

## **Rays of Jesus Divine Gory Illustrated Through Pilate's wife.**

Text: Mat 27:19

1) Revealing to her His innocence in a dream

Suggested Hymns:

2) Causing her to warn her husband

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 27:19, <sup>19</sup> *While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

This is a most remarkable incident in the history of our Lord's holy Passion — a stranger, a heathen woman speaking and acting in the defence of Jesus.

Early in the morning Jesus was taken by the chief priests, elders, and servants from the high priest's palace where He had stood before the church court to Pilate's judgment hall. The Roman governor did not allow them to go into the hall, but came out and inquired about what was the trouble.

And now there was a sort of a preliminary hearing which did not be long to the trial proper. Pilate heard the charges of the chief priests and elders. Then he took Jesus inside, and questioned Him, while His accusers were waiting outside. He brought Him out to them again and told them that the man was innocent.

Later on he sent Jesus to Herod, and when Herod returned the prisoner to Pilate, the governor proposed to the Jews that he would

scourge Jesus, to give them some satisfaction at least, and that then he would set Him free.

But they would not listen to Pilate. By this time, the day was advancing and they had gotten their friends to come and help them. There was now a howling mob before the judgment hall demanding the trial.

At length Pilate took the chair and declared the court in session. Scarcely had he taken the seat when a special messenger came from his home and, within the hearing of all, delivered to him a verbal message from his wife.

It was not a message concerning household affairs, or anything of that sort, but concerning the prisoner standing before him now and whom he is about to try in court. He is most emphatically requested not to have anything to do with this just and holy man, that is, not to meddle with this affair, but to dismiss the case immediately and set the prisoner free.

It is a noteworthy fact in our Lord's holy Passion that, when His friends were afraid to appear in His defence, even strangers and enemies had to speak in His favour.

When Peter denied Him, Judas confessed Him. When the chief priests announced Him guilty of death, Pilate declared he found no fault in Him. When the women that loved Him stood afar off, Pilate's wife, who knew little of Him, showed concern for Him.

Rays of divine glory in the suffering and dying Christ is our general theme for this Lenten season. Today, again, we see the rays of Jesus' divine glory breaking forth as in His deepest humiliation He moves the heart of a heathen woman and causes her to declare openly His innocence and to ask that He be set free.

The subject of our sermon shall be, then, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, The suffering Christ manifests His divine glory through Pilate's wife. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Revealing To Her His Innocence In A Dream.**

Pilate's wife, doubtless, was a Roman woman, a heathen woman. Her name has been handed down by tradition. It is *Procla*, which was a common name among Roman women. She had heard of Jesus and, possibly, had seen Him in Jerusalem.

But it was very little she knew of Him. Perhaps she had heard of His great miracles and, like Herod and others of high rank, wanted to see Jesus and would have liked to have seen some miracle done by Him. But she was not a secret believer in the Lord Jesus, or else the Apostles would certainly have informed us of such an important a fact.

Yet she dreamed of Jesus. That may be accounted for in a natural way. Her thoughts may have been with the great wonder-worker the day previous or before she went to bed. We often dream about those things which occupy the mind during the day. The brain works on mechanically, so to say, while we sleep, and there is a reflex of those ideas which are still fresh in our minds.

But there is something in this woman's, dream which is very peculiar and which is not to be accounted for in a natural way.

Was it not a peculiar thing that this dream should come to her just at this time? She had this dream in the very night in which Jesus was betrayed and while He was standing before the council in the high priest's palace, where they passed upon Him the sentence of death.

For when she says, *I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him*, we must not think that it was during the day she had this dream. It was in the morning or early in the afternoon when she sent the message to her husband. In the land where she now lived the people reckoned the day from sundown to sundown.

The day began at six o'clock in the evening, and the night was the first part of the day. So when she said that this day she had the dream, she meant the first part of the day, which was the night that had just

passed. Now, was it not a most peculiar thing that she should dream of Jesus at the very time when He was on His way to death?

But there is another thing about her dream which is more than peculiar, which is extraordinary in the common course of things and can not be accounted for in a natural way. She suffers many things because of Jesus in her dream. What does that mean? It means that she was in great agony and distress for Jesus' sake. Why?

Because the dream revealed to her the fact that Jesus is a just and holy man, that He is innocent. She says to her husband, ***Have nothing to do with that just Man.*** Her great trouble in the dream is that her husband might stain his hands with the blood of an innocent man and thereby bring down upon himself the vengeance of the gods.

The great revelation made to her is that Jesus is just, and that implies even more than innocence or the denial of any guilt on His part. It implies that He is right and does right, that His doctrine is true, and that to assail His pure and stainless character is in itself an offence. This revelation made to a heathen woman concerning Jesus' integrity is the most wonderful part of her dream.

The Greek word that is translated "***just***"<sup>1</sup> is the same word that is translated as "***righteous***" in other places.<sup>2</sup> It seems that while her husband has come to the conclusion that Jesus is innocent before the law, Pilate's wife has reached the higher conviction that Jesus is righteous before God, a conviction that was soon to be echoed by the centurion at the cross.<sup>3</sup>

Now we know that Jesus had power over the minds of people. From afar He could direct the thoughts of people and make them willing to do as He wished.

Only a few days ago, when on His way to Jerusalem, He had sent two of His disciples ahead to procure for Him a beast of burden so that,

according to divine prophecy, He might ride into the city, and from afar had made the owner willing to let Him have the use of the animal.

And when His disciples were at loss where to celebrate the Passover, Jesus again dispatched two and said to them, as we read in Luke 22:10-13, <sup>10</sup> *And He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. <sup>11</sup> “Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” <sup>12</sup> “Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” <sup>13</sup> So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.*

At the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew tells us that God spoke to the Wise in dreams, and now toward the end of his Gospel, Matthew tells us that God spoke to another Gentile in a dream. When Herod wanted to kill Jesus, the Wise Men wanted to worship Him. When the Sanhedrin wanted to kill Jesus, Pilate’s wife wanted to save him. She is also the fourth Gentile woman to be presented in a favourable light in Matthew’s Gospel; Rahab and Ruth<sup>4</sup> and the Syro-Phoenician woman<sup>5</sup> are the others.

Jesus had not lost this power over man’s mind standing before the governor. The wonderful dream of Pilate’s wife plainly shows that Jesus still has this power. Jesus can still reveal things to any one whom He wishes to trust it with. This is certainly a glorious manifestation of His divine glory in all the depths of His misery and humiliation!

## **2. Causing Her To Warn Her Husband.**

Still Jesus manifested His divine glory through Pilate’s wife not only in revealing to her His innocence in a dream, but also in causing her to warn her husband.

Pilate’s wife could have kept the dream to herself and said nothing to anybody. Or she could have waited until her husband came home and

then told him all. But no, she could not wait. She felt that a just man's life was at stake and that no time was to be lost.

Her husband had left the house early in the morning, perhaps before she was awake. She noticed that something unusual was going on in the streets, that so many people were going to the judgment hall. She inquired about the cause of this commotion among the inhabitants and was told that Jesus of Nazareth was to be tried for sedition.

There she saw that her dream was true, and though, as a rule, a Roman cared very little for the life of a Jew, it was quite a different thing with this Man because her own husband was implicated. It was not so much for Jesus' sake, as for her own husband's sake, that she was troubled.

There was a voice within her saying, *'You must do something; you must warn your husband, you must do so at the risk of incurring his displeasure for disturbing him in his official duties and mixing into state affairs.'* And so she sent one of her servants to the hall and had him deliver the message, ***"Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."*** There is no answer recorded which Pilate sent to his wife. He heeded her warning.

He made efforts to comply with her request and to set Jesus free, but when the howling mob was so determined to have His life and shouted until they were hoarse, Crucify Him, crucify Him! he at length yielded to them and condemned Jesus to death without cause.

The question is, *Who* was it that induced this heathen woman to do what she did? Who was it that suggested to her mind and forced her, as it were, to send that message to her husband? The answer is, It was Jesus.

If it was Jesus that revealed to her the dream, it must have been Jesus also that caused her to act. Jesus was the central figure of her dream, and the divine revelation connected with that dream plainly shows that it was

not merely the thought of Jesus, but that the Son of God Himself took an active part in it.

He had a heathen woman do Him the service to proclaim His innocence and spotless righteousness to offset the vehement accusations thrown against Him before the judge by His blood-thirsty enemies. This was done so that the judge, Pilate, might not be misled by those accusations, but retain the conviction, which he did right to the end of the trial, that Jesus was innocent.

So today we have again seen the divine glory of our Saviour in the midst of His suffering for our sins. He was falsely accused and thereby suffered for the great sin of bearing false witness against the neighbour. The tongues of His accusers were restless in defaming His spotless character that He might atone for the sins of the tongue, for the slanders and injurious reports of sinners.

Let us guard our words and take heed what we say about others, defend the neighbour, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything. And if we have sinned, let us amend our sinful lives with the help of the Holy Spirit and trust that ***“we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.<sup>6</sup>”*** Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 27:19

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 10:41; 23:35; and 25:37,46

<sup>3</sup> Luke 23:47

<sup>4</sup> Mat 1:5

<sup>5</sup> Mat 15:22-28

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 2:1