

What is that to us

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[0 : 00] We return with the name of the chapter of the Red Matthew chapter 27 and let us look together for a few moments at verse number 4 and verse 24.

Matthew 27 verse 4 where Jesus Iscariot says, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they, that is the priest said, what is that to us?

See thou to that. And then verse 24, when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.

See ye to it. Now we notice straight away there, there's a remarkable likeness that is between the words that the priest said to Judas and the words that the pilot said to the priest.

The priest, you see, had made tremendous use of the services of Judas in the betrayal of Jesus. But as soon as he had served his purpose, as soon as he had pointed Jesus out to them, he was paid.

[1 : 19] And they reckoned that that was him finished. They wanted nothing more to do with him. Although they were priests, and although they were priests, having the responsibility for men's soul, when this poor, tormented soul came to them, they had nothing to say to him.

They didn't want anything to do with him. What is that to us? See thou to that. And Pilate, in very similar words, treats them in exactly the same way as they had treated Judas.

Innocent blood, says Judas. I am innocent of the blood of this just person, says Pilate. See thou to that, says the priest. See ye to it, says Pilate to them.

Pilate tries to push the responsibility onto the priest, and in their fanatical hatred of Jesus, they are willing to take us. So let us look for a few moments at those three, at the characters of those three, to find you to be scarier the priests and Pontius Pilate.

And let us look at it from the point of view of their own conscience, as they played their part in the crucifixion of Jesus. Then just examine that these three people, there are three sort of groups of people, and they played their part in the crucifixion of Jesus, looking at it from the point of view of their own conscience.

[2 : 47] So first of all Jesus is scarier. Here we have a man who was in an agony of conscience. Here. He was a man demented. A man slowly going mad because of what he had done.

I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. Judas was an ordinary man. An ordinary man, but he had low animal selfish taste.

He followed Jesus because of personal gain from himself, because of what he thought he would get in this world.

He thought Jesus was to be a great leader against the Roman army of occupation. And for selfish, personal reasons, he wanted to be in on any success that was gained.

He wasn't attracted by Christ's passion. He wasn't attracted by his character. He wasn't drawn to his preaching or his teaching in any way at all. And I have the key reason for Christ's work became more obvious as the nature of his kingdom that he was setting up in this world didn't appear to fit in with Judas' selfish thought.

[4 : 08] Judas got fed up of Christ. Judas became weary of it. It's awful when we think that the nearness of Christ made eleven disciples.

But it made one traitor. Because nobody could live near to Christ for over three years in constant communion with him without coming to hit him if he didn't love him.

Remember when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and they were met there by that old man Simeon. That old man who was full of the Holy Spirit.

And he had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah. Until he had seen the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he saw the baby Jesus he took him in his arms and he said about him Behold this child is set from the fall and rising again of many in Israel.

and here amongst the disciples themselves we have this truth working itself out. The rise and the fall. The rising of the eleven disciples and the fall of one of them.

[5 : 26] So you see that our attitude to Jesus is the difference between rising and falling. It's the difference between life and death. Our attitude to Jesus is not really a question of whether we're religious or whether we're good or whether we're Christians or whatever.

That's not the question. The question is do we live or do we die? And the answer hinges on our attitude to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Judas' own selfish greedy ambitious nature blinded him to the loveliness of Christ and brought him to betray Jesus to the feast.

But notice that as soon as his deed was done as soon as he had betrayed Jesus his conscience which he had been able to muffle up to then suddenly screamed around within him and tormented him until he could stand it no longer and he went out and hanged himself.

he was filled with a reversion of what he had done and it's interesting that as his appalling crime became clear to him it was the anything of Jesus that affects him I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood he knows himself a traitor and that fair perfect character which was the law of Jesus Christ rises up before him in all its purity as he had never seen it before and it was the purity and the innocence of Jesus the hopelessness of Jesus that rebukes him and torments him as it rebukes and torments every lost soul and when too throughout all eternity what a normal difference there is between the appearance of sin before we do it and afterwards there is tremendous difference in the way we look at sin when we are being tempted by it and the way we look at it after we have succumbed to temptation before we do it the thing that we are looking for looks so attractive and the sin appears so small but when it's done when the sin is committed the sin gained suddenly becomes contemptible but the sin committed is awful can anybody be here tempted by worldly desires the temptations of the world are described by one passion nothing between two dishes a splendid service of silver plates when you take the cover off there is no food to eat such are the pleasures here sooner or later when the delirium of passion when the rush of temptation are over and we'll wake up to the consciousness of what we have done we find that we're no rapture for the thing gained and we are so much poorer for the way that we gained it to cry to all sins drink drugs adultery sabbath breaking dishonesty they all come home to root you're absolutely certain of this my friends that every sin is a blunder every sin is a mistake as well as being an offense before God as well as being rebellion against God it's a mistake in your own life and nothing can ever justify it not even what you gave particularly not what you gave in Judas you see we see the awful picture of hell upon earth a conscience that is fermented and that has no hope of pardon

[9 : 43] Judas was lost not because he betrayed Christ in that respect he only takes his place amongst many of us but he was lost because having betrayed Christ he never asked to be forgiven he never looked to ask for forgiveness he never came to Jesus confessing his sin he never did anything about it but he allowed himself to be tormented to death by his wounded conjoint you see the difference between Peter the traitor who denied Jesus and Judas the traitor who betrayed him was this that Peter when he went out and wept bitterly had the thought of his beloved savior with him or Judas when he went out and hung himself was obsessed by the thought of a spoiled which blinded him to the savior and drove them to destroy him my friends we must learn this lesson we cannot think too blackly of our sins but we can think too exclusively of them if we brood upon our sins if we brood upon our own mistakes if we are constantly tormented in our own minds by our own inadequacies by our own weaknesses by our own inability to master our temptation if we are constantly contemplating our own weakness then that is up to send us into the blackness of despair what contemplation of our own weakness and the thought of our own inability to do anything good and the thought of our own sin and all of those things that torment us what they must do is they drive us to Jesus and the blacker our sins the worse our lives are the more precious is the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary he paid for the sins he died that we might live he died in a room instead and let sin and the knowledge of us and the knowledge of your own weakness drive you to Calvary each one of us pitch our tent at Calvary at the foot of the cross so that everything that we do and say in

our whole lives will be from the vantage point of Calvary itself because in him the Lord Jesus Christ who died there is our hope our only hope there is no sorrow or remorse deep enough for sin there is no sorrow or remorse deep enough for the smallest sin but we thank God that there is no sin which is so great but that forgiveness may come and we may have it for the asking if we go to our dear Lord Jesus Christ who died for us Judas Iscariot died without hope and without pardon not because his crime was too great for forgiveness but because the forgiveness that he required was never asked for next we have Pontius Pilate and Pontius we had Judas Iscariot and his was a tormented demented conscience a man in an agony of conscience but here we have Pontius Pilate a representative of all those whose conscience is half awakened but who body swerves its demands

I am innocent of the blood of this just person see ye to it see how he ducks away from the responsibility the responsibility which the presence of Jesus before him brought to him and he pushes it away on to the priests and the people and they are quite willing to accept this responsibility but Pilate cannot rid himself of it nor can they accept it because it's Pilate's responsibility and shuffle and wriggle as much as he likes the very fact that the Lord Jesus Christ stood in front of him means that he has to accept the responsibility and he cannot push it off to anybody else you see it's the same with us we cannot blame other people we cannot push responsibilities on on to other people we cannot blame the minister the church or anybody else none of those excuses will stand when you appear before the Lord Jesus Christ we have a responsibility ourselves to have personal business with the Lord Jesus Christ and when the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to you in the gospel then the responsibility comes upon you it is no right thing to come in under the power of the gospel it demands a response and the responsibility rests squarely upon you shoulders from the youngest to the oldest they hear about the Lord Jesus Christ they hear that he died for sinners and we must respond Pilate here had a contempt for the accuser he is above them and he knew the real motive for accusing Jesus because we read in verse 18 for he knew that for envy they had delivered him and he knew that it was personal enmity against the Lord Jesus Christ Pilate knew that the Roman power really had nothing to fear from this king this king of the

Jews whose kingdom was founded on truth and in the words of our text he equips Jesus and by so doing he condemns himself he equips Jesus and he allows him to go to be crucified he equips him he doesn't find him guilty the very fact that he says he is innocent condemns himself Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent and in giving him up to die he was he Pilate was making a mockery of the Roman justice for which he stood a justice which had been a boon and a blessing to all the countries that the Romans had come into they were stakeholders for justice but here we find Pilate making a mockery of that very justice making a mockery of the honesty which should have been in himself as a man in a responsible position and what does he do he calls for a basin of water to wash his hands I am innocent of the blood of this just person is he innocent no he is not no washing of the hands will ever cleanse the hands of Pilate all the persons of Arabia will not sweeten his hands you see in Pilate we have a different picture of a man whose conscience tells him what is right but he hasn't got the strength he hasn't got the backbone he hasn't got the spine to do it you see conscience is a very strange thing conscience has a voice within it but it has no means to force us to do in it conscience is a king without an army conscience is a law within us without any law enforcement officers it's like a board that says trespassers will be prosecuted it can only tell us we can jump the fence right beside that board and that board can't do anything about stopping us the board says trespassers will be prosecuted but it can't move to stop us in the same way your conscience can say thou shalt not and if you say oh yes

[17 : 48] I will then poor conscience has nothing more to say in Pilate we also have a picture of a man trying to get rid of the responsibility that belongs to him see he to it doesn't shift the responsibility onto the priest's shoulder and yet Pilate squirmed and thought that he did men find many reasons for not accepting the gospel message there are many scapegoats on which men place the blame for not coming to the Lord Jesus Christ they have dozens of different reasons for not coming to church they indignantly pass the responsibility for their refusal to hear the voice of Jesus unto somebody else have you ever asked somebody why he doesn't come to church you would be amazed at the imaginative parish as people wriggle and justify themselves for not attending the gospel we can talk about circumstances we can talk about heredity we can talk about our chemical makeup about the chemistry of our body we can talk about our home background as

much as we like but we know each one of us deep down in our heart knows that we and we alone are responsible for our actions nobody forces us to yield to temptation

Pilate was not compelled by any one of his subjects to give the commandment which he gave he gave the commandment to scourge Jesus and deliver him to be crucified each person has to bear the consequences of his actions so please don't put your conscience to sleep by trying to shift the blame on to somebody else or on to something else you see the woman tempted me and I did eat that Adam said in the garden of Eden still the basic form of defense for sinful man please sir it wasn't me it was him you hear it every day you hear it from the tiniest child right to the biggest man the seed out to that of the priests to Judas was cruel and heartless but it was true we all are responsible individuals before God the combined weight of all who cooperated in the crucifixion of the Lord

Jesus Christ doesn't alleviate or lighten Pilate's guilt in the smallest measure the fact that there's a whole lot of people involved it does not alleviate Pilate's guilt and we may join ourselves to thousands who are engaged in sin and we put forward the defense everybody's doing it won't stand for a moment before a God who looks upon each individual heart doesn't matter if you're a million people with you when you're sinning it's an individual sin which is hanging around your neck and when God looks at you he deals with that sin and any defense that you say about that there are others doing it it is a case of what Christ said what is that to thee what do I mean you have no business with the others your business is a personal one with the Lord Jesus Christ the word of God in the book of Proverbs says to the Pontius Pilate of this world if thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it then finally we have the priests and the people and they represent for us the conscience that is misdirected you see you can't always go by your conscience it's like a computer if you fed the wrong details into it then the wrong details will come out in the same way if you have fed your conscience wrong information then it's bound to give you false reading and here we have the people here the priests and the people they had consciences but their conscience was misdirected they had a conscience that was wrong their conscience was paralyzed they said they answered all the people and said his blood be upon us and upon our children what an awful thing to say and they didn't say it lightly they had no qualms about accepting the burden of Christ's death upon themselves and upon their children they had no qualms no worries they thought that they were doing

God a service when they crucified his son see how blind they were they honestly thought that they were doing the right thing they didn't see or understand for themselves the beauty and the gentleness of Christ's character they believed him to be a blasphemer so they honestly thought that it was their religious duty to put him to death were they to blame because they put a blasphemer to death according to the Jewish law no but they were to blame because they had brought themselves to such a blind condition that all they could see in the loveliness of Christ was a blasphemer they thought they were right remember one of the victims of the guillotine during the first revolution she said before she died oh liberty what crimes have been done in thy name well surely one of the lessons of

Calvary is or religion what crimes have been done in thy name and we still see it history proves over and over again people who are standing up for what they think is right and they kill their fellow man in the name of Christianity how can that be because their consciences are blinded they are not able to see they are sincere people who have gone absolutely astray so that even their consciences are feeding them the wrong information just like Jonah passed asleep in the side of the boat while the storm raged consciences it can be lulled into a false sense of security can be lulled into the wrong direction so not a word is said during the worst of sins but how can consciences become like that well we find two or three things about it by neglecting to listen to conscience conscience becomes something that doesn't bother to speak to us anymore if we habitually don't listen to our conscience then it's almost as if conscience gets fed up and doesn't speak to us at all but we continually refuse to take any heed of conscience then conscience will be paralyzed and doesn't say anything and you can do this by surrounding yourself with evil companions and indulging in sinful practices in fact if you go amongst people who are evil the first time you go maybe your conscience is telling you and you've got an awful lot of trouble about it you go out late on a

[25 : 41] Saturday night and you stay out half of Sunday on a Saturday night into the Sunday morning and the first time you do you're worried you're concerned but the longer you go on and the way that you ignore your conscience telling you you should be in at home at midnight on the

Saturday night the longer you go on the easier it so that midnight comes and midnight goes and the Lord's day is desecrated and your conscience doesn't trouble you any longer because you have never listened to it and conscience has lost its voice the habit of sinning will lull your conscience faster than anything else and conscience can be misdirected that is put off course so that it actually points you in the wrong direction see we need something outside of ourselves to be our guide we need something beyond our own opinions to be our standard we must not be contented that our own conscience equips us we cannot say

I didn't think it was wrong Paul says in Colony 4 that he knows nothing against himself yet he is not justified by that for he that judges me is the Lord it isn't what you think that is right and what is wrong it isn't what I think that is right and what is wrong our standard must be outside ourselves it's quite possible that a man can do a very very wrong thing and not feel any prick of conscience so we need something outside ourselves that is an unchanging standard of right and wrong we need a fixed point on which to set our bearing the same as a ship at sea needs a fixed point on which to set their bearing so that even in the darkness of the storm we know that we're heading in the right direction where do we go for this fixed point well the unchanging standard in the world is the word of God the Bible itself a revelation of truth and goodness and beauty outside ourselves by which our consciences can be set on the right line not what you think not what I think not what the minister thinks not what everybody else does what does God say what does the Bible say in these three examples of conscience Judas Carriot Pontius Pilate and the priests who crucified Jesus we find a strange and total lack of sympathy they have no sympathy one for the other as a gang caught by the police they turn against each other in order to save their own skin so we find a wounded conscience finds no sympathy in society or in nature when a poor sinner becomes aware of his sin and he says I have sinned there are a thousand voices round about him calling out what is that to us see thou to that when a sinner in amongst his friends suddenly comes to himself and he talks to his friends about this strange churning that is going on in his heart his friends ignore him they turn away they think he's going mad and they offer him no rest no peace they can offer him nothing they just keep away what is that to us see thou to that it's your business ah but we thank

God that there is one who comes with outstretched wounded hands to the sinner when he is troubled by his conscience by his sins and he finds that things are not as they ought to be and he looks around for help he calls out for help I have sinned there is someone who comes with outstretched wounded hands and says cast thy burden upon me and I will free you from the guilt of sin I will free you from the dominion of sin I will give you rest Lord Jesus Christ surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows the spilling of the innocent blood at Calvary cleanses from all sins Amen that is great O Lord we give thee thanks that we have such teaching in thine own world and we ask that each one of us would realize and know the weakness that is within us and as we look to thee for guidance and direction we ask that we would feed the right information to our conscience the right information that comes from the word of

God so that our lives will be built upon Christian principles and that we will have the non-negotiable fundamental principles that will guide us and keep us on the right road and we ask that we would always be aware of the need of our fellow man that when we hear someone saying I have sinned that we would be able to point them to Calvary draw near to each one of us we pray soothe our conscience with the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ let us know when sin troubles us that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin that thou art abundant in mercy that the blood of Christ cleanses to the uttermost O Lord let us know deep in our own hearts the truths of those glorious truths that we may know and understand the meaning of salvation give us peace peace through coming to know the

[31 : 57] Lord Jesus Christ give us the rest that come from Christ taking our burden and help each one of us to reach out to our fellow men to help them on the road to Calvary for Jesus sake Amen