

God Changed Their Lives!

B	M	N	O	I	R	U	T	N	E	C	Q
B	A	R	T	I	M	A	E	U	S	S	Q
D	N	A	P	O	L	L	O	S	W	U	N
O	I	M	Z	H	H	L	U	A	S	I	M
N	A	A	R	A	I	T	R	J	Y	L	M
A	C	G	W	E	C	L	U	G	S	E	A
C	R	D	B	E	L	C	I	R	A	N	H
I	E	A	A	O	R	I	H	P	M	R	A
L	P	L	H	V	C	D	A	A	U	O	R
B	E	E	K	A	I	A	N	J	E	C	B
U	L	N	G	R	B	D	J	A	L	U	A
P	F	E	I	H	T	G	N	I	Y	D	S

Words to Find:
 Abraham
 Andrew
 Apollos
 Bartimaeus
 Centurion
 Cornelius
 David
 Dying Thief
 Jacob
 Jailer
 Leper
 Magdalene
 Maniac
 Philip
 Publican
 Rahab
 Ruth
 Samuel
 Saul
 Zacchaeus

Answers at: <http://www.openthoumineeyes.com/Puzzle/Changed.htm>

The King's Pardon

D. L. Moody

A man was once being tried for a crime, the punishment of which was death. The witnesses came in one by one and testified to his guilt; but there he stood, quite calm and unmoved.

The judge and the jury were surprised at his indifference. They could not understand how he could take such a serious matter so calmly. When the jury retired, it did not take them long to decide on a verdict of "guilty."

When the judge passed the sentence of death upon the criminal, he told him how surprised he was that the criminal could be so unmoved in the prospect of death. When the judge had finished,

the man put his hand in his bosom, pulled out a document, and presented it to the judge. He then walked out of the courtroom a free man.

Ah, that was how he could be so calm. He had a free pardon from his king, which he had in his pocket all the time. The king had instructed him to allow the trial to proceed, and to produce the pardon only when he was condemned. No wonder then, that he was indifferent to the result of the trial.

That is just what will make us joyful in the great Day of Judgment. We have a pardon from the Great King, and it is sealed with the blood of His Son. We that are saved will miss that Judgment!

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When "Daddy's Boy" Went Free

Bill Brinkworth

At the time of the unjust capture of Jesus Christ, a notorious criminal was also apprehended. His escapades were known by many in the area. He was a murderer, a robber, and was guilty under both Roman and Jewish law. His name meant "son of father". Maybe at one time he was daddy's boy, but not at the time of his capture. He was the wicked Barabbas.

Surely, the legal presentation of his case did not last long. His captivity could not have been lengthy, as his death was planned to be completed before the nearing Passover. He was detained in one of the infamous, Roman jails – dark and dank. It could be the only comfort he had of not being alone, were the screams and cries of other criminals facing the same fate.

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"Every Footprint Crooked!"

Walter Knight

A writer walked across the Valley of Dead Men in the South Sea Islands. Looking back over the way, he saw his tracks in the sand and marked how crooked his path was, though he had intended to walk straight. It became a parable to him. He said, "This is my life. Every footprint, crooked!"

Then he fell asleep. When he awoke hours afterwards, he could see no marks on the sand. Every footprint was gone. Not one was to be seen. The tide had been in, and when it receded there was no sign of the crooked steps.

He said to his soul, "That is my fresh reminder of what God has done for me."

How hope-engendering, gloom dispelling are His gracious words of promise, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." *Isaiah 44:22*

When “Daddy’s Boy” ...

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Perhaps, from hearing the screaming and the commotion outside he learned what was to happen to him. Maybe the guard’s cruel taunts also informed him of what his fate would be.

Two of his prison mates would also accompany him in death on the cruel, Roman cross. Just the thought of the long, lingering torture of being nailed to an old, rugged cross would sober even the worst of attitudes, and he was certainly sober.

The other two were thieves. If they deserved death, certainly Barabbas did. As man’s standards go, Barabbas’ deeds were far worse. Not only was he reaping the consequences of his thievery, but also for his act of murder. His fling of felonies brought much anger to his captors. They would be relieved by his death.

Outside, the people stirred nervously. Crowds came and went. Barabbas may have heard some of their emotional opinions as they brought in another well-known man for punishment. The loudest of the angered mob were the religious. Those Jewish leaders wanted the man destroyed. “Jesus” was the name called out the most. It was He they wanted crucified also.

Arguments and debates

pierced the darkness of the early morning. The trials were a mockery to justice pursued. Quickly, many hearing the judging of Jesus knew He was guilty of nothing. An earlier hearing from King Herod revealed no transgression worthy of death. They brought him to Praefectus Pilate, the governor of Judea, who was hearing the case, and he also found no fault in the man. It had to be evident that the Jewish elders and chief priests had it in for this man. They even brought in several men to bear false witness against Jesus. The leaders’ envy against Jesus brought the religious leaders’ tempers to a frenzy. They pleaded and demanded that Pilate would have him killed; even though the ruler saw nothing worthy of death in the testimonies against Jesus.

Pilate tried to get out of making the decision to crucify the man. Their demands upsurged. Knowing some of the Jewish laws, Pilate reminded them that a prisoner could be spared prior to the ensuing religious holiday. Ignoring Pilate’s repeated pleas to free Jesus from death, their demands quickly changed.

Soon, through that commotion, Barabbas may have heard his name in the arguments outside his cage. They were demanding to have Barabbas released. They ordered Jesus to die

in the criminal’s place. “Why would they want me free? After all I have done. Why, they don’t even know me. I certainly am not their religious type,” he may have considered.

What a tragedy. What an injustice the ensuing trial was. Jesus’ reputation was widespread. Certainly, Barabbas had heard something of this man that would die in his stead. He could have heard of Jesus’ healing of the sick, or of all the miracles He had performed. Street gossip from many had raised the suspicion of many that this prisoner, Jesus, was not just a man. He was the “son of God,” the true son of the true Father, and the long-awaited Messiah the rumors claimed.

Yet, for all the good this man was known for, the mob wanted Him to die. This great, good man would die in the place of a common criminal. Some unreliable, written sources even claim that Barabbas’ first name was Jesus. As God ordered it, the only Son of the heavenly Father, the promised Messiah, would die in the place of another “son of father”. Jesus would die so the sinful son could go free.

What he had heard was true. The Roman guards opened Barabbas’ jail door. Jesus would be taking the place of the criminal. It was not fair for Jesus, but Barabbas was grateful for the court’s mercy. Barabbas was free; one would die in his place.

The substitutionary death was only temporary, however. One

day Barabbas did die; as one day, we will all die. By believing and trusting that Christ’s death on the cross is payment for all our sins – past, present, and future, His death can be a payment for all our sins. His death can be what sets us free from sin’s control in our lives now, and it can free us from the wages of sin for eternity. His gift of dying for our sin can open the prison gates our sin has put us behind.

A Fearful Conscience

*Paraphrased from a
C. H. Spurgeon article*

I have heard of a man who was so constantly in debt, and continually being arrested by the police for his not paying his bills, that once, when going by some railings, he caught his sleeve upon one of the rails. He turned around and said, “I don’t owe you anything, sir.”

He thought it was a bailiff. So it is with unforgiven sinners. Wherever they are, they continually carry the feelings that one day their sin will have unpleasant consequences. They can enjoy nothing. There is no solid joy. Always do they have the guilty conscience of one day being caught and exposed for their sins.

Once a man is forgiven, he can walk anywhere. He says, “To me it is nothing whether I live or die; whether ocean depths engulf me, or whether I am buried beneath the avalanche; with sin forgiven, I am secure. Death has no sting to me. My conscience is at rest.”

“The discoverer of the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs was Jesus of Nazareth.” — H. Arendt