

Truth on a Tree (Matthew 27)

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

Truth or a Lie? Jesus or Barabbas?

As was the custom, Pilot would pardon one prisoner. So, Pilot presents to the people Jesus and Barabbas. **Matthew 27:17** *Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?*

Culture will be defined by one of two absolutes – Truth or a Lie. Truth is absolute in that it never changes. It is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is the same for all people, all places, for all times. (Josh McDowell) A lie is absolute in that it is absolutely deceiving, contradicting, and absolutely is not truth. Truth cannot be relative or it is called a lie. A half truth is not a truth at all; it is a lie. It is again the story of good versus evil, or as God said it, “Blessing and Life or Curses and Death”.

“How do we know it is the truth, since one of the revelations is that 91 percent of us lie regularly? This resurrects the age-old philosophical problem that if a Cretan tells you all Cretans are liars, can you believe him? A Litany of Lies. How tragic a portrayal it is of our times that our lives are so enmeshed in deceit and falsehood; the lies from the professorial lectern, the lies on the screen, the lies of political rhetoric, the lies of false religions, the lies of promised utopias, the lies of broken vows. Jesus' teaching repeatedly focused on the supreme value of truth in defining human nature and destiny. His assertion was that the loss of truth, in effect, trivialized existence and left the sanctities of life open to ridicule and vulgarity. No Truth, No Freedom, Jesus stated that there is no real freedom in life apart from the truth. A life that is built upon a lie is enslaved and on the road to self-destruction. It would do well for us as a nation, and for national leaders, to take note that freedom when severed from truth sets the time-bomb ticking to a countdown of catastrophic proportions. Without the knowledge and practice of truth, there is no *freedom, just an illusion of it. Truth Is a Person, Jesus reminded us that ultimately truth is not merely propositional. It is absolutely personified in God. **'In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God . . . full of grace and truth' (John 1:1)**. In clear distinction to all other ideas and systems, Christianity stands unique. The world of religions points to platitudes or paths; the Scriptures point to Christ. In Him alone is the embodiment of Truth. Thus, in seeking the solid ground of existence, we reach out not merely to a teaching but to a Teacher; not only to a salvation but to a Savior; not so much to a path as to a Paraclete; not just for guidance, but to the Guide who is God Himself, for in that relationship we understand reality.” (Ravi Zacharias)

Barabbas was a rebel against not just the authority of Rome, but any authority other than self. Barabbas was a criminal, a thief, a liar, a deceiver, a manipulator, a man of all around unrestrained social, civil, and spiritual immorality.

Jesus, however, was a man of compassion, forgiveness, grace, mercy, healing, restoration, and deliverance. But this liberty He spoke of came with a price of accountability, responsibility and obedience to the transcendent relational authority of God the Father above the moral institutions of man and the enmity of his heart. He called for restraint of the iniquity of man's fallen flesh which was in contrast with Barabbas.

Propaganda against Truth?

As Pilot is driven by the people's voice of hate, his wife tells him to have nothing to do with truth. **Matthew 27:19** *When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.*

From the very start of Jesus' ministry, plots of His death began to brew. Since the rebellion of Lucifer the Kingdoms of Darkness plot against the Kingdom of Truth. They plot to deceive and

manipulate all creation to believe what is a lie is truth, and what is truth seeks to take away their freedom to do as they wish.

They try to present truth as the evil and danger and all that is evil as a choice of freedom. We are living in such a day when men call good evil and evil good. **Isaiah 5:20** *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* But Jesus said in **John 8:32** “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Truth Rejected?

Matt 27: 22-23 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, *Let him be crucified.* And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, *Let him be crucified.*

“It was the hour of His submission to the full power of evil. Patience must have its perfect work, in order that His obedience may be complete on every side. He bore it all without relief, rather than fail in obedience to His Father.” (JDC Bible Pro)

The time had come for the liar of all ages, Lucifer, to nail Truth to a tree so that all may see that truth remains no matter how you try to cover it, conceal it, manipulate it, or kill it.

“The lie most rampant in our sophisticated academic halls and in bastions of power is that people who live duplicitous lives are somehow interested in the truth. The stark and distressing reality is that if the world were a library and each individual a book, fiction would be coextensive with history. 'You shall search for me and find me,' Jesus said, 'when you search for me with all your heart.' The undertakers of our time, then, have not so much buried God as they have buried Truth. How great, therefore, is the darkness indeed.” (Ravi Zacharias)

Wasn't Me?

Everyone wants the rewards of freedom but no one wants the responsibility of it. “Pilate, a pawn in their hands, was trapped between the soft whisper of his conscience and the strong voice of pragmatism that said guilt could be washed off in a basin with job security guaranteed.” (Ravi Zacharias) **Matt 27:24** *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, **I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.***

Pilate was exercising what is the practice of “**Ablution**” which is, basically, a public denial of responsibility and any wrong doing. This is another plight of a society plagued with lies and devoid of truth. No one wants to take responsibility for what needs to be made right and no one wants to take responsibility or be accountable for wrong.

“Sad and frightful ignorance which self-will has brought upon a people who rejected the light! Alas! how each one, I again say, takes his own place in the presence of this touchstone—a rejected Saviour.” (JDC Bible Pro)

Accept responsibility or not, Pilate was covered with the blood as Christ as was the crowd and many to come who, realize it or not, are in need of a Savior.

Father's Will – Our sins covered by the blood of Christ

Matt 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, ***His blood be on us, and on our children.*** So it was and so it is that His blood indeed covered them. It covered their sins, the sins of their children, my sins and it can cover your sins as well.

Trust in God your Deliverer Oh Sons of God

Matt 27:43 *He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him:* for he said, I am the *Son of God.*

The name of the one who deserved death but instead was pardoned, Barabbas means “*son of Abba or of a father*”. So it is with you and I. We owed a debt we could not pay, and He paid a debt He did not owe. Ours is but to trust Him and receive the forgiveness and life.

Truth hung on a tree where there should have hung a Barabbas so that the Barabbas may in Truth become a son of God's.

“Here We Stand This is our moment, for the lie returns in its seductive allurements in every generation, seeking a fresh perversion. We had dare not run; we must stand for truth—we cannot do otherwise.” (Ravi Zacharias)

In a society full of lies and seemingly void of truth, a society where everyday truth is under attack, they say truth is relative, truth is dead, truth is still in a tomb to be found by the skeptics. But I tell you, Truth is alive and well. Truth hung on that cross, was placed in a tomb but on the third day Truth arose from the grave, conquered death and to this day sits at the right hand of God the Father.