

Speaker: Simon Sherwin

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Readings: Luke 23v1-7,v11-27,v32-34,v39-43

Cross divides – We are saved or not saved, allied to God or not.

“What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”

This was a decision had to be made that day by Pilate and the malefactor. We must make the decision to either stand with Pilate or the dying thief.

Pilate perpetrated the greatest injustice ever seen. Pilate made mistakes. If you take your stand with Pilate you will be making the same mistakes he did. If you trust Christ you will be agreeing with the dying thief.

Pilate's mistakes included:-

1. He tried to say it was not his problem and he could make someone else decide.

If you are not saved you cannot say it is not my problem and you do not need to make a decision.

The person of Christ is essential to salvation, to history and to the future – yours and mine. He stands at the centre of everything. Everyone has to face up to what to do with Christ.

Pilate sent Him away but Herod sent Him back. He could not get away from the issue.

2. He made friends with God's enemies.

Herod had ignored the law of God and tried to do it his own way. He had been responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist. The world around is opposed to God. If you stand with the enemies of God it will mean certain doom and certain destruction. God will act and God will judge. To reject Christ is to stand with a condemned world.

3. Pilate ignored what was right.

He knew the man before him was innocent of all charges “I find no fault in this man” yet he condemned Him. The Lord Jesus was absolutely pure and holy. If you reject Christ then you are saying He deserved to die.

One day, the One who was judged will judge. Every single man, woman, boy and girl must stand before Him. He will have absolutely perfect justice and judgment.

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”(Rom 3:23). Every single one has failed to meet the standard God expects. We are all law breakers in God's sight.

4. Pilate listened to the crowd

The crowd can be insistent as to why you want to stand with one crucified 2000 years ago. Pilate released the guilty and condemned the innocent.

The one thief got everything right and received assurance from the lips of the Saviour. Tonight he is saved and in heaven. If Pilate never decided to change his stand in rejecting Christ then he is lost

tonight and for eternity.

1. He realised time was short and he needed to get right with God.
2. He faced up to what was right and admitted his own guilt. "the due rewards of our deeds"
3. He appreciated the sinlessness of Christ. He is the only one who has gone so far to bring us back to God. Without Jesus there is no hope and no salvation.
4. He turns to the Lord Jesus and says "Lord" - The world around does not want Him as Lord but if you want to be in heaven that is what you have to acknowledge Him as. He looked not at a man dying but one who would be raised again. He saw what so many had not believed.

With Christ there is a standing, salvation and a future. To take a stand with the Lord Jesus will bring you into opposition with the world.

The pathway to blessing and salvation is allegiance to Christ. John 3:16 – Salvation is something we have now to be enjoyed today. It is immediate transformation and transportation. Salvation is no less immediate today.

"The just for the unjust that He might bring us to God"

If we take him as Saviour and Lord we can have that salvation and assurance now.