

Life's Defining Moments June 14, 2008 Tom Schroer

Choices—we have a lot of them to make each day, but sometimes there are big ones that really matter. They're the "fork in the road" decisions that can change the whole direction of our lives. We must choose wisely—unfortunately Pilate didn't. Several years after he allowed Jesus to be crucified, he was arrested and exiled to a remote island, where he ended up taking his own life; a sad ending for a man who once had appeared so powerful. But Pilate's defining moment in life came several years before when he failed to recognize who was in control and who really had the power in his life. Many of us will have a defining moment in our lives as well when we recognize who's in control and who really has the power in our life.

Pilate had to answer three questions in his defining moment. There are three questions that we need to answer whenever we're making a decision as well:

1. What is truth _____?
2. Who will I listen to _____?
3. Who is in control _____?

Two signs that you may be trying to play God:

1. When you are making decisions without God _____.
2. When you are trying to control things that you can't control

Then Pilate went back inside and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the King of the Jews?" he asked him. "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate asked. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you here. Why? What have you done?" Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." Pilate replied, "You are a king then?" "You say that I am a king, and you are right," Jesus said. "I was born for that purpose. And I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. John 18:33-38 NLT

Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. So I will have him flogged, but then I will release him." Then a might roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!" Barabbas was in prison for murder and for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government. Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. But they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Luke 23:13-21 NLT

For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. I will therefore flog him and let him go." But the crowd shouted louder and louder for Jesus' death and their voices prevailed. Luke 23:22-23 NLT

When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify! Crucify!" "You crucify him," Pilate said, "I find him not guilty." The Jewish leaders replied, "By our laws he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. "You won't talk with to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or to crucify you?" John 19:6-10 NLT

Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above." John 19:11 NLT

So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he delivered Jesus over to them to do as they wished." Luke 23:24-25 NLT

"Obviously, I'm not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant." Galatians 1:10 NLT

"...for Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. In fact, everything they did occurred according to your eternal will and plan." Acts 4:27-28 NLT

Additional texts:
Philippians 4:6-7
Psalm 33: 8-9, 13-15, 18-19
Colossians 1:15-17
Jeremiah 6:16