

Changing The Habit Of A Lifetime

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the gospel according to Mark, in chapter 15.

Mark chapter 15. And if we take as our text the words of verse 15. Mark 15 and verse 15.

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd. Now, I'm sure that we're all familiar with the phrase, why change the habit of a lifetime?

Why change the habit of a lifetime? Well, as we begin another new year, this is often the time where people make New Year's resolutions, in which we resolve to try and change the habits of a lifetime, because, well, there are things in our life that we need to change, or things that we would like to improve upon.

[1 : 35] Whether it's our weight, or our fitness, or our consumption of alcohol, or our diet, or our lifestyle, or our use of money. I'm sure there are a host of things.

But at the beginning of a new year, we often make New Year's resolutions, where we resolve to change things, or we resolve and see that things need to change, and we begin a new year with determination to bring about that change in our life.

But when I was growing up, every Saturday afternoon, my next-door neighbour would go swimming in the pool in Stornoway. And when we would see him at New Year, he would always, or often, say that the pool will be packed from the months from January to March and around April.

But after that, he said, well, it'll only be the usual few swimmers who are there every Saturday afternoon. And I remember asking him why people didn't keep going to the pool every Saturday. And all he said to me was, they're not committed. They're not committed. And as you know, well, commitment is crucial if there's going to be a change in our life. Commitment is crucial because these changes, whether it's our fat, our fitness, or our finance, they'll only be determined by our commitment.

[2 : 53] Because our commitment determines the change. Otherwise, we'll just fall back into our old habits, the habits of a lifetime. And we'll stay on safe ground, and we'll stay in our comfort zone, because it's what we know, it's what we're used to, and it doesn't involve conflict or concern or change.

But as you know, my friend, we're not here to talk about fat, fitness, or finance, as helpful as all of these things may be. We're here to talk about faith. We're here to talk about faith.

We're to talk about your need to have faith in Jesus Christ, and your need to commit your life to Jesus Christ. Because for so many of you in here, there's one New Year's resolution which you all need to adopt in your life, and that is to seek the Lord with all your heart.

And if there was one habit of a lifetime which you need to resolve to change, it would be your response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because the habit of your lifetime, it seems, has been to sit in church under the sound of the best message in all the world, and yet put off becoming a Christian until later.

But do you not think, well, at the age you're now at, and the year we're now in, do you not think that it's now time to change the habit of a lifetime? Because the habit of sitting in church each Lord's Day, and the habit of hearing the gospel, and the habit of not responding to come to Christ, it's not getting you to heaven.

[4 : 38] It's not gaining you favour with God. Because it's our commitment that determines the change. Our commitment to loving, following, and serving Jesus Christ determines the change.

Because if we're not committed, we will just fall back into the old habits, the habits of the lifetime. And we'll stay on safe ground. We'll stay in our comfort zone.

We'll seek to please ourselves and to please others. To keep quiet. Because that option, it doesn't involve conflict or concern or change.

But my friend, you need to change the habit of a lifetime. And you need to commit your life to Jesus Christ. But in order to help you make your decision, I want to present to you a man today who decided not to change the habit of a lifetime.

Because the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, he was presented with the opportunity to stand up for the truth. And to stand up for what he knew was right, and commit his life to Jesus Christ.

[5 : 47] But instead, Pilate ignored his conscience, and he ignored the advice that was given to him, and he ignored Jesus. He just let him pass him by.

And so in order for you to see how important it is for you to change the habit of a lifetime, let's consider Pilate today. And I want us to consider him under three headings.

Pilate's prosecution, Pilate's proposal, and Pilate's problem. Pilate's prosecution, Pilate's proposal, and Pilate's problem. So let's look firstly at Pilate's prosecution.

Pilate's prosecution. Look at verse 1. And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.

And Pilate asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? And he answered him, You have said so. And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, Have you no answer to make?

[6 : 50] See how many charges they bring against you. But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. And when we think about this meeting between the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, and the saviour of sinners, Jesus Christ, this meeting was massive.

Because Pilate was the only person in the entire world who could have changed the outcome of the events of history. But because of the enormity of this meeting, this meeting between Pilate and Jesus, because of the enormity of it, all four gospel writers, they included in their account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

But what's interesting is that each of the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all present this meeting from a different angle.

And it's as if you could imagine that they all have video cameras. And they're all recording the same scene. And they're all working together to give one clear picture as to what took place when Pilate prosecuted Jesus.

Because Mark here, he tells us that, he tells us what time of the day it was when Jesus was brought before Pilate by all the religious leaders.

[8 : 09] He says in verse 1, literally it reads, immediately in the morning. And Mark's favourite word in his gospel is the word immediately. Because everything happens immediately.

Immediately Jesus does this, and immediately Jesus goes and does that. But when we look at the last verse of chapter 14, we see that Mark also uses his favourite word there too.

It says in verse 72 of Mark 14, And immediately the cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times. And he broke down and wept. And by using the same word in the last verse of chapter 14 and the first verse of chapter 15, By using the same word, Mark connects the two scenes together.

Because the last time we were looking at Mark's gospel, We saw that Judas had betrayed Jesus. He had handed him over to the religious leaders. And the religious leaders, they had mocked and insulted Jesus, And conspired to kill him.

[9 : 14] And while all that was going on, Peter was outside in the courtyard, Denying that he ever knew Jesus. And the scene, it ends with the cock crowing for the second time, Just as the sun is rising, And just as Jesus has been brought out to go to Pilate.

And then that chapter 15 begins. It begins without any time delay. And Mark tells us that Jesus was delivered to Pilate for prosecution.

But as Jesus is delivered to Pilate, By the religious leaders, You could say that the camera angle, it switches again.

And it switches to John's camera. Because John tells us in his gospel, That when the religious leaders brought Jesus to Pilate, To his headquarters, They didn't enter the judgment hall, So that

they would not be defiled.

And so that they could eat the Passover. And when you think about it, It's complete hypocrisy. The religious leaders, They refused to enter the judgment hall, And go through with all their false accusations against Jesus, All so that they could remain religiously pure, And eat the Passover.

[10 : 29] Because if you remember, It's now Friday morning, It's the day of the Passover. It's the day that a Passover lamb would be killed. And all the Jews, They had gathered in Jerusalem, To remember the Lord's great act of redemption, And redeeming the children of Israel from Egypt.

It was a day in the religious calendar. A great day. And there was going to be, No way that any of the religious leaders, Were going to let anyone stand in their way, Of their religious habits.

Habits. But the absurdity of their request, Was that they had perfection in their midst. They had Jesus there. But they were more worried about, Being religiously unclean.

The religious leaders, You could say, They had the fulfillment of the Passover, Before their very eyes. But all they wanted to do, Was uphold, Their religious habits, Of a lifetime.

And you know, Sometimes I wonder, And I worry, That that's what you are like. You have Jesus lifted up before you, In the gospel.

[11 : 42] And you're told who he is. You're told what he's able to do for you. You're told that, As we were saying to the children, That he's able to transform your life. And you're told about his love.

You're told about his grace. You're told about his mercy. But instead of seeing Jesus, And his free offer of salvation, You choose to keep your eyes, Firmly affixed upon, Your religious habits of a lifetime.

Instead of seeing, That it's by grace that you are saved. And that it's by Jesus' blood, That you're redeemed. And that it's by his righteousness, That you are justified. You choose to keep your eyes, Upon your religious habits, Of church going, And sitting in the same seat.

And sitting here, And sitting here, And the hope that, Well, one day maybe God will accept me. But my friend, These religious habits, They're good. But sometimes, I think that, This religious habit, It's keeping you from seeing the wonder, And the glory of who Jesus is.

Your religious habits, They're keeping you from committing your life, To Jesus Christ. Because it's not a religious habit you need.

[12 : 58] As good as it may be. What you need, Is Jesus Christ as your saviour. What you need is commitment, To Jesus Christ. But when John tells us, That the religious leaders, Refuse to enter the judgment hall.

Pilate comes out to them. And Pilate asks them, Well, What judgment are you bringing, Bringing against this man? But the religious leaders, They don't give an answer.

Rather they just, Play upon their position, As religious people. And they claim that, Well, They would never lie to him. And that they would never do this, If it wasn't serious. So Pilate says, Well, Judge him by your own law then.

And it's saying that the truth, Starts to come out, Because, The religious leaders, They confess, That they can't put anyone to death, According to their own law. So they need Pilate to help him. They need Pilate, Because he was the only person, Who had the authority, To crucify Jesus. And you can imagine, Looking down the lens of John's camera, That there's this little subtitle, When we hear about, Pilate being the only person, That can crucify Jesus.

[14 : 11] This was to fulfill the word, That Jesus had spoken, To show what kind of death, He was going to die. And Pilate, He enters the judgment hall again, On his own, And he calls Jesus, To stand before him, While Pilate sits, On the judgment seat.

And it's just this meeting, One on one, Between Pilate, And Jesus. And the first question, Pilate asks Jesus, Are you the king of the Jews? And at that moment, You could see the cameras, Of Matthew, Mark and Luke, They record Jesus saying, You have said so.

And with that Jesus, He accepts the title of king, Which was a political title. And if Jesus was claiming to be king of the Jews, Then Pilate would immediately think that, Well, the intention of Jesus was, To overthrow the Romans, And to take over the nation of Israel again.

If Jesus was the king of the Jews, He would be a threat, And Pilate would have to put him to death. But it's then that John's camera, He picks up this conversation, Between Pilate and Jesus.

Because Jesus explains to Pilate saying, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting. That I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

[15 : 33] But my kingdom is not of this world. And then Pilate says, So you are a king. And Jesus answers, You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, And for this purpose I have come into the world, To bear witness to the truth.

And He says, Everyone who is of the truth, Listens to my voice. And with that Jesus explained the truth to Pilate. That He's not who people claim He is.

He's not the king of the Jews. He's actually the king of heaven. And He's an innocent man. And then almost in frustration, With all these false accusations, Coming from the religious leaders, Against Jesus, And Jesus' truthful answers, With it all battering back and forth in His head, Pilate then asks the very question, That Jesus is waiting for.

What is truth? Total confusion. And Pilate asks, What is truth? And is that not the same question that everyone is asking?

Is that not the question everyone is asking today? What is truth? It's a very post-modern question. And yet it comes to us from the ancient world. Which means that nothing has changed down throughout the centuries.

[16 : 53] Because everyone has their own truth. And their own understanding of the truth. Whether that truth is based upon a religion, Or a philosophy, Or a science, Or scepticism.

Whatever it is. We live according to our truth. And yet deep down, Everyone is asking the same question as Pilate. What is truth?

What is the truth? Everyone is searching for answers. Why are we here? What's it all about? What's the point of life? What's the truth about Jesus?

And there are so many thoughts and theories that are being proposed to us. And just like the religious leaders, Each and every one of them has an accusation against Jesus.

They all have a desire to rid from our mind The possibility that Jesus Christ is the saviour of sinners. But when we look through every camera lens of the gospel writers, They all record that Pilate could find no fault with Jesus.

[18 : 03] Regardless of all the lies that Pilate had been told, When he came face to face with Jesus, Pilate knew the truth. He knew the truth.

He knew that Jesus was innocent. He knew that Jesus was the king of kings. And with that, Pilate, He goes out to the religious leaders. And before all the crowd, That's now gathering outside his judgment hall.

And Pilate tells them that in his prosecution of Jesus, He finds no fault with this man. Pilate finds no fault with Jesus. But that wasn't enough to satisfy the crowd.

And my friend, maybe you're like that. Maybe you're like Pilate. Because when you look at Jesus, When you listen to his voice, You know that he speaks the truth.

You know that What he says is the truth. Regardless of all the lies that are fed by the media, And other religions, And sects, And secularism, And atheism, Regardless of all the lies, You know that when Jesus speaks, He speaks the truth.

[19 : 21] But like Pilate, It's still not enough For you to change the habit Of a lifetime. It's still not enough For you to change the habit of a lifetime.

And so we see Pilate's prosecution. It proceeds secondly To Pilate's proposal. Pilate's proposal. If you look at verse 6.

Now at the feast, He used to release for them One prisoner for whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison Who had committed murder In the insurrection, There was a man called Barabbas. Pilate knows the truth about Jesus. That Jesus is innocent. And so he actually makes Two proposals. He makes two proposals.

Because when we Go to Luke's camera And Luke's gospel, We see that Pilate's first proposal Was to put off Making a decision About Jesus at all.

[20 : 27] Because when the religious leaders Explained to Pilate That Jesus Had been going around Galilee And stirring up all the people, Pilate discovered That Jesus was a Galilean.

And as a result, He immediately sent Jesus To Herod. Because Galilee And all the people from Galilee, They were to be dealt with By Herod.

And it just so happened That Herod was in Jerusalem At the time. And Luke tells us That when Herod saw Jesus, He was very glad. Because he desired For a long time To see Jesus.

Because he had heard About Jesus. And he was hoping To see some sign Done by him. And the reason Herod Longed to see Jesus Was because many years earlier, It's recorded for us In Mark

chapter 6, Many years earlier, John the Baptist Had preached About Jesus To Herod. John the Baptist Had told Herod That the Lamb of God Was coming to take away The sins of the world. And Herod, well, He enjoyed listening To the preaching Of John the Baptist.

[21 : 38] He enjoyed listening To John preaching About Jesus. And he loved hearing About his need To repent of his sins And seek the Lord.

Herod enjoyed Listening to the gospel. And he enjoyed Being challenged By the gospel. That he needed To change his life. He needed to change The habit of a lifetime. But like many people, Herod refused To respond To the gospel.

And he didn't Follow his conscience. And he failed To lay hold Of his opportunities. Because if you remember Everything changed For Herod At his birthday party.

When Herod's wife She took her only opportunity And she asked For the head Of John the Baptist On a platter. And Herod, well, He was very much Like Pilate Because he satisfied The crowd of his friends.

And he did As he was requested. He beheaded John the Baptist And he brought His head To his wife On a platter. And in that moment Herod silenced The only voice Of truth In his life.

[22 : 51] He silenced The messenger Of Jesus. Which is why When Jesus Stood before Herod Although Herod Was glad to see him Jesus said Nothing.

Jesus said Nothing to him. Because Herod Had ignored His conscience Herod had Wasted his opportunities And Herod Had silenced God's spokesman In his life.

My friend Herod enjoyed Hearing and listening To the preaching Of the gospel But he failed To change The habit Of a lifetime. And all I can say To you is Don't be like A Herod.

Don't enjoy Don't just enjoy The gospel. Respond To the gospel. Don't ignore Your conscience That presses In on you. Listen to your Conscience.

Don't waste Your opportunities Because Well you don't Know when It will be Your last opportunity To hear the gospel. My friend Don't be like Herod.

[23 : 56] Change the habit Of a lifetime And commit Your life To Jesus Christ. But as you know Herod wasn't The only one Who would fail To change The habit Of a lifetime.

Because Pilate Was going to Do the same. Because when Jesus said Nothing to Herod Herod Mocked Jesus He dressed him Up as a king And he sent him Back to Pilate.

And Luke tells us That Pilate He enjoyed the joke And they became Firm friends From that very day. Because before that They were enemies. But what's remarkable Is that In sending Jesus Back to Pilate Pilate knew That he had to Make a personal Decision About Jesus.

He wanted to Put off making A personal decision About Jesus By sending him Away Like many people Do. They want to Put it off. They want to Put Jesus off By sending him Away.

Just like Pilate Did. And you know Many people They're confronted With Jesus And the gospel And they just Want to pass the Buck. Not today.

[25 : 08] Not just now. Too busy. Want to put off Making that decision About Jesus. But the truth is Like Pilate We all have to Make a personal Decision About Jesus.

And that decision It will have Eternal consequences. And Pilate's Decision It certainly Did have Eternal consequences. Because when Jesus returned From Herod Luke tells us That Pilate Then called Together all The chief Priests And the rulers And the people And he said To them You brought This man To me Who was Misleading The people And after Examining him I didn't Find him Guilty Of any Of your Charges Neither Did Herod Because he Sent him Back to us And then Pilate says Look Look Nothing deserving Of death Has been done By him Therefore I Will punish Him And release Him But that Didn't satisfy The crowd Either And so in Order to Avoid an Uproar And making A personal Decision About Jesus At that Time Pilate gives A second Proposal He wants Jesus away From him Again And he Does so By attempting To change The subject Completely Which many People do

And change The focus By appeasing The crowd With the Offer of Releasing A prisoner And through Mark's Camera lens We know That the Feast of Passover It had The tradition Of releasing A prisoner At the Jews Request And so in And so in Order to Divert The attention Of the Crowd Away from Jesus And direct The attention Towards this Man called Barabbas Mark tells Us that This man Barabbas He explains Him to Us He was a Man in Prison Because he Had committed Murder In the Uprising Barabbas was A terrorist He was a Loyal Nationalist Who hated The oppression Of the Romans He hated Rome Being inside Israel And he was Part of this Group who Wanted the

Romans to Just leave Their nation And so that The Jews Could regain The power Of their Nation again And during That period Of history There were Many uprisings Against the Romans but None of them Ever succeeded And so in Order to Divert the Attention of The crowd Away from Jesus And directed Towards Barabbas Pilate did That because In his Mind Pilate Thinks that The crowd Would far Rather release Innocent Jesus Than the Murderer Barabbas In his Mind the Choice was Simple Who do You want Jesus the Nazarene Or Barabbas The murderer Who do You want Jesus the Healer Or Barabbas The assassin Who do You want Jesus the One who Preserves Life and Helps People and Shows Compassion Or Barabbas Who takes Life and Hurts People and Wants Revenge Who do You want Me to Release to You Pilate Asks The choice Seemed Obvious But Pilate Received The answer He never Expected Give us Barabbas Send Jesus away Crucify him But give Us Barabbas But you Know there's Something so Interesting about Pilate's Proposal Because in The original Greek Barabbas Was his Second Name Jesus Was his First name Which means That he was Called Jesus Barabbas And so the Choice which Pilate was Actually proposing To the Crowd was Which Jesus Do you Want Jesus Christ Or Jesus Barabbas Which Jesus Do you Want And you Know it's The same Question that We are being Asked in the Gospel Which Jesus Do you Want What kind Of Jesus Do you Want Do you Want a Jesus that Suits you Or a Jesus that Saves you [29 : 25] Do you Want a Jesus that Fits into Your box Or a Jesus that Commands you To take Up your Cross Do you Want a Jesus that Follows you Or do you Want a Jesus that You follow What kind Of Jesus Do you Want What kind Of Jesus Is it that You're actually Looking for Because the Jesus who Has been Proposed to You again Today Is a Jesus who Loves you It's a Jesus who Longs for You to Come to Him It's a Jesus that Wants you To seek Him with All your Heart And it's a Jesus that Wants you To commit Your life To Him This Jesus This Jesus in The Gospel My friend This is the Jesus you Need This is the Jesus you Need And you Need him As your Saviour Today Today So why

Don't you Change the Habit of A lifetime And commit Your life To him But Pilate's Problem was He didn't He didn't Change the Habit of a Lifetime By committing His life to Jesus Christ And so We've Considered Pilate's Prosecution Pilate's Proposal But lastly We see Pilate's Problem Pilate's Problem If you Look down At verse 12 And Pilate again Said to Them Then what Shall I Do with A man You Call the King Of The Jews And They Cried Out Again Crucify Him Pilate Said To Them Why What Evil Has He Done But They Shouted All The More Crucify Him So Pilate Wishing To Satisfy The Crowd Released For Them Barabbas And Having Scourged Jesus He Delivered Him To Be Crucified

Knowing That Jesus Was Innocent Pilate Was Desperate To Let Him Go Because Pilate He Didn't Want To Make A Personal Decision About Jesus He Wanted To Put It Off He Didn't Want To Have To Decide But As Time Went On He For A decision about Jesus. But I love the way C.S. Lewis put it. C.S. Lewis, as you know, he was the author of the children's books and many other books and the films, the Chronicles of Narnia.

C.S. Lewis, he once said, when we make a decision about Jesus, there are only three possible conclusions that we can come to. Because either Jesus is a liar, either he is a lunatic, or he is Lord. A liar, a lunatic, or Lord. And he says that if Jesus is a liar, he's not to be trusted.

If Jesus is a lunatic, he's not to be followed. But if Jesus is Lord, then we must bow down before him and we must submit our life to him. And if anyone knew that Jesus is Lord, it was Pilate.

[33 : 07] Because Pilate knew the truth, but he was too afraid to stand up for the truth. And as Pilate sat in his judgment seat in the judgment hall with this decision about Jesus hanging over him, the camera angle suddenly shifts. It shifts to Matthew's camera and it pans the whole scene of the judgment hall as Matthew shows this messenger running and bursting through the door and running to Pilate. The messenger is from Pilate's wife because she has had a nightmare.

She's been up all night dreaming about this man called Jesus. And the note that's written on for Pilate from his wife, it reads, have nothing to do with this man. Have nothing to do with this man. And Pilate sitting in the judgment seat, having to make a decision about Jesus, Pilate's greatest fear is confirmed by his wife. She had never met Jesus. She didn't know anything about him. She probably didn't know anything about the trial that was going on at probably six in the morning. But what she did know and what Pilate knew was that Jesus wasn't a liar. Jesus wasn't a lunatic because Jesus Christ is Lord. Pilate's greatest fear was confirmed by his wife. Have nothing to do with this man.

But regardless of his wife's plea, Pilate knew that the crowd was pushing him to make a decision about Jesus. And what made his personal decision so hard was that he didn't want an uprising. Instead, he wanted promotion from Caesar. He wanted praise from Herod. And he wanted to please the Jews. My friend, Pilate's problem was that although he knew the truth, he looked for the approval of others.

[35 : 10] Regardless of all the lies that he had been told by the religious leaders, Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. He knew the truth. He knew the truth about Jesus. He knew that Jesus was the King of Kings.

He knew that Jesus was the Lord of Lords. But he was too afraid to stand up from the crowd. His conscience told him. His conscience was screaming at him that what he was doing was wrong. But he was too afraid to change the habit of a lifetime. Pilate's problem was that he preferred to stay on safe ground. He preferred to stay in his comfort zone. He preferred to please himself. He preferred to keep others happy. Because it didn't involve conflict. It didn't involve concern. It didn't involve change. It didn't involve questions. Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas.

And having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. It's a sad ending for Pilate.

[36 : 24] Because he knew the truth. He had the opportunity to stand up for the truth. To stand out and be counted as a Christian. And yet, he let his opportunity go by in order to please the crowd.

Pilate's problem was that he didn't change the habit of a lifetime by committing his life to Jesus Christ. Because he was too afraid of what others would think. And you know, most of us suffer from our longing for the approval of others.

Whether it's our family, our friends, our neighbours, or our work colleagues. And looking for their approval, it can make us do things and say things and go places.

That we know are wrong and well, we don't really want to do them at all. But we do it because we're afraid to make a stand.

We carry on because we're afraid to make a stand. We worry about what people will think of us or say about us.

[37 : 34] And all these questions, they go round in our mind. They are the biggest stumbling block. What will people say? If I start following Jesus.

What will people think if I become a Christian? What will people say if I go to the prayer meeting? What will they think? What will they say? What will they do?

But you know, my friend. I'll tell you this. I guarantee. I guarantee. That if you were to change the habit of a lifetime.

By committing your life to Jesus Christ. Most people would be delighted for you. Most people would rejoice with you.

I was told by a friend. I wish it was me. And they say it. They say it. They say it. They say it. Because. Like you.

[38 : 40] Deep down. They know the truth. And they want to be saved too. They want to be a Christian too. And anyway.

In the grand scheme of things. What does their opinion matter? What does it matter? What people think or say? It should only matter to us what Jesus thinks.

And what Jesus says. Because at the end of the day. When all is said and done. It's him we are accountable to. And don't you find it interesting in this passage that.

Although Pilate didn't want to make a decision about Jesus. Jesus. And Jesus was the one standing. Before the judgment seat of Pilate. To give an account of his life and ministry.

The reality was that. One day soon. The roles would be reversed. Everything would change. Because when Pilate would finally close his eyes on the scene of time.

[39 : 49] He would open them. At another judgment seat. And at that judgment seat. Pilate would stand before. Jesus. Jesus sitting.

In the judgment seat. But the decision Pilate made. About Jesus. In this life. Was to have eternal consequences.

And the same is true for each and every one of us. Because the Bible solemnly reminds us. That on the day of judgment. We must all appear.

Before the judgment seat of Christ. And on that day. We won't be asked. What were other people's opinion of you? We won't be asked.

Whether or not we were a good person. We won't be asked. Did we keep up with all our religious habits? Were you a good church attender? All we will be asked. Jesus will ask.

[40 : 49] What did you do? With me. What did you do with Jesus? And like Pilate.

Our decision. About Jesus. Has eternal consequences. And so my friend. Don't be like Pilate. Who failed to change the habit of a lifetime.

Because Pilate. He was presented with the opportunity. To stand up for the truth. And do what he knew was right. And commit his life to Jesus Christ.

But instead. He put it off. He ignored his conscience. He ignored the advice he was given. And he walked away from Jesus.

Walked away from Jesus. Into a lost eternity in hell. Don't be like Pilate. Rather. At the beginning.

[41 : 50] At the beginning. Of a new year. Why don't you change the habit. Of a lifetime. And leave here today. Different to the way you came in.

By committing your life. To loving. Following. And serving. Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God. We give thanks for. The opportunity. We give thanks Lord.

That we have been given many opportunities. And how thy word reminds us. That too much. To whom much has been given. Much will be required of us. Help us Lord.

We pray. To see. The wonder of the gospel. And the wonder of Jesus. Not to make. Our attendance here. A religious habit. But to make Jesus.

[42 : 51] Our wonderful saviour. Bless us Lord. We ask. That thy word. Would penetrate our heart.

That would change our lives. That would transform us. By the renewing of our mind.

And committing. Our life to Jesus. Go before us. We pray. Bless us today. The Lord's day. Help us to glorify thee. And to enjoy thee in it. Go before us.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 86. Psalm 86.

In the Scottish Psalter. Page 341. Psalm 86. Psalm 86. Singing from verse 10.

Down to the verse marked 13. The psalmist asks for guidance. And then he thanks the Lord.

[43 : 56] For delivering him out of hell. That should be everyone's prayer. Because thou art exceeding great. And works by thee are done.

Which are to be admired. And thou art God thyself alone. Teach me thy way. And in thy truth. O Lord. Then walk will I. Unite my heart. That I thy name. May fear continually.

O Lord. My God. With all my heart. To thee I will give praise. And I the glory will ascribe. And to thy name always. Because thy mercy toward me. In greatness doth excel.

And thou delivered hast my soul. Out from the lowest hell. These verses of Psalm 86. To God's praise. Because thou art exceeding great.

And works by thee are done. We are to thee and my granddad.

[45 : 01] Every God. Because your thing. You don't needfulican you.

And others with hazelnisies. I find my heart, the light I did, may fear come daily.

O Lord, my God, with all my heart to Thee, I will give praise.

And I the glory will ask I unto Thy name always.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, both now and forevermore. Amen.