Matthew 27:11-31

**\*At every Passover Festival, the Roman governor was in the habit of setting free any one prisoner the crowd asked for. At that time, there as a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas** *(Matt. 27:15-16).*

\***So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to set free for you? Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus called the Messiah?”** **He knew very well that the Jewish authorities had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous….**

**The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death. But Pilate asked the crowd, “Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?”**

**“Barabbas!”, they answered.**

**“What, then, do shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah”, Pilate asked them.**

**“Crucify him!”, they all answered.**

**But Pilate asked, “What crime has he committed?”**

**Then they started shouting at the top of their voices, “Crucify him!”** *(Matt. 27:17-18, 20-23).*

DVD Spot: **Matthew DVD on chapter 27**

Discussion Questions

1) What’s the most important thing that you’ve ever learnt?

As a child? As an adult?

For me, it’s that Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross for me*,* in my stead*, out of love for me and for everyone….*

What do you think?

2) Has anyone ever made big sacrifices for you?

What motivated him or her? Do you know of any examples of a person giving his or her life for another?

Share among yourselves.

3) Why does you think Matthew give us all this detail about the choice the crowd had between “Jesus Barabbas” or “Jesus called the Messiah?”

Could it be that Matthew includes all this because the early church was very conscious of the fact that Jesus died in Barabbas’ place? By including all this about Barabbas and Jesus in his Gospel, maybe Matthew is pointing us to the fact that Jesus died in place of more than just Barabbas: in fact, he died instead of all of us? What do you think?

4) Jesus understood himself to be the Suffering Servant of God spoken about in Isaiah, chapter 53, the one who would “give his life to redeem *many* people” *(Mark 10:45; cf. Mark 8:31; Matthew 26:27, 28).* How did God verify, *confirm to be true,* Jesus’ self-understanding? During his ministry? After his death?

5) How has your life been changed as a result of Jesus dying on the cross for you? How does this help you and empower you to face this time of uncertainty and trauma due to the Corona virus?

Quotes:

The following is are quotes from Sunday’s message on the theme: “He died upon the cross for me…”

**\*“What’s the most important thing you’ve ever learnt?” For me, it’s that Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross for me, in my stead, out of love for me and for everyone….**

**You know, giving your life for someone you love is not usual by any stretch of the imagination…. It happens, though, and when it happens it takes my breath away, and makes my heart skip because it reminds me of what love is capable of, and because it reminds me of Jesus did for me and for everyone, out of love for us…”**

\*There is an old legend about what happened to Barabbas after he was set free that reminds us graphically of this:

**Legend has it that after Barabbas was set free, he sought out some of his friends and went to the local tavern, where he celebrated his unexpected freedom with the odd ale or two or three…. As he staggered home, legend has it that he looked up at the hill of Golgotha where the crosses of Jesus and two thieves were, and looking at the cross of Jesus, he cried out in agony of spirit, “That should have been me!”, “That should have been me there!!”**

According to this legend, Barabbas understood that Jesus had died in his stead. **And, as I said, this is precisely what Jesus did do for me, for you, and for everyone: he gave us his life for us, *in our stead.***

**\*This is what Jesus understood that he was doing for us, that he was suffering and dying for the sins of every human being as the Suffering Servant spoken of by the prophet in the Old Testament, and this is an understanding that was confirmed by God in the various miracles that He empowered Jesus to do, and supremely by raising Jesus from the dead.**

\*Well, what’s the most important thing that you’ll ever know?As I said at the start, I thinkthat it’s the fact that Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross for me, for you, and for everyone *in our stead.*

Why is this the most important thing that you’ll ever learn? Because knowing this, and trusting in Jesus as *your* Saviour, changes your whole life, and changes that way that you live your life.

**When you know that “he died upon the cross for me”** *(cf. song by Colin Buchanan),* **and when you trust in Jesus as your Saviour, you know that:**

**1) Your sins are forgiven**

**2) You are a precious child of God**

**3) You are headed home to be with God**

\*You know who you are: a forgiven child of God, that you part of God’s family. And you know what life is all about, that it’s about living as a child of God, living like Jesus: loving others, and caring for others, empowered by God’s Spirit in you, *the Spirit of Jesus.*

And **furthermore, you know that you are in the care of your dear Father in heaven, *your Abba Father,* and that nothing not anything that happens to you, *not any suffering, not even death,* can ever separate you from God’s love and His ongoing forgiveness** *(Rom. 8:38-39).*