

Hope Lives!

Scripture used: [Matthew 27:15–18, 20, 23](#); [Romans 3:22-24](#); [Colossians 2:14](#)

OVERVIEW

This Easter message, *Hope Lives!*, invites us to see ourselves in the crowd surrounding Jesus' trial. When given the choice, the people chose Barabbas over Jesus—the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ. The same question asked then is still being asked today: “Which one do you want?”

This isn't just about the crowd back then—it's about us now. We are confronted with the reality that we often choose versions of Jesus that fit our preferences rather than surrendering to who He truly is. The good news of Easter is that Hope lives—not because of who we choose, but because Jesus chose us first.

KEY POINTS

1. An Illuminating Question

During the Passover festival, it was customary for the governor to release one prisoner chosen by the people. Pilate presents the crowd with a clear choice: Jesus or Barabbas.

But this moment reveals something deeper than a historical decision—it exposes a heart-level question we all must answer:

“Which Jesus do I really want?”

Sometimes, without realizing it, we shape Jesus into someone more comfortable or convenient:

- A Jesus of power—someone who fixes our problems and proves Himself through miracles
- A Jesus of profit—someone who blesses us materially or advances our plans
- A Jesus of preference—someone who never challenges our lifestyle
- A Jesus of perspective—someone who agrees with our opinions and worldview

But the truth is, these versions of Jesus cannot save us.

Only **Jesus the Christ**—the true Savior—has the power to redeem, restore, and transform our lives.

2. Why is it so hard to trust?

In Matthew 27, we're told that the crowd was influenced by the religious leaders. What may have started as individual opinions quickly turned into a unified outcry. Pilate even refers to them as a mob—a group driven more by pressure and influence than truth.

Many people today struggle with trust, especially when it comes to faith. Some have experienced manipulation, hurt, or disappointment—often at the hands of spiritual leaders or church communities. That kind of pain can make it difficult to trust Jesus fully.

But it's important to separate who Jesus is from how people may have misrepresented Him.

At the same time, this passage invites us to reflect honestly:

Have we ever gone along with the crowd instead of standing on truth?
Have we ever seen—or even participated in—“mob mentality” in Christian spaces?

The good news is that the same grace that saves us is available for others too. No one is beyond redemption—not the crowd, not Barabbas, and not us.

3. A Stunning Surprise: The Great Exchange

Romans 3:23 reminds us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. In other words, we all have a record—a “rap sheet.” Barabbas was guilty. He deserved punishment but he was set free. Jesus, who was innocent, took his place. This leads us to a powerful and humbling realization: “I am Barabbas, and Barabbas is me.”

We are the ones who deserved judgment. We are the ones who were guilty. And yet, Jesus stepped in and took our place. He estranged our guilt for His grace. Our sin for His righteousness and our death for His life. This is the heart of the gospel.

4. Why Would God Love Me Like That?

After hearing this truth, a natural question arises—one that both believers and non-believers have asked for generations: “How can Jesus love me like that?”

It doesn't always make sense. It doesn't feel earned. And that's exactly the point.

God's love is not based on our performance—it flows from His character. God's love is a love that pours itself out for the good of the other. And because of that love, hope lives.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - When you hear the question, “*Which Jesus do you want?*” What challenges you most about that? Why do you think trust is difficult for people when it comes to Jesus or the Church?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read [Colossians 2:13-14](#). How does understanding the “great exchange” change the way you see yourself and Jesus? Why do you think God chooses to love us so sacrificially?
- 3) **DO** - Plan to attend next weeks Gathering online or in-person as we learn more about The Jesus Way as we learn how to activate the Jesus kind of love across differences in your relationships.