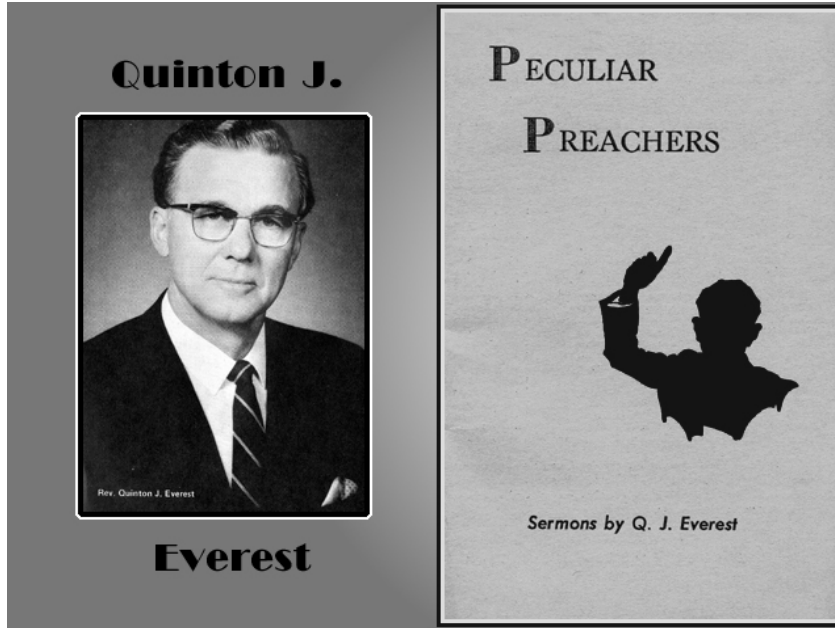


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**PECULIAR PREACHERS**  
By Quinton J. Everest



Messages for February, 1963

Printed in U. S. A.

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Dear Worship Hour Friend:

Greetings in Jesus' name, I am very happy for the opportunity of presenting to you this book containing messages on the general theme, "Peculiar Preachers." We have tried to think of what these men would say to us if they had the opportunity of coming back and talking to people today. To be sure, there is much more that could have been said. I thought of a great many truths which could have been presented, but we have given you what we have considered the most important and the very heart of the message these men would present were they privileged to come back and talk to the masses of people in the world at this particular time. It is my prayer that as you read these messages, they will be a blessing to you and should you desire additional copies to distribute them to your friends and neighbors, feel free to write and request them.

We have now started in our thirty-first year of broadcasting. God has been wonderfully gracious to us. We do praise Him for all that has been accomplished in the salvation of souls, in Christians being filled with the Spirit, in God's people being strengthened in the faith. We feel very humbled when we think of all that the Lord has accomplished through the Worship Hour ministry. These are dark days, days of over-turnings. Nations are rising and falling. Hatred, strife, desolation, is being experienced everywhere. There is only one remedy, there is only one hope, and that is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please join with us in praying for the Worship Hour broadcast that it will bring salvation, liberty, and hope, to masses of people throughout the world.

My dear friend, I do hope that you and I, through the avenue of radio, can continue as workers together with Christ. I deeply appreciate your kindness, your prayers, your contributions of the past. I shall be looking forward to hearing from you again very soon. May God bless you and be with you in every way.

Your Worship Hour pastor, Quinton J. Everest

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## 01 -- JUDAS ISCARIOT

For four Sundays we are going to permit peculiar preachers to preach to us. Today we shall listen to Judas Iscariot. Instead of being the greatest tragedy of all history, Judas might have stood out as a hero of faith. Judas Iscariot is a fascinating character because of what he might have been. The same thing can be said of a great many people today. Judas was very near to Jesus, and yet through his actions and decisions he placed himself outside the kingdom of God's grace.

**Some of you listening to me right now have been very close to Jesus -- almost persuaded to be a Christian, and yet because of the subtle influences and whisperings of Satan you are still outside the kingdom of God's grace and love. For you, just as with Judas, there is tragedy if you continue in your present way. If Judas has one message, above another, for us today, it is this: a person may be very close to Jesus Christ and yet be very far from Him and eternally lost. Even as a church member, a professing Christian, you need to determine whether your relation to Christ is real, genuine, or just external and mere profession.**

**Judas heard Jesus. He responded to His call. He followed Him for three years. He was privileged to share the revelations of that inner circle of followers. He heard and received much more than the general public that listened to Jesus. In fact, on the very night of Christ's betrayal, Judas had listened to Jesus and watched Him manifest His love and humility by washing the disciples' feet. He was even one of those who received the sacramental emblems. Yes, a man supremely privileged, yet eternally totally lost!**

**First, let me say that a person may be an outward follower of Jesus Christ and yet not genuinely Christian, thus eternally lost. There isn't any question but that one of the present grave dangers is that of formalism, as the Word declares, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," II Timothy 8:5. This is a prophetic statement which declares a prevalent condition in the last days, that is just prior to the coming of Jesus. Regular attendance in a church service, partaking of the communion, daily Bible reading, family worship and prayer, even public preaching of the Word and doing foreign missionary work will not bring one into a proper relationship with Jesus Christ; neither will it guarantee salvation once a person is saved. Don't misunderstand me, these things are good. They're absolutely important. Each has something to contribute to spiritual vitality. Each is in accord with the will of God, and yet there are people who have done all these things and still been eternally lost. Such things as attending church and reading the Bible can be the means of bringing us under conviction and helping us to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. All these things which I've mentioned can help us as Christians to increase our faith and be strong in the power of the Lord and in His might. But if we make them ends in themselves, they can lead us to spiritual pride and are worse than useless.**

**The tragedy is that a great many people who have had close association with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ have experienced a hardening of heart until they no longer have a vital relationship with Christ and the real truth of God no longer has a desirable effect upon them. They seemingly have covered their souls with a kind of armor that makes it impossible even for the Son of God to cut through. They are so Gospel hardened that even the Word of God does no good whatsoever. Instead of applying the message to their own sin, they pass it along to Mrs. Jones or Mr. Smith who is perhaps also busily engaged in shifting it over to someone else. Many are like those whom Jesus described in the parable of the soil. They come to the Word with their minds so cluttered with the riches and cares, the**

joys and sorrows of life, that the seed cannot find unoccupied soil in which to grow. Conceit and self-satisfaction leave no room for Jesus Christ. To them can be applied the statement, "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away," Luke 1:53.

In the second place a man may have heard the Gospel invitation and yet be lost. When Jesus saw the situation in the life of Judas, He sought definitely to help him. As one observes the latter period of the life of Christ and His ministry to His disciples, it seems that He devoted an unusual amount of His time to Judas. I think there is a sense, even at the Last Supper, in which Jesus singled him out for a mark of special favor. He dipped a morsel into the wine and gave it to Judas. It was a custom in those days to give such a sop to the honored guest, and our Lord gave this special recognition to Judas. I wonder what was in the mind of Judas when he saw again the gracious love of Jesus. I am quite sure that down in the depths of his soul, he had regret for his bargain. He would liked to have undone his plans. Without a doubt, his conscience was bothering him. Even though he had walked with Jesus, talked with Him, lived with Him, and fellowshiped with Him, now by a deliberate choice of evil, he hardens his heart, for John tells us after the sop, Satan entered into him.

Listener friend, you are either softened or hardened by God's love. A bit of modeling clay left in the sun's ray becomes hard. A cake of ice melts. It is the same sun that shines on both. The same love directed into our sin-filled hearts either drives us from Christ in deeper rebellion or it draws us to Him in grateful love. The consequences are entirely dependent upon your reaction and your decision. In the Garden of Gethsemane when Judas came at the head of that wicked army of individuals, Jesus was pouring out His love upon Judas, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Matthew 26:50.

Even at this last moment, even after Judas placed the hateful kiss of pretended affection, Jesus tries to reclaim this soul that has turned against Him. How often have I seen people love the Lord, serve Him, do His will, even for years give Him a diligent devoted, unswerving service, and then permit something to come into the heart and life. Perhaps as Judas, it was a love for money, a love for the things of the world. Perhaps the individual has felt that he was mistreated, and he has hard feelings, or a grudge. Perhaps things in the church did not go just as he thought they should, and he developed a wrong spirit. This desire, this spirit was permitted to grow. It was fondled and caressed until finally it becomes a deadly viper, killing the very spirit of the love of God in the heart and life, causing this individual to be possessed by a disposition, a determination, and a course of conduct which was inspired and directed by only Satan himself.

Why should anyone prefer death to life, sin to holiness, Satan to God? The greatest mystery of the Gospel is the mystery of its rejection by men. I think most people will acknowledge that the principles and precepts of the Gospel are indeed wonderful, marvelous. They accept them intellectually and say, "This is the way we

should live." In other words, people in general do not object to the doctrines of Christianity and the Bible, but when it comes to living the life, it is an altogether different thing. I ask you: Do you find in your heart a desire to eat the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt rather than partake of the manna which God sends down from heaven? I know you make your excuses. You excuse yourself on the ground of a busy life, hypocrites in the church, that the Bible cannot be applied to present-day living, but if you would be really honest, all of that is just a smoke screen for your sinful, selfish, devil-controlled heart and desires. If you ever did know Jesus Christ, something has gone seriously wrong. Oh! that you will permit the life, the message, and the manifestations of Judas toward Jesus to preach to you today.

In the third place, note that a man may repent of his sin and still be lost. Listen to Judas as he comes to the priestly foes of Christ, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," Matthew 27:4. But also listen to these priests who are now dealing with Judas like a cat with a mouse, "What is that to us? See thou to that." Now in this desperate, dark, dismal hour of defeat, Judas can't think of anything better than to commit suicide. In this connection, I think of the great message given us by Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and 'worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and then he added, "of whom I am chief," I Timothy 1:15.

I think we need to be very clear about this. The love and forgiveness of God in Christ was adequate to cover even the sin of Judas Iscariot. The Son of God on the cross of Calvary bore all human sin -- even this black betrayal! Judas Iscariot could have stood throughout all time as the supreme monument to the limitless forgiveness of God, but he refused. Yes, the Bible does say, "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3.

But it also says that we are to repent and believe the Gospel -- that is the whole message.

The man who recognizes his sin as evil, who acknowledges it, has gone only part way to the cross. After repenting and turning from his own sinfulness, he must turn to the Saviour and believe on Him. As a pastor for many years, I've discovered that a great number of people will admit at least some measure of their sinfulness, but many are not willing to be led to the Savior's feet. Friend, it is not only your repentance but your repentance plus faith in Jesus Christ which saves you. True there is some relief in saying, "I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood." But each person needs to take Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. Listen to Him. Walk with Him. Obey Him. Constantly do His will.

Please listen to me! If Satan would show you the end of your sin from the beginning, you would certainly shrink from the bargain. But just remember, he is a very clever tradesman, and he is not going to frighten his customers. He shows you only the brilliant entrance with its dazzling display of lights. He conceals the dark quagmire and briars which lie at the end of the road. Judas Iscariot, when he began

taking small sums of money from the treasury of the disciples, didn't realize how deep his sin would carry him. Don't be foolish enough to believe the whisper of the devil. He will tell you you can do this little thing and that little thing and it will never hurt you. Little by little he is leading on until finally there will come the tragic consequences of a sin which will blacken your life and dam your soul. I know, the devil is telling you that you are going to be the exception to the rule, but there are no exceptions to this rule. Sin like a snowball grows bigger as it rolls. Like Judas, you will discover your feet slipping faster and faster down the smooth decline of evil. More and more its chains fasten themselves around you.

If you are a Christian and you have been feeling the love of God leaking out of your life, if you have been discovering that other things contrary to God's Word and His desires are entering your life, I say unto you today, do not play around in this manner. Some of you are religious performers. You have never known Christ. You have never had a real change of heart and life. You don't know what it is to be born again or filled with the Spirit of God. I call upon you today to quit playing with religion. Open your heart. Let the Lord Jesus Christ come in and be a reality in your life. The possibility of acting like Judas is within reach of every individual. That is revealed in the lives of the disciples, for when Jesus spoke of His coming betrayal, every disciple looked into the dark pit of his own soul, and seeing their latent possibilities for evil, cried out, "Is it I? Is it I?" Mark 14:19.

Your safety and my safety can be assured only if we recognize this possibility of sin. When we do this we are going to more genuinely and thoroughly rest our case in the hands of Christ. It is then that we seek an adequate refuge in the strong arms of our God. If you have been considering yourself sort of a self-sufficient individual, not needing the presence and power of God, I call upon you in the closing moment of the broadcast to turn from your futile, foolish, self-assurance to the "always sure" power, under Whose wings you can find constant peace and security. With the Psalmist you need to say: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer," Psalm 19:12-14

May God bless you and help you to trust Him fully and completely is my prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

02 -- PONTIUS PILATE (John 18:37, 38; 19:16)

I have discovered that very few men who become governors of states are ever outstanding enough to make the headlines in the news of the world. To be elected governor of one of our states is certainly to be given a very high and

responsible position. However, even though a man is thus elected, when he is no longer governor, he is soon forgotten. Pontius Pilate was not elected but appointed by the Roman Emperor to rule the turbulent Hebrew nation. He was one of the most interesting men who surrounded Jesus Christ when He was here in this world. Pilate's task was far from easy. In his position he had to satisfy the Caesars and at the same time try to keep from arousing the Jerusalem mob which was always like a geyser ready to explode. It took Roman military force to keep the hotheads of that nation in control. Israel hated the very sight of the Roman Eagle carried before a column of soldiers which often stirred up a riot. Pilate had experienced such attempts to throw off the yoke of Rome.

Now Pilate has an altogether different man, an altogether different leader before him. This prisoner, Jesus, seems to have no desire to lead a revolt. He seems to have little control over His people, for even His own people are clamoring for His death. He doesn't appear to be dangerous, just kind of an idle dreamer, so far as Pilate was concerned.

After an interview with Jesus, Pilate decided that He was innocent. He told the priests, "I find in Him no fault at all." For just a moment, it seemed as if Pilate would go down in the records of the Bible as a hero, but no sooner does this possibility enter our minds than we see him given to compromise. He ordered his prisoner scourged, hoping that the flowing blood might cool the anger of these boiling hearts and minds. After Jesus had been mercilessly beaten, He was once more brought before the crowd. They were still not satisfied. They thirsted for all of His blood and screamed, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

Pilate struggles, heaves, sighs, and gropes for a way out of this dilemma. Something seemed to say to him, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend. He claims to be a king, and if you let him go, Caesar will rob you of your place and possessions. Perhaps you will lose your very life." If Pilate ever had any real manhood, if he ever had any real principle, he now loses it. He makes the decision, as he thinks, to save himself and delivers Jesus into the hands of the bloodthirsty enemies. What does this experience of Pilate say to you and to me as we look back upon it? What do you think Pilate would say if he could now come back and stand before this microphone and speak as I am doing?

### **Stability Of Truth**

In the first place I think he would tell us that there is the stability of truth. He learned that no one can destroy God's cause. I am quite sure that, like many modern politicians and many people in all walks of life, Pilate in that day said, "Well, I'm not concerned with theories, but with practical affairs." He was thinking of wealth, position, and security. These were things he could understand, but this foolish, simple individual who stood before him seemed to care nothing for any of these. In fact He cared so little for possessions that He said, "Foxes have holes, and

birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head," Luke 9:58.

He was so wretchedly poor that even when He rode triumphantly into the royal city, he had to borrow the donkey upon which He sat. He didn't even seem to be too much concerned about defending His life from attack. When this man was warned about the plans of Jerusalem's enemies, He cared so little that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. These were things which Pilate simply couldn't understand. He and his great position, with his pomp and pride, dismissed the events in the life of Jesus with sort of a cool contempt and asked the question, "What is truth?"

He actually didn't wait for a real answer. He just went on with his practical concerns, like many of .you. A king in rags, a king whose closest followers deserted Him at the first sign of danger, a king who seems to be a helpless victim before the priestly aristocracy -- surely one need not worry about such a man! Just like many people today, he brushed Jesus Christ aside and attempted to go on his way.

Listener friend, let me ask you: How much would you know about Pilate if he had not come in contact with Jesus Christ? He achieved a high office; he stood in political favor with the emperor of all the earth; he had amassed a tremendous fortune. All the military might of all the Roman legions were at his command. By every standard of that day, and of our day, he was a tremendous success. His picture and his name would be on the front cover of many of the most popular magazines. But may I remind you that today we wouldn't know a thing about him if he hadn't been brought face to face with this dreamer from Nazareth. After digging and digging and digging one might find a little smattering of information in secular history, but I think it would be hard to find. But there is Pilate smiling upon Jesus with the thought, "What a fool this man is to waste his life this way! Doesn't he see on which side his bread is buttered? Why can't he be wise enough to stop beating his head against the wall?" But look! The power of this helpless man proves to be stronger than all the fame and power of this Roman politician, Pilate! Rome, once the mistress of the world, is today little more than a vast museum of antiquity. Actually, when I was in Rome not too long ago, I discovered that its most interesting and beautiful buildings are built in honor of Pilate's prisoner! The praises of Christ are sung around the earth. The lives of men and women, boys and girls have been changed and transformed, and they have worshipped Him in Spirit and in truth. Listener friend, if you haven't learned it by now, you better give careful attention to the fact that there is stability in truth.

### **Futility Of Compromise**

In the second place, I think that Pilate would preach to us concerning the futility of compromise. One simply cannot compromise with evil and get by. It never pays to disobey the voice of conscience when it is directed by God. There was a voice that said to Pilate, "This man is innocent. Let him go." Instead of Pilate obeying God, he decided to give in to the devil. First of all, just a little bit. Yes, he



was struggling, struggling between right and wrong, but he finally decided to save his own life. It is true that what he did meant the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but actually, it is just a little while until Pilate loses not only his position, but his very life.

O my friend, hear me! I say unto you, hear me! It does not pay to compromise with the devil. Every hesitation makes him stronger and weakens your resistance to his wiles. Your only chance of conquering evil is to reject it entirely and at once. There is a sense in which the world will not object to your being a Christian if you're not too much of a Christian. At least in some parts of the world they are willing for you to be a follower of Jesus Christ if only you keep sort of a nodding acquaintance with the devil. The world will permit you to be a halfway follower of Christ, which means of course, that you would also be a halfway traitor! Look at compromise in the life of Pilate-ready to sacrifice his honor and the life of an innocent victim. Historians tell us that just a few years later he was called to Rome to answer the charge of misusing his authority. The Emperor Tiberius died just before he arrived at the capital and Pilate escaped that trial, but he never returned to his office. Stripped of fame and power, he vanished into obscurity. He lost everything he tried to save.

He struggled through the wall of truth, gave the authority to have Jesus Christ crucified -- all to save himself, but he lost everything for which he had sacrificed everything. The truth of his prisoner was verified, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it," Matthew 16:25.

The devil is a liar. He always has been and he always will be. We are warned that he is the father of lies. He'll promise anything. He whispers, "Are you sure God is telling the truth? You know you can violate God's law without any danger. True, others didn't get by, but you are going to be the exception. You can play with fire and not get burned," and so the devil speaks and so men continue to go down to disaster. Some of you may not be tempted to terrible immorality, fleshly sins. You just sort of enjoy playing with the thought of insignificant sins. For example, when a degrading story is told, you can laugh at it. When the latest best seller comes on the scene and carries dung on platters of golden eloquence, you give in to reading it, if not in a public place, somewhere in seclusion. Many of you are willing to pass along gossip that's too good to keep to yourself. Yes, sins that when measured seem to be small, but large enough to give the devil a foothold in your life. It is like the old fable of the camel sticking his nose in the tent until finally he occupies the whole tent and pushes his master out. You can be sure that if you give an inch of compromise to the devil, he will do the rest. My friend, if you compromise, you lose.

### Responsibility Of Action

If Pilate could stand before this microphone today, I think there is one more thing that he would certainly tell us and that is, we are personally responsible for our decisions and actions. Pilate would tell you what I'm going to try to tell you, and

that is that you cannot avoid responsibility for your action. Look at these priests and Pharisees, who are too religious to contaminate themselves by entering into the pagan hall of justice. Again, in this action, one sees them careful to strain the unclean gnat, but finding no difficulty in swallowing the camel of murder. As a result of this, Pilate holds his court outside. Back of him are his Roman guards. The screaming, turbulent crowd stands below him in the street. At the head of the mob one sees the religious political leaders of that day. Beside Pilate stands the quiet figure of Jesus Christ, blood still dripping from His wounded back and staining His white tunic.

Pilate's last effort to save this man had failed. Now what is he going to do? A slave is called. After Pilate listens to the screams of the crowd demanding the death of Jesus, he dips his hands into a basin of water and declares, "I am innocent of the blood of this lust person: see ye to it," Matthew 27:24 but the question is, Was he really innocent? Absolutely not! He was responsible for his own actions. His handwashing action did not erase the condemnation from his mind, conscience, and heart. Hear me, you who are trying to shift responsibility. In your business, in your position as a political leader, in your social activities, in your financial procedures, how many times have you known exactly the right course and yet you struggled against your God-directed conscience and did the wrong thing. Then in the end you tried to blame someone else! There's nothing up to date about people trying to evade responsibility. Neither is their anything modern about their failure. Look at the first pages of your Bible and listen to Adam. "Lord, don't blame me for my sin. It was the fault of my wife."

Eve says, "I wasn't really to blame either, because the serpent tempted me." You know the result of that. Adam and Eve, Pilate, you and I, every one is responsible for his actions. My choice is my own whether I made it alone or in the midst of a crowd.

A minister hears many, many so-called reasons advanced for people's neglect of the things which are vital, important, spiritual, and eternal. I think about the cheapest one and the most cowardly that I hear is something like this. "You see, my parents made me go to Sunday School and church when I was little; so now that I'm independent, I no longer attend." I notice that these same people eat their meals three times a day, even though their parents presumably made them join the family at the table. Apparently a desire for independence doesn't keep people away from mashed potatoes and gravy. Why can't you people be honest enough to stop blaming your parents, maybe in some instances your godly parents, and acknowledge the real reason that you do not serve Jesus Christ? The real reason that you do not go to church is because you are just inwardly wicked and indifferent to Jesus Christ and too much in love with your bed and your Sunday newspaper. We have people all around the world who worship very carefully and conscientiously the idols of their beds and their easy chairs.

When Pilate crucified Jesus he placed an inscription over His head, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," John 19:19. The priests objected that it should read differently. They said, "Write not The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews." Pilate now, when it was actually too late to save his own situation, stubbornly refused to give way and said, "What I have written I have written."

Well, actually, there is a sense in which that is true in every life. What we have done, we have done. We can't turn back the clock of time. One cannot run the sands of time through the hour glass the second time.

But now in conclusion, listen to me carefully. We have a wonderful Gospel -- actually a Gospel which never reached the heart of Pilate. It is the message of this God-man, Jesus Christ, whom Pilate despised. It is the message of a forgiving God, a God who makes the written, unwritten and the done, undone. It is a Gospel which can wipe out the past. It is the good news of the grace of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. Listener friend, I say unto you, this message of Jesus Christ -- His suffering, dying, His shed blood, resurrection, ascension, and His intercession can take care of your past. He can wipe your slate clean and permit you this very moment to start afresh. Judas refused this Gospel and his life was a tragedy. Pilate ignored it, turned away from it, and his life was a failure and his soul is in hell.

You have listened to this broadcast, to this message. As Paul said to the Romans, you are without excuse. For you, there is forgiveness; there is heart cleansing. The Holy Spirit Himself will come into your heart and life if you will permit Him to do so. Yes, there is a solution for your life, for the forgiveness of your sins, for your transformation. It is God's solution. May the Lord help you to see it and accept it just now.

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### 03 -- HEROD -- THE MURDERER

Today we call upon Herod, the murderer, to preach to us.

At one time the Pharisees were posing as the protectors of Jesus and told Him He had better get out of the country because Herod would kill Him. Jesus answered, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," Luke 13:32. Jesus knew very well the wicked desires, not only of Herod, but also the Pharisees, and refused to give in to either. His constant, courageous purpose was to do the will of His Heavenly Father. Herod had murdered John the Baptist, and through his sinful, wicked connivery solicited the affections of another man's wife and was unlawfully living with her. Herod, as wicked as he was, yet had a conscience which disturbed him, for when Jesus came on the scene, he thought it was John the Baptist whom he

had killed and who had come back to pronounce judgment upon him. Herod's religious theology declared that there was no such thing as an after-life or a resurrection, but it didn't hold water in the presence of the Man of Galilee.

Pilate, the man who preached to us last Sunday, tried to turn Jesus over to the Jewish Sanhedrim. He told them to take Him and judge Him according to their law. When this failed, he tried to appeal to the Jerusalem crowd, but stirred by the priestly leaders, the people demanded the release of Barabbas and the murder of Jesus. Pilate finds out that Jesus was from Galilee. Immediately he declares, that this man must be disposed of by Herod, for that is his territory, and so now we see Jesus before Herod the murderer, the adulterer, the godless politician.

## Desires

First of all, look at this man's desires. According to his own statement he, for a long time, had heard of Jesus and wanted to see Him. As I have said, there was a very real sense in which he was troubled because he thought that this man was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead. So he seemed to be driven by a confusion of desires and fears that wanted to see Jesus, and yet he was afraid to see Him. We have the entire episode before us. As we read and study it, we discover that Herod, like many others, was not really prepared to repent of his sin. He knew very well the evil of his doings. Even though with bombastic declarations he declared there was no such thing as an after-life, no such thing as a resurrection, yet he shivered, quivered, and trembled under God's condemnation. He never did get away from the preaching of John the Baptist. At the same time, the sinful companionship of the woman he had taken to be his wife was irresistibly attractive. As this man is before us, let it be ever remembered that the voice of God cannot be stifled by killing God's prophets. I think we would be amazed if we knew what goes on in the heart of a Stalin, a Khrushchev, a Castro, and I'm sure, no less true, in the hearts of every one of you listening to me who have sin in your life.

We are living in sort of a polite, educated, sophisticated day. One may not take a sword and cut off the head of his pastor, or take a gun and blow his brains out, but such an individual just manifests sort of a cordial dislike for that man who touches the festering sores of his life. A true, God-called, God-directed minister will be kind, loving, and compassionate, but at the same time, he will not permit his personal likes or dislikes to color his preaching. The Bible, God's Holy Word, deals with the sins of men. If we preach that word faithfully, it cannot help condemning the sins of mankind. A telegraph messenger is not responsible for the message of that telegram. He is responsible only for the delivery of the message. How long would a person he employed who took it upon himself to alter telegrams before he delivered them, in order that he might always bring good news?

Herod in his preaching to you today is declaring that you solve no problem when you dismiss a preacher who preaches the truth; you solve no problem when you leave a church where the truth is being preached, to attend a church where

**your conscience will be salved. You are only adding to your sin, increasing your condemnation, and piling up something more for which your conscience will torture and condemn you. When Herod had Jesus brought into his presence, he wanted a display of magical powers. He tried to bribe Jesus and declare that He could be released if He would only give him an hour's entertainment. What a tragedy! Here is a man in the presence of the Savior of the world, and all he wants is entertainment! Before we condemn Herod, we better look at the people of this day and generation. What of the awful soul-destroying, God-disregarding, unholy tendencies and procedures of submerging the Lord's day into just a week-end? Instead of being dedicated to God and His service, we are making it a day for mere physical recreation. There were two outstanding reasons why God cursed His people Israel. One was their idolatrous worship, and the other was their disregard for the one day out of seven, in which they were to especially meet together for worship, Christian association, and spiritual deepening. The idols of our day may not be the hideous Moloch of ancient Palestine, but they certainly fulfill the prophecy of God's Word when He says, "In the last days... men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," 2 Timothy 3:1, 4.**

**I declare unto you, that more and more this has become the forbidden path which many professing Christians are walking, even those who claim to be born-again and filled with the Spirit. There is the obsession of fear that feels that unless the church makes itself the center of amusement, it cannot hope to win or even hold young people. There is a wholesome social activity which is the fruit of Christianity, but my friend, social activity is not the roots of the tree.**

**I have always contended that in the program of the church, there should be a place for wholesome fellowship, where Christians who are members of the family of Jesus Christ can get together and have fellowship. This was the natural outgrowth of the church in the book of the Acts. Through certain lawful activities and recreations, we might be able to gain the confidence of some people but remember, always and finally, it is through God's precious Word and not through these things that men are brought to Jesus Christ.**

**Faithful preaching, faithful witnessing, and faithful testifying of what God has accomplished in our lives because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These I say, are the procedures and the truths that will bring men to Jesus Christ. If all we have is just the tools of the world, then we can be sure that our plans, efforts, and endeavors will go down in defeat. It is "Not by "might, nor by power, but by my. Spirit saith the Lord," Zechariah 4:6.**

**There are also many people today who are following Herod's pursuit of pleasure by by-passing God's plan to secure finances for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ. Multitudes who have only a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, are willing to listen to schemes and shady procedures, if these will provide a way of escape for them to fulfill the obligation which they have to God. How sad to**

see what is supposed to be God's church bribing even the people of the world, into contributing a few cents through a good meal. It is becoming a tragically prevalent thing to hear of a church going before state legislatures, actually proposing that churches be exempt from antigambling laws. All this is nothing more or less than the devil taking control of that group of people called the church. These things are coming into existence, not because the people of the church are poor, but because they prefer pleasure to their Savior and actually because they do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. They have only a profession or their names written on a piece of paper which declares that they are members of the church.

Most of us have money enough for our needs: We buy new cars. We wear good clothes. We have money to do this, that, and the other thing, and in many cases the pittance that is given to support the cause of Jesus Christ causes our homes, cars, good clothes, and good food to blush with shame. Hear me, my friend, where your heart is, there will your treasure be also.

### Disappointment

In the second place, we observe Herod the preacher and discover his disappointment. The Man Whose fame had spread abroad and had come even to Herod, refuses to entertain him with even the smallest miracle. Jesus refused to use His divine power to satisfy the curiosity of a wicked man. Certainly this is something which we do well to take very seriously in this day, when we have a lot of people who want nothing more than an outward, physical, earthly display of God's power to satisfy their curiosity and perhaps to help them so they can go on living in their sins and serving the devil. The miracles of healing on the part of Jesus were performed because He had an overflowing heart of divine sympathy. If your real aim in life is nothing more than selfishness or pleasure, you need not expect God to give you that for which you ask. I've discovered that there are businessmen who want to use God to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. People get in trouble, they get sick, and then in an hour of need and emergency, they want to use God as sort of a fire-escape. When God doesn't do as they think, then they become critical of Him and say that He doesn't answer prayer, that He isn't a God of love, and He doesn't care. My friend, first of all you must make Him the goal to which your love clings. Just to use Jesus Christ to gain something which one considers desirable is a subtle idolatry. If you will only permit Him to do so, He will come into your heart and life and sit in the very throne room of your being until you will say, "Not my will but Thine be done."

Herod was disappointed because this Galilean had no word to speak to him. Those lips which had charmed and silenced friend and foe were now, in the presence of Herod, silent. The One to Whom the common people gladly listened had no word for this insincere, curious, wicked politician. Go back to the message which Pilate preached to us last Sunday and you discover that Jesus talked

patiently with him, but finally Pilate said, "Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him," John 19:6.

Pilate revealed his choice. Already Herod had refused to alter his life when faced with the message of the Baptist. Jesus knew that it was no use to talk with this man. Hear me, my dear listener. The message of Christ during these few moments can bring to you blessing. If you will take heed, you can know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Your sins can be forgiven, but if you close your heart and mind, if you harden your heart, it will bring you nearer everlasting death and destruction. Either you listen and obey or you stifle the voice of the Spirit of God and the voice of your conscience, wrapping about yourself a garment that the very sunlight of God's mercy cannot pierce. For every person there comes sooner or later the moment of final opportunity. It is not because God is unwilling to forgive and meet the need, but because the sinner is unwilling to receive the gift. I plead with you, do not close the door of opportunity.

## Disaster

Herod has been preaching to us first concerning desire, second the thought of disappointment, and now finally disaster. Notice this, the Bible says, "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves," Luke 23:12. Think of it! A friendship based upon the common rejection of Jesus Christ. Your enemies and your friends reveal exactly what you are. Listener, if you are a Christian, I believe you will follow the example of Jesus and will love and seek the lost whoever they may be, but while you try to seek the lost, are you not seeking and indulging in their sins. How important that we continue faithful in prayer so that while we try to win a lost world to Jesus Christ we likewise maintain our Christian integrity, holiness, and standards. The friendship of these two men proved to be disastrous to both. Both were very near the kingdom of God, but now these scoffers reinforced each other. I've discovered that the man is unlikely to yield to Christ, whose companions ridicule the Christian faith. A person who associates with others of loose character is strengthened in his ungodly living. And so the dark shadow falls upon Herod as it fell on Pilate. Both men stood face to face with the World's Redeemer. Both were almost persuaded, but because of Herod's frivolity and love of sin he joined the host of men of whom it could be said, "he might have been." Not long after this, by his superior at Rome, he was banished to Lyons and died in exile. In the words of the song I say, "Almost cannot avail, almost is but to fail Sad, sad that bitter wail, almost but lost."

May this not be said of you, but God grant that right now you will open your heart and let the Lord Jesus Christ come in to meet your need.

\* \* \* \* \*

04 -- BARABBAS (Luke 23:18-25)

**Yes, Barabbas! The convicted robber, the blood-stained murderer, the plotter, desperado, the dangerous man. When he was free, the officers of justice, when looking for the individual who accomplished the last bold robbery, would first of all think of Barabbas. When they looked for the captain of a wicked gang, it was Barabbas. In fact, when there was any unusual searching going on with relation to crime, murder, or wickedness of any outstanding character, Barabbas was the criminal wanted. Finally, he was convicted and imprisoned. His name means, "Father's own boy." In our imagination we might conclude that he was ruined by the unwise fondness of his father. How many times history records the fact that an unwise mother or father produces a child who becomes their sorrow and their shame. Whatever the process, we see the result. Here is Barabbas, convicted and imprisoned.**

**On the other hand, here is Jesus, the Son of God, who never committed a crime. In fact, He never did a wrong thing. His authoritative invitation is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matthew 11:28.**

**He says, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it mope abundantly," John 10:10b.**

**The question is: Will men believe it?**

**As we look upon that scene of nearly two thousand years ago, the call of this dying Redeemer fades away unheeded. The throng screams out, "Away with this man, but give us Barabbas." Someone has tried to imagine what happens to Barabbas when he was released. This person sees him staggering drunkenly from a tavern. In his drunken stupor, he was caught in a milling, screaming crowd that pushed its way toward the city's gate. What was the reason for all this excitement? Barabbas, in his half-drunken stupor, makes his way along in the crowd and soon comes to the place of the skull, where he sees three crosses, each bearing its terrible burden. Such a sight was perhaps not too unfamiliar to this wicked man. He pushes his way through the crowd that he might view more closely the suffering of these victims. In the midst of a comment of blasphemy to a companion, Barabbas seems to be caught by the eye of the man who is on the middle cross. The penetrating, yet loving look of that man, wiped the drunken grin from his face. Something that was stronger than the wine which he had been drinking, sobered him and Barabbas cried, "Jehovah God! That's my cross He's dying on."**

**Yes, as I've said, that is only the imagination of some person as to what may have happened, but it's a true picture of many a man who has come face to face with the Crucified. The very heart of the entire message of the loving God to sinful man lies in our realization of the truth: That is my cross He's dying on. The old Prophet declared, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," Isaiah 53:5.**



**Oh! that these pronouns would stand out in bold, blazing type so that every one of us would realize anew and afresh, the amazing mystery of divine love. Listener, I say unto you, we shall never understand the event on Calvary until we see both our personal need and God's personal offer.**

## **Need**

**And so Barabbas stands before us again today as one of those peculiar preachers, declaring to mankind down through the centuries, that man has a definite, deep, dark need which can be met only through Jesus Christ. Quite likely, if Barabbas could stand before this microphone where I am at this moment, he would declare that Jesus' dying on the cross that day revealed not only his need, but the need of the whole world. It is true that man's need was revealed before. Go back into the pages of Genesis and you see man in rebellion against God, a rebellion which could end only in disaster unless God intervened.**

**Almost every page of the Bible tells us either of sin or its consequences. In the oft-repeated wail of the human heart that has failed to find the answer to its need, we see its being supplied by a gracious God. Even nature speaks to us in the same voice. Within is the turbulent, inescapable strain for that which we never find. Multitudes are attempting to crowd out with their work, the consciousness of this need. They try to bury it with their pleasure. They seek to evade it by running away, but still the hunger of man's heart insists that it must be heard and must be met. Within is distress, without is horror.**

**I have lived through wars and have read the columns of the daily papers telling of the cold-blooded slaughter of women and children by men in arms. Another column in the paper reports a vicious child murder by some sexual pervert. Everywhere one goes he finds beneath the veneer of culture and apparent surface respectability, the degradation which seems to descend below the level of the brute.**

**There are employers of labor who attempt to crush workers with indescribable conditions. There are ruthless labor leaders, threatening those who do not yield to them, and by their reckless actions endangering the lives of millions of people who are hardly involved in the struggle. Surely, we do not need the authority even of the Bible to tell us that, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," Isaiah 53:6. With shame we look upon the imaginations, actions, and decisions of men. Yes, like sheep -- weak, defenseless, fearful, easily bewildered, and an easy prey to wolves and coyotes, men are apt to be frightened by even a tumbleweed, frequently stampeded to death in the gullies of sin. You and I without Jesus Christ are just like that. In the dazzling light of the cross of Christ, we are forced to admit that man without God, without a Savior, descends to an inconceivably low level.**

**Jesus Christ on the cross forbids us to take sin lightly, for it stands through time as a memorial to the fact that God takes sin very seriously. The sin at which this modern world is smiling and even sneering was directly responsible for the most tragic hour in the world's history. There are two ways for me to know how much my neighbor paid for his automobile: One is to look at the price tag, and the other is to see how much money he paid the salesman. Actually, sin has no price tag, for the devil is far too clever to frighten away timid customers. But let me tell you, we can see how much sin cost God! When we look at Calvary, our minds stagger at the immensity of the divine sacrifice. Only eternity will enable us to adequately view the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of God's gift.**

**I think most people are quite prone to stand with the Pharisee as he prays, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are..." Luke 18:11a. But let me tell you, my friend, when you look at the cross, it shatters such complacency, for the crucifixion was brought about by good men, self-righteous men, but men who at heart were wicked, vile, and sinful. The moral leaders of the most religious people of that day screamed for His death. Men who were the proud defenders of law and order, sentenced and executed Him. Yes, call them polite sinners if you will, but sinners headed for hell. I ask you: Are you guilty of exactly the same things? Do you prefer something before Christ? Its name may not be Barabbas, but it robs you of peace, happiness, and heaven.**

**A poet whose name I do not know has given us these words, I see the crowd in Pilate's Hall, I mark the wrathful mein. Their shouts of crucify appall, With blasphemy between.**

**And of that shouting multitude,  
I feel that I am one,  
And in that din of voices rude,  
I recognize my own.**

**I am sure that many times in a moment of clear vision and thinking, we have recognized very definitely, that we helped to crucify Jesus Christ. Our sins nailed Him to the cross. The cross testifies to this in unmistakable language. Listener friend, do not stifle that clear voice that speaks to you. Instead, cry to a merciful God for pardon and release.**

## **Mercy**

**In the second place I should like to call your attention to the thought of mercy. It is not enough that we gaze upon the cross and see the greatness of our need. Recognition of our sin doesn't save any man, and neither does hatred of that sin. A few Sundays ago we had Judas Iscariot preaching to us. No one can follow the events of his life without being deeply touched. Judas was guilty of the blackest betrayal in history, and yet he shrank from the consequences of his own act. It seemed he couldn't believe that the mercy of Christ might reach down to him.**

Instead of trusting Christ Whose life-blood was being poured but for all sin, even the sin of Judas, he went into the darkness and hanged himself. You can't say that he lacked either the knowledge or a hatred of his sin. I'm sure he would have been glad for an opportunity to undo his sin. What he actually needed was a glimpse of God's love and mercy. Every man must come to the place where he realizes that he can appropriate, through God's mercy, the provision of Calvary, to his own life. This will enable us to rejoice, not merely in the love of God toward the whole world, but in His love for us.

The Protestant Reformation really began when a young monk came to a companion and told him of his burdened conscience. The elder monk listened and finally asked, "Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins?"

"Yes of course, I confess it daily in the creed."

"But you do not really believe it," said his counselor. "You believe in the forgiveness of sins for David and Peter and the thief on the cross, but you do not believe in the forgiveness of sins for yourself. You will not find peace until you can say, 'I believe in the forgiveness of my sins.'" When Martin Luther heard the very personal offer of God's grace in Christ which the Gospel makes, the rebirth of Biblical Christianity had begun.

## Forgiveness

That brings me to a third thought with which I desire to conclude this message; namely forgiveness.. If you have found at the foot of the cross, only the terrible, awful, unfathomable depth of your need, you are of all men most miserable. But if you have heard the gracious Savior speak to you of His everlasting love, His mercy, His willingness and ability to forgive you, then you are on the threshold of true life. The knowledge of your need and all the mercy of God being made available to you is meaningless unless you come to the place where you are willing to confess your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

He has provided for you that which is great enough to clear up all your past debts and to provide a future inheritance that is, "... incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," I Peter 1:4.

He is able to do the exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and yet, my friend, with all of this provision, you can starve spiritually.

As you just now stand before Golgotha, I trust that the Spirit will help you to see yourself with a divine clearness. As you see God's offer of salvation for your soul, it is my prayer that you will gladly and fervently accept His offer.

A little boy stood with his father before Holman Hunt's masterpiece, "Christ Knocking at the Door." He was puzzled. "Daddy, why don't the people hear Him

knock and open the door?" The father was silent as he thought of the mystery of human rejection. But the boy answered his own question after a moment. He said, "I think it is because they are living in the back rooms." I am sure that is where many of you have been living -- sinful, degraded, rejecting Jesus Christ, and thus void of peace, joy, happiness, and hope of the future. Yes, I say, void of all of this, but if you will, right there by your radio, perhaps in the quietness of the moment, come to the place where you can hear Him, where you can see Him dying on Calvary for your sins, surely a new hope and a new confidence will come into your life. You will be able to rejoice and say,

"Upon the cross of Jesus,  
Mine eyes at times can see,  
The very dying form of One  
Who suffered there for me.  
And from my smitten heart with tears,  
Two wonders I confess:  
The wonders of redeeming love  
And my unworthiness."

I am sure you realize your need, and may God grant that just now you will open your heart, permitting the mercy and forgiveness of the God Who provided the same at Calvary, to become your all-sufficiency.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE END**