



## Matthew 27:1-26: “Innocent Jesus saves guilty humanity”

We all know what it is to be guilty: whether it's past guilt (events we just can't move on from), present guilt (like addictions, besetting sins, from day-to-day life), or surprise guilt (not living up to our own expectations). But our society often plays down the idea of guilt where it relates to “people like us”, instead using language of “mistakes” or “errors of judgment”. But Matthew takes us through a “rogue's gallery” of human guilt in this passage:

### **v3-5 – the guilt of Judas**

He gives up Jesus out of *greed*, then has an apparent change of heart, but never truly repents. An example of “*worldly sorrow*” (2 Cor 7:10).

### **v6-10 – the guilt of the leaders**

Jesus gets in the way of the life they want to live; he challenges their status and damages their reputation. They actively work to get him out of the way. Their *pride*, *envy* and *self-interest* mean they deny the obvious evidence of his deity in order to protect themselves.

### **v11-26 – the guilt of Pilate**

Pilate knows Jesus' innocence, but because he fears the crowd, *gives into peer pressure*. He goes with the flow to make his life easier.

### **v20-25 – the guilt of the crowd**

Ultimately this is where we all are – wanting to be *king of our own lives*, and wanting the real king out of the way. “His crown ain't big enough for the both of us” – and so he's got to go.

### **Barabbas**

He is another picture for us – this time of the sinner who is set free because Jesus is condemned. This led to the key phrase for the sermon: “Innocent Jesus saves guilty humanity”. We deserve death – see all the above! But Jesus takes our place. We had all kinds of sin up on a flip-chart which was then covered over by a page simply stating “Jesus' innocence”. Whatever is on that flip-chart, it is all covered over. Jesus' invitation from the passage is: “Will you let me take your guilt?”

### **Imagine...**

We finished thinking about what this good news looked like for a number of examples, and what it might look like for us, our community, our city and our world.

### **Questions**

*Introductory discussion:* Our society has a complicated relationship with the idea of guilt. In what situations are we happy to talk about it? In what situations is it uncomfortable?

- Matthew goes through a “rogue's gallery” of guilty humanity in this passage. What different aspects of human guilt are on display? Write them down in a notebook.
  - Which examples hit closest to home for you?
- Retell the story of Barabbas. How is his story a picture of the Christian life? Flip over pages of the notebook to cover what you've written. Is this how you see your sin?
- What does “taking our guilt to Jesus” look like practically in the day-to-day?
- The church should be a community of people who acknowledge their guilt and know that Jesus has covered it. How are we doing at living this out?