

**Easter! So What?
What Should I Do Then With Jesus?
Matthew 27:1-2, 11-26**

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Text Introduction: Through the years you have grown accustomed to my question, “So What?” at the conclusion of my messages. I fell into this practice a few years ago as the result of making sure that every message ends on a note of action. As I routinely say, “We gather not so much for information, but for inspiration and transformation.”

As we journey toward Easter this year, we are pursuing what I would call the ultimate “So What” preaching series. Through the week after Easter, we are considering several questions surrounding the Easter accounts in the Bible. Some of the questions come from Jesus. Others questions come from the disciples. A few of the questions come from adversaries of Jesus like Pilate. Many of the questions are our questions. I think you will discover that every question impacts us. That is, all of the questions cause us to ask “So What?”

Our text today is Matthew 27. If you were with us last week, this is the continuation of the conversation between Pilate and Jesus. Jesus is standing trial before Pilate. Pilate is not a Jew. Jesus has been brought to him by the Jews. Pilate is an official of the Romans. Pilate doesn’t know what to do with Jesus, but he doesn’t know what to do with the Jews either. In this exchange with Jesus, we get another pivotal question. Watch for it as we read this text today.

Text: When daybreak came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death. ²After tying him up, they led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Now Jesus stood before the governor. “Are you the King of the Jews?” the governor asked him. Jesus answered, “You say so.” ¹²While he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he didn’t answer.

¹³Then Pilate said to him, “Don’t you hear how much they are testifying against you?” ¹⁴But he didn’t answer him on even one charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

¹⁵At the festival the governor’s custom was to release to the crowd a prisoner they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷So when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Who is it you want me to release for you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸For he knew it was because of envy that they had handed him over.

¹⁹While he was sitting on the judge’s bench, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I’ve suffered terribly in a dream because of him.”

²⁰The chief priests and the elders, however, persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to execute Jesus. ²¹The governor asked them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?”

“Barabbas!” they answered.

²² Pilate asked them, “What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?”

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

²³ Then he said, “Why? What has he done wrong?”

But they kept shouting all the more, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. See to it yourselves!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them and, after having Jesus flogged, handed him over to be crucified.

Introduction: Have you ever done something that as soon as you did it, you said, “Now, I wish I wouldn’t have done that.”

We encounter a man today who would live to regret the choice that he made. Pilate—though not solely responsible for the crucifixion of Christ, and though it was God’s will for Christ to die, humanly speaking—was the last man who could have halted the execution of Christ.

I am intrigued with his question as is recorded in verse 22, because it is the same question you and I face this morning: “What should I do then with Jesus?” First of all, this question involves surrendering our life to Christ in relationship that leads to eternal life. But, this question for those who are already Christians regards “Will I choose Christ’s way in all aspects of my life?”

Pilate’s question, “What should I do then with Jesus who is called the Christ” (v. 22) is the same question that each of us faces. Pilate made the wrong choice. The reasons that caused Pilate to make the wrong choice are the same factors that cause many to reject Christ today. What are those factors?

- **Influenced by what other people think.**

Pilate’s Position

1. As Governor, he was trained to please people.

He was the governor on behalf of the Roman Empire. His main job was to keep the peace. Any kind of disturbance could get him quickly dismissed. Historians of this era say that Pilate was not very good at keeping everyone happy.

2. As Judge, he was trained to look at facts.

As Pilate looked at the facts, Jesus was innocent. There are some in our society today that are struggling with the facts about Jesus. However, there are many others that will tell you that they believe in Jesus but they are too worried about what others think or too concerned about their own desires to be concerned for the desires of God. For example, people will say “I know what the Bible says about this, but this is what I am going to do.”

Pilate’s Problem: Listened to too many voices.

1. Religious Leaders
2. The Crowd
3. His Wife

Pilate had these competing allegiances. Confused by these competing allegiances, He refused to listen to the one voice that he should have heard—God’s voice. Trying to please others, He missed the most important voice. Many of our poor choices are the result of listening to the wrong voices that compete for our allegiance.

- **Ignorant of who Jesus is.**

In addition to be influenced by what others thought, Pilate was ignorant or at least confused by who Jesus was.

Curious about Jesus—As Governor of the province that included Jerusalem, He no doubt had heard about Jesus. He no doubt heard about the miracles, the teaching, and things that Jesus was claiming. He also knew about the uproar from the religious leaders that Jesus’ ministry was causing.

Hesitant about Jesus—Part of Pilate wants to believe.

Any understanding about Jesus that is not complete is inadequate.

- **Indulge in temporary favor at the expense of eternal favor.**

Again, worried about the crowd, He made the unfortunate mistake of caring about temporary things when he could have been concerned for spiritual, eternal things.

- **Inability to make a choice.**

Ultimately, Pilate thought he could make no choice at all. He thought that He could put off the choice by “washing his hands” of the entire thing. We must always remember that choosing to make no choice is in reality making a choice. There is an abundance of evidence that in the first century world in which Pilate lived that this act of publicly washing hands was the supreme symbol of claiming innocence.

Maybe some here today would want to proclaim his or her innocence? You cannot do that? “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

So What?

You will find that it is impossible to not make a decision about Jesus.

You will discover that the decision you make about Christ influences all other decisions.