asked those who were ready to decide for Jesus - to decide. I want all of you who are ready - to come and take my hand, and say now and yes to Jesus. Those who will trust him as their Saviour. He said a number of young people came. And one of the little girls about 13 years of age - came. She was serious that day. And soon the service closed and the day went by. The week went by. And he stood the following Sunday to preach. And at the close of the service - a man came to his study. He said, before you go to your lunch, you are wanted to go to the home of Nellie. They are going to take her to the hospital - she is ill. And she wants to see you. Certainly, he said. And he said, I went, to where Nellie lived. And she was waiting to be carried in an ambulance to the hospital.

He says, I sat down beside her and asked her what she wanted to say to me. She took her handkerchief out over her face. To conceal her tears. And then she said to him, I don't know that I will be back from the hospital. I am very sick. And he said, well Nellie, what if you were not to come back. That is just what I want to talk to you about. If I do not come back and something tells me that perhaps I won't, if I do not come back - I want you to know that it is alright. And I want you to tell my Sunday School Class of girls - if I do not come back, that I was not afraid. And I want you to tell them that on last Sunday, when you preached, I decided for Christ. And I am following him and I am trusting him. And he suggests and I meant it. And if I do not come back, I want you to tell them that I went away not afraid. Because I had decided for Christ.

He said, I am glad to hear that for I'll be praying for you and I am praying for you now. So the day passed on. And that evening, he preached. And that night at midnight, they called at the hospital. Nellie wants to talk to you very much. So, very soon - he was there. Things had gone to the bad. Her pulse galloped.

He sat by her bed and he said, Nellie - what have you to say now. She said, I cannot go back home. And I cannot get back to Sunday School and to church. And I want to ask you again to tell the girls in my class that I am not afraid. I was ready - because you preached a week ago and said - now is the accepted time to decide for Christ. I said it shall be my time.

Dr. Truitt said, wasn't it a glorious thing - that I could tell the people that a little girl of a dozen years - when she heard Jesus saying to her - now is my time for you to come to me. Now is the best time. Now is the only time. That she said, this will be my time - I will surrender. To Jesus, and trust him for now and forever to be my Saviour.

Now as we come in a moment to close this sermon - I have asked a question - a supreme question. And left it before you. Before you leave this service, what have you done with Jesus. What will you do with him. Do you say, I am ready to trust him. To do the right thing with him. I am ready to answer the question, properly - what shall I do with Jesus. I will take him as my Saviour. I will be for him from this hour and no longer will I be against him.

Then we would like for you to tell us of your decision.