

Matthew 27:1-26  
Feilding Baptist  
1<sup>st</sup> March 2026

### Message - The Silent King

Unexpected and undeserved forgiveness is the result of Jesus' blood shed for us, so that we might choose life.

Tony Blackie grew up in Ashburton, an hour south of Christchurch. He is a couple of months older than me, and is now the minister at Beckenham Baptist. It used to be called Colombo Street Baptist. Tony and his brother Neal and I used to do a lot of biking around Ashburton, down the river, around the domains, and occasionally we would go to the 'death drops'.

Ashburton's only hill was a very old river bank, about three metres high. It was covered in weed and big trees, and bike paths. And some of these bike paths had death drops. To be fair, some of these were quite tame, gentle descents. But there was one, at 90 degrees, for maybe half a metre. I sat at the top of this looking. Tony sat at the top looking. Tony offered to go down on my bike. But I'd saved up and bought my bike, so I wasn't lending it out for stunt riding.

It was life or death. In the end, I chose life, and Tony chose death, on his bike, and lived to tell the tale.

This morning we have three stories of life or death. And we're left to consider life and death, and which will we choose? Let's read;

Matthew 27 (NIV - UK)  
Judas hangs himself

1 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. 2 So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. 4 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.'

'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.'

5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

6 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, 'It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.' 7 So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. 8 That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9 Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 'They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, 10 and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.' [a]

Jesus before Pilate

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'

'You have said so,' Jesus replied.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, 'Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?' 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge - to the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus[b] Barabbas. 17 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?' 18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.'

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' asked the governor.

'Barabbas,' they answered.

22 'What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' Pilate asked.

They all answered, 'Crucify him!'

23 'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said. 'It is your responsibility!'

25 All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Here are the characters and people groups in these 26 verses.

Chief priest and elders

The people of Israel

Jesus

Pilate the governor

Judas

The potter

Foreigners

Jeremiah the prophet  
Sons of Israel  
Crowd  
Barabbas  
Wife of Pilate

As I read these verses, three characters stand out. I'm convinced Matthew is making a point here, contrasting them. Who do you reckon are the three main characters?

So firstly Judas. Three things.

Poor Judas, v3, he realises his mistake, and seeks to put it right. Things hadn't gone as he had hoped. And so he tries to put it right. But that goes all wrong too. The word for how Judas felt, is the word 'remorse'. Now this is interesting. It is similar, but isn't the same word as to repent, to turn. Remorse is like a change of mind, without a change of heart.

Jesus uses this word in the parable of the two son back in chapter 21.

It's the parable of the two sons. The father says to the one son, go down and work in the garden. And he says sure dad. But never goes. The father talks to the other son and tells him to go and work in the garden. The son tells the old man to get lost. But later changes his mind, and goes. This change of mind, is the word for remorse. It's a change of decision, without a change of heart. That's what we see here with Judas. It's soft remorse, without repentance.

Matthew 21:28-32 New Living Translation  
Parable of the Two Sons

28 "But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' 29 The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went anyway.

This is the contrast Susan picked up with Peter, after Peter had denied knowing Jesus. Peter repented, he had a change of heart. And interestingly, as I said last week, Peter went back and joined with the disciples. And as a result, he then met with the resurrected Jesus on the shore of the lake, to be forgiven, and experience the grace and mercy of Jesus.

Remorse is destructive, repentance is creative (Green, 287).

Judas is a disappointing character. He was not able to cope with the gravity of what he had done. And in despair he chooses death.

Second thing, we should be shocked and disappointed at the callousness of the chief priests and elders. It's not very human. They show no concern for Judas, offer him no pastoral care. And that they wouldn't have blood money in the temple treasury is ironic, when it was presumable money from the temple treasury that was used to bribe Judas in the first place. The unclean money buys an unclean place for unclean people (Bock, 378).

The tragedy of Judas is real, horrible and lasting. But the tragedy of the Temple is worse. Not only do the chief priests in looking after their own political interests, choosing death for Jesus, they choose death for the temple. They don't see the temple foundations sinking into the sand, and the tell-tale cracks in the masonry. Here is the beginning of the end of the temple era. And it happens from within.

I believe there are three main characters here. One of the others, is Barabbas. Here he is in prison, after causing the Romans some trouble. He would be regarded as a terrorist leader today. But the Romans have got their man. He's in prison, but only temporarily. He knows would have known the plans they had for him. Crucifixion. And he would have known it was close. And he would have heard the crowd chanting his name. And you can imagine a shiver going down his spine.

Without knowing what was going on outside, he would have assumed his time was up. The soldiers come to get him, they bring his out into the crowd, the light would have been blinding. The soldiers take the chains off him. And then they walk away.

If ever there was a picture of undeserved favour, here it is.

Which brings us to the third main character. Of course it's Jesus. What is it about Jesus that makes Him one of the main characters here? Is it His silence in the face of accusation? Is the punishment He is receiving? Or is it something else?

There is no coincidence that the Passover feast is mentioned in v15. And look at what is mentioned before this, in v4, v6, v8 and also after in v24 and 25. Blood. This is the point that Matthew is making in these verses. It is the blood of Jesus that leads to life. Barabbas was unexpectedly forgiven. Jesus took his place.

It is the blood of Jesus that has taken our place. So that we can live.

And there in v25 a double meaning, for the people say to Pilate  
[25 All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children!'](#)

Indeed His blood is - if we choose life. Jesus' blood is there for all who want to choose life. It's a perfect time to be heading into Communion, where we remember again the blood of Jesus, and what that means for us. Jesus died, that we might live.

The Baptist Hymn book is full of treasures. Here's number 181

Away with gloom, away with doubt  
With all the morning stars we sing  
With all the sons and daughters of God we shout  
The praises of a King  
Hallelujah

Away with death, and welcome life  
In Him we died and live again  
And welcome peace, away with strife!  
For He returns to reign.  
Hallelujah

Father, here we are, almost 2000 years later, still benefitting from the blood of Jesus. Please help us to appreciate anew, what you have done for us, through Jesus. Holy Spirit, please speak to us, take the blinkers off our eyes, please help us to understand. Please help us to appreciate in a fresh new way your forgiveness, your mercy, and your grace. May we go from here set free like Barabbas. Amen.