



FREE FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN

FREEDOM TO SERVE - THIRTY DAY DEVOTIONAL SERIES
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Free from the Penalty of Sin

When we think of the “Passion of Christ,” we don’t tend to focus too much on Barabbas. It is hard to imagine what was going through Barabbas’ head as he sat in his prison cell waiting for his time to die. He had been sentenced to death thanks to his gruesome crimes. As he waited, weighing everything up, maybe he regretted some of his deeds. Perhaps he was remorseful, or maybe his mind was completely blank. It could be that he was glad for everything he did, or like many today, maybe he blamed society for his choices.

There is no way to know what Barabbas was thinking, but his day took a drastic turn. It all began with Jesus’ arrest and wrongful conviction. Barabbas must have listened as the crowds shouted, “Crucify him!” The whole nation was after Jesus’ blood. Barabbas had likely heard of Jesus and His ministry. He may have heard how Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. Barabbas knew why he was sitting in death row but was probably wondering what Jesus had done.

As he was following the proceedings, Barabbas overheard Pilate asking a strange question. It was Pilate’s prerogative to release one prisoner every year during the Passover. Pilate heard the case that was being leveled against Jesus and realized that He was an innocent man. So, in his wisdom, he decided to pair the innocent

Jesus with the notorious criminal. Surely the Israelites would see the mistake they were about to make.

So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”

— Matthew 27:17

The answer shocked both Pilate and Barabbas, as the crowd responded “Barabbas!”

Barabbas, the notorious criminal, went off scot-free, as Jesus, though innocent, took his place. Barabbas deserved to die for his crimes. Jesus was innocent—yet died in Barabbas’ place.

I know you are probably there thinking about how unjust and unfair this was, but that is exactly also what happened to you and me as well. We were born sinners (Psalm 51:5) and doomed to die in sin (Romans 6:23), but Christ stepped in and took our place.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 6:23

Jesus died so that you may live. He was condemned so that you may be justified. He was rejected so that you may be accepted. He took your place and now you are completely free from the penalty of sin.

Reflection:

Do you have a problem accepting God’s forgiveness?

Do you often see others as worse than you? Why?

Prayer:

Lord, I ask for forgiveness for the times I have thought I am forgiven because I have been good. Help me to realize that salvation is a gift not based on my merit but on Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.