

Sometimes it is difficult for us to make up our mind just exactly what it is that we want. Especially when presented with a wide variety of choices, we find it much more difficult to make up our mind than when we are presented with only a few choices. If you are a sports fan, you have number of different sports to choose from, and then within that sport, you have a number of different teams to choose from. There are many different factors which play into which sport and which team you are going to follow closely. The same thing can be said of our spiritual lives. There are many options of whom we desire to listen to as we make decisions which affect how we live our lives here on this earth. The world offers us many different choices. The question before us this evening is also asking us to make a choice among many about whom we want. Jesus asked this question, WHO IS IT YOU WANT? And He is expecting each one of us to answer that question for ourselves. Yet, while we have many choices, they boil down to only two choices. Do we want someone who turns out to be an impostor, promising things but not really able to come through with those promises, or do we want the one and only Savior of the world? Who is it you want. We answer that question through our actions in this life.

After Jesus had finished the last Passover meal with His disciples, He led them out of the city of Jerusalem to a place called Gethsemane. He went there to pray, for He was being deeply troubled because of the things which He was about to go through. Since Judas had been identified by Jesus as the one who would betray Him, Judas felt that it was either now or never for him to do it. So he had run to the leaders of the people, who decided they had better act immediately. **“So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.”** (3)

Since Jesus still had His band of disciples with Him, this detachment of soldiers was prepared for anything that might happen. They had weapons to defend themselves or to attack. They also had torches and lanterns in case Jesus tried to hide under the cover of darkness (though it probably was not too dark since there was a full moon that night.)

These men came looking for Jesus, but they wanted Him for a wrong reason. They wanted to arrest Him so that they might be able to get rid of one whom they considered to be a trouble maker. Jesus did not fit into the way they thought that their religious organization ought to be run. So they wanted Him out of their hair. The one whom they really wanted was someone who could provide them with a better life here on this earth. They felt that they were fully capable of taking care of their relationship with God through the good works of the law which they followed. So they wanted someone, but not the Messiah whom God had spoken about in the OT. The Messiah they wanted was a leader for this world. Since Jesus did not fit into this mold, they did not want Him, and did not want to follow Him.

Even today many people do not want Jesus. Obviously, those who refuse to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior do not want Him. But even those who claim to be followers of Jesus, may not want Him. Many so-called followers of Jesus today say they want Him, but they really do not want to follow what He has to say to them. Many in the Christian community today debate whether it is right or wrong to have “gay marriages.” They debate whether it is right or wrong for a woman to have an abortion. They feel that the Bible is speaking only of old customs when it speaks of the proper roles for man and woman to follow in God’s world. Even though they outwardly confess that they want Jesus, they immediately reject Him whenever He says something which does not agree with what they think. In effect, then, they really do not want the true Jesus, but just an impostor — one who will let them believe and act any way that they please. Such a Savior they want. But such a person is not a Savior. They have done nothing more than make themselves or their own ideas to be their own Savior or God. Since they have made up this savior in their own minds, their idea of of their Savior is not going to be able to help them at all on the last day. They have put their trust in an impostor who will not be able to deliver on his promises. Even in this life, a parent who lets his children believe and act any way that they want is not really doing them any good, but in the end will be harming them terribly.

Our sinful nature always throws up roadblocks to try to keep us from wanting the Savior which is revealed to us in the Bible. But if we take a good, close look at the Savior who is revealed to us in the Bible, we will see that He is not an impostor, but the only Savior of the world.

As the true Son of God, Jesus knew everything that was going on. **“Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, ‘Who is it you want.’”** (4) Jesus did not try to hide from this armed band. He did not try to resist His arrest in any way. He knew everything that was going to happen to Him, and He was willing to go through all of it so that He might be the Savior of the world. So He went out to meet the band of men who were coming to hunt Him down. He asked them who they wanted, and when they told Him, “Jesus of Nazareth,” He replied, “I am he.” Even though Judas had been given thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus, he really was not needed, for Jesus was allowing them to arrest Him.

Even while this was going on, Jesus was still in control. **“When Jesus said, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.”** (6) Jesus gave them this indication that He was not powerless to defend Himself, but was going to allow them to do to Him what they had come for. The reason He did this was because His heavenly Father had determined that it was through this method that He would redeem all mankind from their sin. The Lord had not taken away this cup of suffering from Him except that He drink all of it.

Still, Jesus’ question needs to be answered by us, “Who is it you want?” Do you want someone who allows you to do anything that you want? Do you want one of the many man-made gods which this world has to offer—money, pleasure, self, knowledge, and so on? Or do you want the One who not an impostor, but truly the Savior of the World?

All who want the Savior of the world will come before His cross, confessing that they are nothing but sinful beings who deserve nothing but His wrath and punishment. As we bow low before the cross, looking away from ourselves to the One Who loved us enough to take our place in sufferings and death, we will receive complete forgiveness for all of our sins. Along with that forgiveness is the gift of life eternal with Him—a life that begins right here and now and can never be taken away from us. These gifts are ours because they have been won for us by Jesus. But His question still remains, Who is it you want? If we want Him and gifts which He has won for us, they become ours only through faith. That is, turning away from all of the impostors who hold out hope to us, and trusting only in Him to give us His gifts of forgiveness and life. After having received those gifts, we will then gladly and willingly follow His will for us in this life, for His guidelines are meant only for our good.

In this life, we have the choice of many different people and philosophies to follow. Each one offers certain blessings, which may be temporary at best. However, with Jesus, when we choose to look to Him for all of the gifts which He promises to give to us, we will never be disappointed. May we always want Jesus as our Savior, for then we will always receive those gifts which He has promised to us every day of our lives.