



## WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH CHRIST?

Every day we are faced with decisions. Some are important, and some not so important. But this decision "WHAT WILL YOU DO..." is crucial, for it will affect your future.

Let me illustrate this from a strange court case. It happened in the USA back in 1829, when two men, Wilson and Porter, were

convicted and sentenced to be hanged for robbery of the US mails. Porter was executed on July 2, 1830. About three weeks before the time set for Wilson's execution, he was granted a **PARDON** by President Andrew Jackson. What happened next had never happened before in US law. He **REJECTED** the pardon.

In order to solve this problem, it was taken to the Supreme Court where Justice John Marshall, the Chief Justice, handed down the following decision (US vs. George Wilson 7 Peters Reports, p. 150): "A pardon is an act of grace, . . . and if it is rejected, we have discovered no power in a court to force it upon him." So they hung Wilson. (Source material - *The Strange Case of George Wilson* - Stephen E. Slocum, Ph.D.).

Most people would agree that Wilson was foolish for rejecting the pardon. It cost him his life. Yet many of you are probably rejecting an even greater pardon at the cost of your eternal life. All of us, no matter how good we appear to be, have broken the Ten Commandments in thought, word or deed. We have all gone our own way, and have come under God's **DEATH** penalty for sin. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is **ETERNAL LIFE** in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Rom. 6:23*) We all need a pardon from God.

That is what the cross is all about. It's God's Pardon. Someone has to suffer the penalty of our sins in order to satisfy God's justice. Either us, or a substitute. In love, Christ took our punishment for us. (*John 3:16*).

Wilson's pardon cost only a drop of ink on the President's pen . . . our pardon cost the blood of God's Son. Wilson's pardon meant only a few short years added to his life . . . our pardon means eternal life. Wilson knew about his pardon, but refused to receive it. You can know about God's pardon in Christ, but have you received it? You have three choices. You can reject the pardon and pay for your own sins in hell.

Or you can **NEGLECT** it. If you keep putting off your decision until tomorrow, tomorrow may never come. You could slip into eternity today without God's pardon for your sin. There are many in hell who planned to come to Christ, but who died sooner than they expected. The longer you wait, the harder your heart can become to the things of God. The Bible says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." (*Heb. 3:15*) Why wait to come to God until all you can give Him is a broken life that has been hurt by sin. The Bible says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation." (*Heb. 2:3*) There is no answer - no escape from His judgement, if we neglect His offer of pardon in Christ. How many opportunities has God given you to receive His pardon? How many more will He give you? Don't sin away the day of His grace.

There is another option that we have. We can **ACCEPT** it. This means more than just knowing about it, going to church, calling yourself a Christian - it means two things:

1) You must be willing to **TURN** from sin unto God. The Bible calls this repentance. When they crucified Christ, two thieves were crucified with Him. One rejected Christ, but the other repented after hearing Christ pray, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." He knew he would soon be facing God and needed His pardon, so he admitted his guilt and turned to Christ.

Christ says, "Unless you repent, you shall perish." (*Lk. 13:3*)

2) You must **TRUST** Christ alone to forgive your sins and to give you His gift of eternal life. It means committing your life to Him.

The thief said to Christ, "Jesus, remember me when you come in Your kingdom!" He believed Christ would rise from the dead and reign one day as King. He wanted Him to be his King. The Bible says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." (*Rom. 10:9*) Christ immediately said to him, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." At that moment, the thief received God's pardon for sin, and His gift of eternal life.

You can do the same right now. When you stand before God one day, the only question that will matter is, "What did you do **WITH CHRIST** and the pardon He offered you?" Your eternal destiny will be determined by your answer.

(For Church Services, use the text *Matt. 27:22*. Pilate and Judas can be used as illustrations of those who **REJECT** and **NEGLECT** Christ.)