

A.M. OUTLINE
2/18/2024

PARDON REFUSED

(Acts 2:36 – 41)

In 1829 two men, Wilson and Porter, were apprehended in the state of Pennsylvania for robbing the U.S. mail. They were indicted, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the scheduled execution, President Andrew Jackson pardoned one of the two men, George Wilson. This was followed by a strange decision which may be without precedent or parallel in our history. George Wilson refused the pardon.

This gave rise to a legal question. Can a condemned criminal refuse the presidential pardon? The question finally appeared before the United States Supreme Court. Chief Justice John Marshall handed down this verdict: "A pardon is a deed to the validity of which delivery is not complete without acceptance. It may be rejected by the person to whom it was tendered, and, if rejected, we have discovered no power in this court to force it upon him. It is not to be thought that a criminal condemned to death would refuse his pardon, but, if he should, the law remains the same."

-from a tract by Avon Malone

1. ALL STAND IN NEED OF PARDON

The Bible charges all with sin: (Romans 3:9-10, v23; Rms. 6:23)

It is our sin that separates us from God: (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Sin means "missing the mark" - (James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; 1 John 5:17)

2. ALL HAVE BEEN OFFERED PARDON FROM GOD

(Titus 2:11) "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"
(2 Peter 3:9; Romans 8:1-2)

We cannot write out our own pardon: (Ephesians 2:8-10)

God voluntarily (graciously) provided for us a "pardon" that we needed and could not provide for ourselves.

Note the words to the hymns we're singing this morning: Power In The Blood,
What Can Wash Away My Sin? Rock of Ages, My Hope Is Build On Nothing Less,
Just As I Am

3. ALL MUST ACCEPT GOD'S OFFER OF PARDON (NOT REFUSE IT)

The terms of pardon are abundantly illustrated and clarified in the book of Acts:

(Acts 2:37-41; 8:12; 8:35-39; 16:14-15; 16:30-33; 18:8)

CLOSE - you may be thinking, "How foolish for George Wilson to die needlessly when the pardon was on the table."

Will you foolishly refuse God's offer of pardon?