

Who am I now that is a good question and what was i once now that is an even better question.

Have you ever thought about those questions and maybe if you were once a bible character who would you have been. Joshua Moses David maybe Job or Jonah.

When reading the record which we have about our LORDS cruel and unjust death we get a glimpse of ourselves yes we can see ourselves in a lot of places as recorded in the whole crucifixion record of our LORD and Saviour.

Who were we well i will come to just who we once were soon because who we are now and who we were then are 2 totally different people.

Maybe i will not hold you in suspense maybe i should tell you now who i once was just to shorten the suspense.

Good morning I was Barabbas i was the priests i was the crowd yes that is who i once was i was all of those people.

When i read the crucifixion records i can see myself everywhere almost like clones of me running all around the place and stopping here and there while putting on several hats and taking on many different rolls just like i did when i was an extra in the man from Snowy River movie.

Yes i was like Barabbas but today i am not today i pray i am a worthy to be called a child of GOD.

Let's start in John 18:39-40 and it is a custom with you that i release one to you at the Passover, Do you then desire that i release the King of the Jews to you, But they all shouted again, saying, Not this One, but Barabbas, now Barabbas was a robber.

I particularly like John's choice of words a robber.

Matthew 27:16 refers to Barabbas as a notorious prisoner.

Barabbas was a robber a thief that is someone who steals precious possessions from someone else and maybe steals

a life as well by cutting some ones life off before their time is up.

I will go to Luke's record of that day **Luke 23:17-26** now of necessity, he had to release one to them at the feast, but they all cried out at once, wouldn't you know it there i am again saying, away with This Man, and release Barabbas to us, he was the one who had been cast into prison on account of making certain insurrection in the city and committing murder, therefore, Pilate again called to them, wishing to release Jesus, but they kept crying out, saying, crucify Him, crucify Him, didn't you just hear me yelling that out and the 3rd time he said to them, but what evil did this man commit, I have not found any cause worthy of death in Him, therefore after chastising Him i will release Him, but they were urgent with loud voices, asking for Him to be crucified, and their voices, and those of the chief priests, prevailed, and i was also there yelling then Pilate decreed that their request be granted, and he released to them the one whom they had asked for, who on account of insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, but he delivered Jesus up to their will.

Again another silly question how many times if you were standing on a high platform above all of those proceedings could you see yourself.

Several i would say because before you and i answered our call you and i may have been rebellious well i know that i was and as you know 13 is the number or rebellion and 6 is the number of man well those 2 numbers are stamped all throughout my life right from the very day of my birth.

I was born on the 13th day of the month and June is the month of my birth which is the 6th month 1952 is the year or my birth which is 4 times 13 but now since my Baptism and accepting Christ in my life those numbers have been all changed because i hope that i am no longer rebellious any more.

From the most devout disciple to the most casual onlooker the events that transpired before their very eyes that day as the LORD was sentenced flogged and then crucified were anything but good.

The reason i just said good is because many churches call the day which they believe these proceedings took place on was a Friday and they call it good Friday which of course you and i know that this day Friday is absolutely impossible and to this day these churches still cannot work 3 days and 3 nights into their story to match the bible records.

So where was i on this so called good day well being Barabbas i was of course in jail probably biting my fingernails knowing that my time on Earth was soon to come to an abrupt end would i have been repenting no i don't think that i would have been repenting especially knowing my rebellious background.

But then i find myself in the Sanhedrim and what was i doing there well i was slapping and spitting in this innocent mans face and i was laughing at Him yes rebellion can take on many faces in the crowd and rebellion can mingle with the best of men while going completely un-noticed.

C S Lewis wrote this about rebellion a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers including even his power to revolt, it is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower.

The world which we live in today actually promotes rebellion against God and His ways Governments are pushing hard for this equal rights for marriage and every woman's right to have an abortion.

This is open rebellion against the word of GOD it is standing fast in defiance this is thumbing your nose up at GOD when

you know that you are wrong many politicians try and look religious and they love to be seen attending church but in their hearts they are still rebellious my mother used to say looks does not make the man and she was right as always.

People today do not want to listen to authority People today want to be the god of their own lives and they themselves want to be in charge of what they do.

Did you know that scripture actually likens rebellion to witchcraft.

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, **He has also rejected you from being king**.

Yes rebellion makes God angry very angry.

Remember LORD Jesus did not die for your sins so that you could continue to live in rebellion and spit on God's grace because **that is what people are doing spitting on the loving grace of GOD**.

Some Christians hide behind excuses they say but we are told that we are all sinners and that we all rebel against the LORD yes we are but we can come to the Father through LORD Jesus Christ and ask for forgiveness just because **we sin does not mean that we can justify ourselves by living in darkness** if we are Christ's then we have the light of Jesus shining in and through us we are not living in the dark because we are the children of light **1 Thessalonians 5:5** for **you are all children of the light and children of the day, we are not of the night, nor of the darkness.**

And **Ephesians 5:8** for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the LORD, walk as children of light.

Yes i was rebellious and yes i still do a lot of stupid things and yes i will probably continue doing stupid things but i do **not live in the dark** not while LORD Jesus and the Father are dwelling in me.

Whenever a Christian and now add there a non Christian goes down on their knees and prays the battle is not lost no it isn't by a longshot the battle has just began.

A new believer may drop to his or her knees and repent to them their battle in life has just changed for the better because they now have LORD Jesus fighting for them.

But unfortunately like Barabbas there are many ways to live in rebellion against GOD such as living in a lifestyle of sin refusing God's calling trusting ourselves rather than trusting in the Lord by being unforgiving unmerciful and unsympathetic to other people's feelings and emotions and lots more.

What was Barabbas well he was a murderer he was someone who stirred up the people to rebel against authority he was a user he was a **notorious outlaw murderer and robber..**

What we must learn to do is to freely of our own freewill humble ourselves before the Lord.

We must as followers of the LORD continue to examine our lives in the light of Scripture.

We must always repent of our sins.

We must always strive our very best to do good.

And we must be mindful of other people their feelings and their wellbeing.

How how can we do all that well the 1st ever cordless phone was created by GOD and He named it **prayer** and guess what it **never ever loses its signal** and **you never ever have to recharge it** and best of all you can **use it anywhere you choose anywhere** it doesn't matter where you are and there is **always someone on the other end who listens.**

You know the bible is meant to **be bread** to be used in us to sustain us for our daily use the bible is not a cake that we take out and dust off and use just for special occasions.

Too many people only want GOD when they are in trouble i was like that i only spoke to GOD when i was in trouble but one thing i do know and have learned **over the years** i truly believe that **GOD never once put the receiver down on me not once** He put up with all my winging and whining all the why me's and what did i do to deserve this but He i now know **never once put the receiver down** yes things may not have turned out as i wanted it to but nevertheless somehow after speaking to God in the only way i knew how things never got worse.

Trust in the Lord and align your will with His will Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your life daily and the LORD will guide you.

Barabbas never did that most robbers and murderers align themselves with the Devil they do his will and they use his phone that is why i suppose he is known as the prince of the power of the air.

Francis Schaeffer said The beginning of men's rebellion against God was and is the lack of a thankful heart. We sing that wonderful hymn Give thanks with a grateful heart. If you do not have a thankful heart then your heart may be a heart heavily burdened with rebellion

As i quoted earlier **1 Samuel 15:23** **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** **Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.**

We are living in the time when Paul wrote to Timothy of in his letter being **2 Timothy 4:3-4** **For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own**

lusts, they shall accumulate to themselves a great number of teachers, having ears itching to hear what satisfies their cravings, They will turn away their own ears from the truth, and they shall be turned aside to myths.

Kicking against the pricks hurts yet that is what man loves doing kicking against those sharp pricks as though we love doing it and strange as it sounds we keep going back for more.

Rebellion is kicking against the pricks.

What did Jesus teach in **Matthew 7:21-23** Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven, Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? and did we not cast out demons through Your name, and did we not perform many works of power through Your name, And then will I confess to them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.

Looking the part does not count because many people can look the part but in reality they are void of compassion they lack caring for others thinking of others helping others its inside of our hearts where it really counts.

Knowing what's right don't mean much unless **you do what is right** and yes that is easier said than done **that is why we need Jesus in our life.**

And do you also know that alcohol is a very effective dissolving agent it dissolves families marriages friendships jobs bank accounts brain neurons but it can **never dissolve problems** alcohol to the excess is rebellion against God because so many people blame alcohol for their problems.

Remember life is far too short to start your day with broken pieces of yesterday because it will definitely destroy your

wonderful day today and ruin what should be your great tomorrow.

1 John 3:8 The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Think about this for a moment this is how corrupt man has become how uncaring and how blood thirsty It is recorded that the political authorities of the LORDS day examined Jesus and the charges against Him and concluded that He was innocent.

Jesus was pronounced innocent not once not twice but THREE times by those who had the power to render such a verdict! 3 times.

However i being in the crowd of opposition did not like their verdict and possibly with a little urging on i did not want the verdict to stand and i **loudly demanded** that these political leaders do as i wished and what was that well it was for Jesus to be put to death.

In **Matthew 27:20** we are told that **the priests persuaded the crowd.**

I was probably shouting and chanting out loud **what do we want** then i yelled out even louder **crucify Him** then **when do we want it now** now that is not something that we should simply pass off as could not happen.

I remember back to when i worked in the wool industry and Bob Hawke and Simon Crean and a few other heavy weight storeman and packer union bosses came to Brisbane when we were on strike Bob Hawke was the ACTU representative or boss at the time and Simon Crene was one of the union heavyweights i can't quite remember what his title was now anyhow they organized a march and so we as sheep marched along Adelaide street and we were being egged on

with slogans pumped out of a loud hailer slogans just like what do we want and when do we want it and we like blind silly little sheep who all followed the union bosses **bleated out loudly as good little sheep those slogans** and oddly both of these men went on to become this nations leaders one as Prime Minister and the other i think became deputy Prime Minister at one time.

Who are we well if we do not have Jesus in our lives guiding us then we are people who like me back in those days blindly followed the leader thinking it was good and the more we were taunted **the louder we became** that is what maybe happened that day to the LORD the priests began chanting crucify Him crucify Him and then the mindless sheep took up the chant and then those who may have been just there for a look see joined in with the crowd its easy to see how a peaceful rally may start out peaceful and the people may have had peaceful intentions however it just takes one individual to begin chanting **just one** and then it doesn't take long for everyone to take up the war cry.

In **Matthew 15:14** LORD Jesus said **leave them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall in the pit.**

It is important that we do as we are told and we are instructed in **2 Corinthians 13:3-5** **since you seek a proof of Christ speaking through me [Who is not weak toward you] but is powerful in you, for although He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by GODS power, and we are indeed weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by GODS power toward you, examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith, prove your own selves, don't you of your own selves knowing that Jesus Christ is in you, otherwise, you are reprobates.**

Keep the Word of the LORD firmly and securely locked in your minds and hearts if you can do that because Jesus is the

way the truth and the life and there is no other name under heaven by which you and i can be saved.

If i and you have the Word of the LORD in us.

Then the Devil cannot defeat us.

People cannot disillusion us.

Weather cannot weary us.

Sickness cannot stop us.

Money cannot buy us.

Governments cannot silence us.

And if there is a hell then hell cannot hold us.

Do you know why.

Because we are children of **the Most High GOD**.

Too many people these days allow the priests in the crowd and the Barabbas'es to influence their thinking i know i did when i marched that day it was i thought fun i was i thought a real stirrer but i was their pawn their mouthpiece and it was as though **i were yelling out crucify Him**.

1 Samuel 8:7 and the LORD said to Samuel, hearken to the voice of the people in all they that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them.

What is that verse about well it was rebellion at work.

The people wanted King to reign over them.

What did the LORD say to Samuel **Verse 22** and the LORD said to Samuel, hearken to their voice, and make them a King.

As i said before where are at that point today in history we are once again rejecting the LORD we are rejecting the Words of life and truth and we are blindly like sheep accepting a lie instead of the truth and we following that loud voice in the crowd yelling crucify Him.

Yes we are living in a topsy-turvy world **Acts 17:6** says and when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and certain

brethren before the city magistrates, crying out, those who have set the whole world in confusion have come here also.

We are the **they** of that verse we are the ones who are being dragged before the Magistrates its happening in America and England and it will happen here however there is just one problem their view is right and they are allowed to have their view the courts agree with them but the Christian view is wrong and we must be quiet or be dragged before the court i can see the upside down effect happening and its happening all around the world at an alarming rate.

I love this poem or ditty whatever it is.
Mirror mirror on the wall it doesn't matter if i am short or tall.
If i have skinny legs or my hips are wide.
It only matters who i am inside.
blue eyes brown eyes hazel or green.
what makes me most beautiful cannot be seen.
when you look at me don't judge my looks.
Because my beauty is in my heart.

Proverbs 17:11 an Evil one seeks only rebellion, therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

Whenever someone shows kindness towards others for some reason their motives are questioned kindness and compassion meekness and gentleness people who demonstrate these characteristics are thought to be weak and are easy prey for evil minded people.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:5** the meek shall inherit the Earth and in verse 8 **blessed are the pure in heart.**

The Barabbas'es and his followers in this world prey on the meek and pure in heart because they are easy targets.

A lot of Jews and Christians look upon good Friday as a Day of Death.

But remember this many criminals were crucified on a Friday and this was for a special reason however we know the truth we know that LORD Jesus was not crucified on a Friday.

Friday was known all throughout the Roman occupation of Judea as a day of death.

The Romans although not having the appeasement of the Jews as their high priority they did however respect them enough to organize themselves in such a way that the Sabbath day and the other religious festivals days could be observed in peace.

Therefore it was common that executions be held on Friday's or the day before a feast so that those executed could be removed from the cross before the Sabbath or holy day so that the Sabbath and holy days would not be desecrated.

And we know this to be the case because LORD Jesus' body was removed from the cross and buried before the Passover began whereas many people were simply removed from the stake or crosses and thrown into a common pit.

There were three condemned criminals who were to be crucified that day two thieves and one notorious insurrectionist murderer and robber named Barabbas.

Three people were being held in death row.

Their trials had been held.

The verdicts had been handed down.

The sentences had been pronounced.

Three men were waiting to die that day.

Three men were waiting for their hour to come.

Three crosses had been prepared and were just waiting for the occupants to be placed upon them.

But one of those three men would walk free and an **innocent man would take his place**.

One could say Barabbas robbed LORD Jesus of His life that day because Jesus took Barabbas' rightful place but then again Jesus took all of our rightful places not just Barabbases.

A robber murderer a stirrer of trouble was set free just as we have been set free.

Yes one guilty man destined for death on death row was going to get an unsuspected pardon while One innocent man destined to live was going to die.

But because Jesus died for our sins that day we have all walked away pardoned.

What's The Hold Up was the Roman executioners question what is going on we want to get this over and done with why the hold up well Historians and archaeologists suggests that those who were sentenced to die on the cross before the Sabbath and festival days would have been brought up out of their prison cells and placed in a holding area of sorts in the early morning hours before their death or possibly this happened the night before.

It is also suggested that executions especially in Jerusalem took place early in the day so that everything could be quote cleaned up long before sundown because that is when the Sabbath began.

However on this day of execution things did not quite go as normal.

Something strange happens.

The first thief is escorted out in shackles and chains.

The second thief is escorted out in shackles and chains.

But when it comes to my turn Barabbas instead of leading me out in shackles and chains **my shackles and chains are released from me** and i am informed that i am now free as a

bird why because they have found someone else to take my place.

How should i feel how should you feel happy well yes we should feel happy and full of joy knowing that Jesus paid the full price for our freedom we you and i have been released from the chains and shackles of this world's death row.

I feel absolutely blessed that i have a Brother Who loves me that much that He willingly took my place and died for me.

Barabbas did not know Jesus and may have thought to himself as he ran away laughing looks like they caught someone worse than me to take my place how wrong could his thoughts have been.

The religious leaders were demanding that Jesus be put to death along with the other two who had been condemned to death but the authorities struggled to grant their request when it came to Jesus why because they could not find anything to charge Him with that would deserve death.

But we just like those three men on death row deserved death.
Why **because The penalty of sin is death.**

All the proceedings that day were being held up why because people were **demanding that an innocent man be put to death.**

Nothing much has changed really especially in this topsy turvy world today innocent people are being called criminals because we love LORD Jesus and the Father and people who do not follow the Word of God are chanting jail them Jail them.

Just drift your mind back in time to the LORDS day and imagine the Scene if you can.

Barabbas is in a holding cell waiting death then suddenly he hears the crowd begin to loudly chant his name “Barabbas! Barabbas!”

Barabbas does not know why they are chanting his name he does **not have a clue**.

All that he knows is that they are yelling his name **Barabbas Barabbas**.

He does not know that the crowd is chanting his name because they are demanding him a hardened and condemned murderer to be set free.

Then the crowd goes silent.

Pilate then shaken asks the crowd what he should do with Jesus.

And with the help of the religious leaders the crowd goes wild again and shout **“Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”**

Could you imagine what must have been going through Barabbas’ mind that day.

All he hears is “Barabbas! Barabbas! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” I mean Its not as if he doesn't know that this day his number is up but why is the crowd gathered together shouting for his execution.

Then he hears footsteps approaching his cell and he now knows that his time has come.

But then **he is set free** why he asks **why are you setting me free** and the soldiers answer because we have found another to take your place.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

If only Barabbas could stand up here and talk to you what would he say.

Well having painted the picture the way that I have maybe he would want you to hear his story like this.

I a man who was guilty and condemned was set free because a Man who was innocent and perfect was willing to take my place.

Three people were going to die that day.

I Barabbas deserved it.

But this innocent man called Jesus did not deserve to take my place.

But I Barabbas could not have stopped the proceedings that day my fate was sealed.

But Lord Jesus Christ did.

And now after being set free and now knowing Who Jesus was i know in my heart that at any point in time Jesus could have called down legions of angels to His defence but He did not He willingly chose to take my punishment.

I now know that at any point and at any time Jesus could have simply spoken a word and His enemies would have ceased to exist.

But He did not.

I know that at any point and time Jesus could have **stopped it all** but He did not.

Lord Jesus allowed all the horrendous events of that day to unfold just as they did i am now told He took my place that day because His mission here on Earth was coming to an end i know because i watched Him die in my place i saw His blood i heard His words i heard Him say **Father into Your hands I commit My spirit** then He bowed His head and said it is finished.

I Barabbas am a free man because of Jesus and His love for me and for this world.

Maybe that would have been Barabbas message to us had he spoke about that day.

LORD Jesus Christ the innocent has been reckoned guilty before God the Father so that **we the guilty might be** reckoned innocent and be set free from condemnation.

For all who may read or hear this message If you have been

saved by Jesus' atoning sacrifice then Barabbas is more than the name of a condemned man way back then.

You see you and i were Barabbas because we were sinners and because we were the guilty men on death row that day.

We were the condemned.

We were the hopeless.

We were the helpless.

And we were the unsaved.

But today because of LORD Jesus and because He took our place we are **the saved.**

We once bore the name Barabbas and the names of the mockers and the names of the priests who demanded LORD Jesus' death.

Because Jesus died in our place.

Jesus took our spit on His face

Jesus took our slaps on His face and He took the pain of us pulling his hair out.

Yes Jesus took our guilt.

Jesus took our shame.

Jesus was condemned for us so that we could be forgiven set free and given a new life in and through Him.

If we are true Christians then let us every day get down on our knees and thank LORD Jesus for being our substitute and for being punished in our place.

Let us freely confess that like Barabbas we deserve death.

But let us cling firmly to the glorious truth that a sinless Saviour has suffered in our place and that by believing in Him and **Him alone** we the guilty may go free.

