

"What Will You Do with Jesus?"

You have an appointment that you cannot avoid: and one day you must face the Lord. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." What Jesus does with you will depend on what you have done with Him. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We love the Lord and want to please Him. And the Scriptures teach us how. God is our Creator and the source of every good thing; God gave His Son upon the cross for our sins; God gives us an abundant life and eternal life; and the Lord Jesus is preparing a home for us in heaven. These things move us to love Him and to please Him in every respect. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Mack Lyon asked me to work with the Search ministry twelve years ago. And I moved back to Oklahoma to be part of this evangelistic effort. These twelve years have been a different part of my ministry than my work with local churches, but I have treasured these years. This week celebrates another anniversary: I began working as a youth minister for the East Main Church of Christ in Shawnee, Oklahoma, fifty years ago in 1971. Dewayne Thomas was the minister and he helped me learn about ministry. Through the years with churches in Oklahoma, Mississippi, Texas, and Tennessee, I've made many new friends throughout America and in other countries.

Working these last twelve years at In SEARCH of the Lord's Way has been exciting and challenging. I've learned to pray and to depend upon God for strength. I've seen God open doors of opportunity for preaching the word far beyond anything I imagined. And I am thankful to my coworkers, our volunteers, our viewers, and our supporters of SEARCH for all their encouragement and prayers. God truly is the giver of every good thing, and the people who love this ministry are the salt of the earth. I ask that you please keep praying that God will continue to bless us for many more years.

Now we offer this study free on What Will You Do With Jesus. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, PO Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Acts 17:30 to 34, and explore the importance of serving the Lord.

Our reading today comes from Acts, chapter 17, verses 30 to 34. Paul is in Athens and he's giving the philosophers a reason to believe in God, and a reason to follow Jesus. Verses 30 to 34. "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.' Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, 'We shall hear you again concerning this.' So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

Yes, some will sneer, but some will believe. Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that You do give us proof by raising Jesus from the dead, to believe in Him. And we're thankful Father for all the blessings of life, and we're thankful for Your Word. Help us to be faithful in believing in You, and faithful in our service to You. In Jesus name, Amen."

No event in history compares with the events of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and the establishment of the church. Now this series of events describes human nature and reveals how they perceived and treated Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus knew that He would suffer at the hands of His enemies. And Matthew 20 verses 17 to 19 says: "As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.'" Now both Judas Iscariot and Simon Peter heard this prophecy.

The Chief Priests hated Jesus and they feared that they would lose their status as leaders of the Jewish people. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, they began thinking seriously of finding a way to kill Him. When Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple, things got even more serious. Mark 11:15 to 18 says, "Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And He began to teach and say to them, 'Is it not written, "That My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?" But you have made it a robbers' den.'" (Now here Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 56 verse 7 and Jeremiah 7:11.) Well, the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and they began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching. They wanted to kill Him and began looking for a way.

Well, Judas Iscariot had been a thief, helping himself to what was in their moneybag. And his desire for money became a habit. And when he learned the chief priests were seeking an opportunity to capture Jesus privately, he took them up on the offer. Luke 22 verses 3 to 6 says: "And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and the officers how he might betray Him to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money. So he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them, and it would be apart from the crowd." Judas apparently loved that measly thirty pieces of silver more than he loved the Lord Jesus.

Though Jesus washed the feet of Judas, and though Judas participated in the institution of the Lord's Supper, he still betrayed Jesus and led the crowds to the Garden of Gethsemane. When Judas came into the garden, Jesus called him "friend" (Matthew 26 verse 50); but Judas was no friend. He betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Then there was Simon Peter who disappointed Jesus by denying him three times. Peter boasted in Matthew 26:33 to 35, "Well, though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." And Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Well even if I must die with you, I'll never deny you!' And all the disciples said the same."

Well the words of Jesus proved true. Peter, falling to fear and temptation, did indeed deny being with the Lord three separate times. According to Mark 14 and verse 71, he invoked a curse on himself and swore that he did not know Jesus. Luke 22 verse 61 mentions that after his third denial, the Lord Jesus himself turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said, and he went out and he wept bitterly.

Pontius Pilate was the appointed procurator or governor of the Judean province. He was known as an able administrator who would not allow riotous behavior among the Jews; but he was obstinate and inflexible. Because Pilate treated the Jews mercilessly and took money from the Temple treasury to

build aqueducts, the Jews despised him. Because the Jewish Council couldn't sentence Jesus to death on their own, they had to get Pilate involved.

Well the Sanhedrin Council falsely condemned Jesus for blasphemy, when Jesus admitted that He was the Christ, the Son of God; but Pilate would not put Jesus to death for a Jewish theological dispute. The charge they brought to Pilate was one of treason, since being the Messiah meant Jesus was a king. In John 18 Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you a king?" And Jesus responded in John 18:36 to 37, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." And then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king (that is, yes). For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.' Jesus is the king of a spiritual kingdom, not a worldly one.

Pilate repeatedly told the Jews that he found no guilt in Jesus, that Jesus had not done anything worthy of death. Now since it was Pilate's custom to let a prisoner go free, and hoping that prisoner would be Jesus, he asked the crowd if they wanted Jesus to be released. Well Mark 15:11 to 14 says, "But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, 'Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' And they cried out again, 'Crucify him.' And Pilate said to them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him.'

Pilate's wife had gotten involved. In Matthew 27 and verse 19 it says, "That while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.'" Well Pilate had married Claudia Procula, the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar, and was very powerful. Pilate owed his position to his wife's connections. He was caught between his wife's warning and the Jewish crowd's insistence that Jesus be crucified.

Well when Pilate tried to free Jesus, the Jewish leaders told Pilate in John 19 verses 7 to 8, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." Well, when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. Matthew reveals what Pilate did. Matthew 27:24 to 26 says: "So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and he washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I'm innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children' Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified."

When Pilate felt trapped, he compromised. He washed his hands of the situation and declared himself free from "this man's blood." Now, Pilate tried to absolve himself of any responsibility for the condemnation of Jesus, but Pilate was lying to himself and to the crowd. You know it's common nature for people to try to justify their actions rather than admit they were doing something wrong. Pilate could wash his hands physically, but he couldn't avoid responsibility for the death of Jesus Christ. People today try to justify their sins through a lot of false reasoning; but according to 2 Timothy 4 verse 8, Jesus is "the righteous judge." And He will judge us fairly according to what we've done good or bad. Now you may justify yourself, but that doesn't mean the Lord Jesus will justify you.

Matthew 27:27 to 31 says, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed on

his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him."

For those who love Jesus Christ, we hardly understand how anyone's heart could be so hardened that they would treat another human being the way they treated the innocent Jesus Christ. This is what they did with Jesus: the Council hated Him, wanted Him dead; Judas betrayed Him with a kiss; Peter denied Him three times; Pilate washed his hands of Jesus; and the soldiers mocked Him, spit on Him, beat Him, scourged Him, and crucified Him. That's how they treated the Lord of glory who suffered and died to set us free from sin and to bring us to God.

Jesus never fought back, never called twelve legions of angels to protect Him. He willingly suffered for our sins. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus: "Surely he has borne our grief's and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4 to 6). The grace of the Lord Jesus so marvelously blesses us, we wonder how could we ignore Him or sin against Him.

What are you doing with Jesus? Now you're doing something with Him. You may doubt that He ever existed. You may think He was just a good teacher. You may deny He's the Son of God, but denying Him doesn't change the facts. You may disagree with Him and leave Him, but what Jesus said then remains true. You may hate Him, but He doesn't hate you. You may be ignoring Him, but He is calling for you. You may be making fun of those who believe in Him. You may betray Him, but He won't betray you. You may wish you could wash your hands and be free of Him, but He isn't going away. You may think assembling with the Lord and His people to worship isn't important, but Jesus communes with His people in the Lord's Supper.

The Lord Jesus told the lukewarm Laodiceans in Revelation 3:19 to 20, "That those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." The Lord wants to be close to you, to bless you, and to prepare a place for you in heaven. Jesus loved you enough to suffer on the cross for you. And I pray that you might have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

Whatever mistakes you made in the past doesn't have to determine what you will do with Jesus today or in the future. If you recognize His love for you, won't you love Him with all your heart? Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful that You have loved us so much that you gave Your Son for us, to die for our sins so that we might live with You. Help us to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and to do Your will. In Jesus name, we pray Amen."

You may ignore the Lord now, but there's a day coming when you can't avoid Him, and you won't be able to avoid him in the life to come. Philippians 2:9 to 11 says that "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father." Oh I tell you if you fail to bow the knee in this life, you will bow it in the life to come.

You'll also face Christ in judgment: 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body,

according to what he has done, whether good or bad.' On that day, you'll either hear the Lord say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master'; or you'll hear, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'" What you now do with Jesus will determine what Jesus will then do with you.

You must in this life come to Him with faith and love in your hearts. You must repent of your sins and determine to live righteously. You must confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and be baptized into Christ. And when you're baptized into Christ, your sins are washed away (Acts 22:16) and you become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5 verse 17). The Father will then make you His child, and the Lord will add you to His church. What a blessing! And why not get right today!

Now, we hope this study about what we do with Jesus has stirred you to consider your soul. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now, you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Go to YouTube, then search out "SearchTVMinistry." And when you find our programs, why not subscribe to it and be notified when a new one comes out. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry if you get a hold of us, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. Now everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ that's in your area. A man recently told me that he found one where he lived, and I hope you will too. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.