



JUST JESUS: A Journey Through Mark

PART 66 - 15:7- 15

Two Men. Two Very Different Kingdoms

READ: Mark 15:7–10 and Mark 10:42–45

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the most striking contrasts between Jesus and Barabbas? Why is it so ironic that Jesus is standing before Pilate accused of being a threat to Rome while Barabbas is imprisoned for participating in an actual violent uprising?
- 2) Barabbas represents one very understandable way of dealing with enemies and oppression: fight back, overthrow them, take power. According to Mark 10:42–45, how does Jesus' understanding of power and His Kingdom differ from the way the world normally understands power?
- 3) Mark tells us that Pilate recognized envy as the real motivation of the chief priests. What can envy cause even religious people to justify? How can envy disguise itself as righteous concern rather than jealousy?
- 4) Pastor G said: "One offers the kind of revolution people naturally understand. The other offers the upside-down Kingdom of God." What does following Jesus' upside-down Kingdom actually look like when someone hurts, opposes, or mistreats us?

What Shall I Do With Jesus?

READ: Mark 15:11–12 and Matthew 16:13–17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) The chief priests "stirred up the crowd" to ask for Barabbas. What does this tell us about the power other people can have over our thinking and choices? Where are we especially vulnerable to that kind of influence today?
- 2) Pilate asks, "What shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?" He is trying to solve an immediate political problem, but why does his question become much bigger than Pilate ever intended?
- 3) In Matthew 16, Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do YOU say that I am?" How is Jesus' question connected to Pilate's question? Why does what we believe about Jesus necessarily affect what we ultimately do with Him?
- 4) Pastor G said: "You cannot avoid the question forever: What are YOU going to do with Jesus?" What are some ways people try to remain neutral about Jesus? If someone asked, "What have you done with Jesus?" how would you answer, and how should that answer be visible in your life?

The Innocent Man and the Screaming Crowd

READ: Mark 15:13–14 and Isaiah 53:4–7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) When Pilate asks, "Why, what evil has He done?" the crowd never actually answers him. They simply shout louder. What does that reveal about what has happened to this crowd?
- 2) Pastor G said: "Pilate asks for evidence, and they answer with volume. Pilate asks for a reason, and they answer with rage." Where do we see people substituting volume, popularity, emotion, outrage, or repetition for truth today? How can Christians guard against doing the same thing?
- 3) Compare Jesus' silence in Mark with Isaiah's description of the suffering servant as "a lamb that is led to slaughter" who "did not open His mouth." What does Jesus' refusal to defend Himself tell us about what is actually happening here?
- 4) Crucifixion was deliberately brutal, humiliating, and public. Why is it significant that Jesus willingly continues toward precisely this kind of death even though nobody can identify an evil He has committed? What does His willingness tell you about both the seriousness of sin and the depth of His love?

We Are Barabbas

READ: Mark 15:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Mark says Pilate acted because he was “wishing to satisfy the crowd.” Pilate appears to know that condemning Jesus is unjust, yet does it anyway. What is the difference between knowing what is right and having the courage to do what is right? Where does the desire to please people most easily compromise our faithfulness?
- 2) Put yourself in Barabbas’ place. You know you’re guilty and have every reason to expect Roman judgment. Then the prison door opens, and you discover that you’re free while an innocent Man is being led away to die. What do you imagine going through Barabbas’ mind? Did he do to earn that freedom?
- 3) Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 again: “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.” How does what happens to Barabbas give us a picture of this much greater Gospel reality?
- 4) Pastor G said: “WE ARE ALL BARABBAS. The innocent Son of the Father took the place of the guilty sons and daughters of the Father.” In what sense are we all Barabbas? If we truly understand that we are living with “a life we didn’t earn and a freedom we don’t deserve,” what should be different about the way we live this week?