

Lessons from Pontius Pilate and his wife (Quality: Very good)

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[0 : 00] been upon my mind to speak from, as the Lord may help me. You'll find in the chapter that we read, the 27th chapter in Matthew's Gospel, I will ask your attention particularly to verse 19, the 19th verse of the 27th chapter in the Gospel by Matthew.

When Pilate, that is, when he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man?

For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. We're obviously working through the days towards the annual special celebration of the Easter time.

And one hesitated to come to this area of scriptural record prior to the Easter Sunday.

But nevertheless, as this word has been very much on my spirit, and I hope the Lord has a reason for so exercising my mind and thoughts relative to this subject, that there may be a purpose of grace and spiritual profit in our thinking together upon these things.

[1 : 39] What a momentous development of divine purpose surrounds the small period of time enclosed in the chapter that we've read together this morning.

Momentous. The Lord Jesus Christ said ultimately, of one particular, in reference to the experience unfolding, Father, the hour has come.

And what an hour. What an hour. Hours contain so much experience in the unfolding of the world.

There are times when certain things happen in a very short space of time that seem to alter the whole course of history.

But my friends, surely, there's never been a time in the unfoldings of the history of the world that's had such great influence and holds such great importance as that hour when the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified upon Calvary's tree.

[3 : 09] What a mercy if you and I can look back upon that hour in reference to the unfolding of our spiritual experience and say, O precious hour, when my thoughts were directed of the Holy Spirit to the crucifixion of the Son of God.

He who alone could make me clean from the condemnation of my guilt and my sin. He alone that could bear the burden of sin and guilt to such a degree as to make whiter than snow a number which no man can number of every nation, kindred and tongue.

Surely, in the unfolding of that hour which Christ apprehended in his knowledge of God's will for him, there has been so much unfolding in the subsequent history of the world's experience.

As in the forerunner to that hour, there was the unfolding of much associating with that hour. It seems that some went to heaven in the Old Testament era on account of that which had yet to take place as the world's time unfolded.

But, my friends, Christ was the Savior from first to last. And there's only one Savior. And there's only one who can historically occupy that blessed estate of being Jesus.

[5 : 02] His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. Another scripture that comes to my mind, none other foundation can any man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The saints, taught of the Spirit by faith, entered into the fullness of the sacrifice of the sacrifice of the Son of God. They were led and guided to cast the need of their immortal souls upon the coming Savior.

And we have, in our Gospel day, a wonderful, wonderful history reserved for us in the scriptures of truth that multitudes have already gone into glory as the fruit and effect of Christ's sacrifice.

And I hope and trust that even this day some that pass from time into eternity will again increase the number that is gathering there all the times the Lord brings to himself those for whom Christ has borne the burden and discharged the need relative to their souls freedom from the condemnation of the law and being brought into the knowledge of salvation by him who perfected salvation for his people.

Well now, obviously, a lot of things associate with the experience surrounding the Lord Jesus Christ as he went step by step in the will of God to the tree of Calvary.

[7 : 08] And a figure that seems to carry some preeminence in this history is the Roman pilot.

What an important personality but how much more important is the part that he was caused to play relative to the end that was God's purpose and design that the Son of God, the Son of His Love should be crucified upon the tree of Calvary and shed that precious blood which is the only efficacious cleansing that the world has ever known and ever will know with regard to the sin of the world.

Well now my mind has been thinking quite a lot of Pilate. He was a great man in the service of a great empire.

Really as we may use this expression as things developed to bring us to the point and place of the crucifixion, the condemnation and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ under the hand of Pilate.

There is a tremendous progressive development in the history of the universe. You think of the empires that existed.

[9 : 18] You think of the changes that were made internationally as well as nationally. You think of the eventual subjugation of Israel to the Roman power when Caesar as it were gained the mastery in the ascendancy of influence that he exercised over so much of the world at that particular time.

And we see great men raised up to be leaders in a national and international way. And we've seen that very clearly in the last few days in the gathering that has taken place in our capital city.

Well, now, the Lord is working out his purposes. And the Lord was working out his purpose when Rome became the ascendant empire in the world at that particular time.

And eventually, of course, Caesar exercised his authority and appointed this man to be the figure exercising justice over a subject body of people known as the Jews, the children of Israel.

And it's wonderful to just get a glimpse from time to time of the workings of the Almighty to a certain point in the development of his holy and his sovereign will.

[11 : 13] He doeth as he will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. None can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou?

Let me put it to you like this. A sovereign has a liberty over his or her subjects. And the king of kings had a liberty to formulate a pattern of development in the unfolding of the universe that brought this great fact to fruition that Pilate should be in the judgment seat and he should be exercising his authority ultimately to occasion the crucifixion of the son of God upon the tree of Calvary.

And my friends the streams of circumstance that flowed in many directions to establish that at that particular time at that particular point in the world's history there should be the coming together of Pilate and Jesus in the judgment hall.

Oh, it was not any sudden occurrence it was the great pattern of experience that God himself brought to pass according to his will that such a situation should be found at such a time as we have before us here in the subject of the text.

Pilate was no ignorant man. We realize that he was an appointed character by the great emperor Caesar and he had the authority and he had the accountability to exercise for the position that he occupied.

[13 : 47] I do feel that he was very, very influenced by his accountability to Caesar and that seems to me to be about the height of his consideration.

But my friends, what a mercy, mercy, mercy, it would be to be able to realize his accountability to God was the transcendent concern and interest of the exercises of his authority in such a position and such a place.

What a wonderful thing it is in the fulfillment of authority, however small may be our region of influence in that direction, how good it is if we realize that accountableness is really to God, before God, in everything.

Justice is essential to the approbation and blessing of the Most High God.

But it seems that Pilate was more concerned with the religious dignitaries of his day as to what they thought and what they desired over and above any reference at all.

[15 : 24] to the fact that he was instrumentally exercising his authority under the accountability associating with his high station and influence in the kingdom of Israel at that particular time.

Well, now having laid a few thoughts as a foundational approach, church, isn't it remarkable that God not only determined that Pilate should be the influence to pronounce ultimate judgment that the Son of God should be crucified, died, but also his wife had an influence.

His wife was brought to bear under the sovereign disposition of heaven to express her personal concern with regard to the pronouncement of justice by her husband Pilate.

Do we not focus our thoughts upon the strong influence that it is possible for a wife to exercise over her husband?

A good influence is constructive. A bad influence is destructive.

[17 : 20] Pilate's wife surely exercised a constructive consideration when in the text she warns her husband, he having the responsibility of pronouncing justice at this particular time, his wife said, have nothing to do with that just man.

Have nothing to do with that just man. Don't you pronounce according to the demand of the multitude.

Don't subject your authority to the will and wish of the crying crowd that cry crucify him, crucify him.

And all the priests and those in authority uniting and supporting the sentence of death.

Nevertheless, this woman is fired with an instrumental influence toward her husband, warning him not to submit to the cry of the multitude because it had been revealed to her in this respect that Christ was a just man.

[18 : 55] Christ was innocent of the foundation of condemnation that the number were crying out aloud to influence Pilate to exercise his authority in sympathy with their evil intentions and purposes.

I just put this in at this particular time. I suppose we know not the extent of influence that is exercised between a husband and a wife, a wife and a husband.

I wonder how many, many ways we have been influenced by the good counsel and the wise example of the wife that God has given to us.

And I would use this as an opportunity of yet again stressing the responsibility that is exercised within that category.

Wives have a great influence not only on the husband but also on his ways in the family and in the world.

[20 : 51] I believe God has given this initial benefit to mankind that he gives a help meet suitable for the need.

And it's a wonderful thing when we can realize God has been good and gracious to us in guiding our thoughts and affections toward those who we feel have been constructive in their influence for the well-being of the family as well as ourselves not only in a natural way caring for us in the home and in so many ways within the family context but also the spiritual what a wonderful thing it is to have a wife that is spiritually inclined to exercise her influence constructively constructively and I turn the coin over and say how great is the responsibility of a husband to his wife relative to the exercise of the family in a general application of the responsibility well now this seems to bring when

Pilate was set down on the judgment seat his wife sent to him oh she couldn't rest and she couldn't rest for a reason she couldn't rest because God had been at work God had been at work in her experience and it's so wonderful to me to realize the condescension of God in raising up Pilate's wife as a warning instrument as a means by which he must consider the solemnity of his judgment she says have thou nothing to do with that just man whether she was a Christian or not I can't find any reason to form a judgment one way or another but at least at this point

God had led her into an experience which enabled her to send at that critical moment of judgment her influence a strong influence without question but not strong enough to deter Pilate from submitting to the awful and unjust cry of the multitude but it doesn't by any means say that her message was unnecessary God has recorded in his word for a purpose and he's caused us to realize the solemnity of turning away from the good counsel of anyone that is near and dear to us obviously as it were influencing our thoughts and our actions

Christ ward Christ ward in sympathy with the acknowledgement of the perfect justice of the Lord Jesus Christ she was on Christ's side in that sense spotlighting a principle which Pilate knew for himself for he used the expression more than once that in reply to the multitude and to the priests and elders this just man Pilate he was under pressure to the crucifixion of Christ contrary to his own heart's feelings and eventually his wife as it were cast her might into the scale that she sympathizes with this let him free let him go he's a just man he's not worthy of the treatment for which the crowd are crying aloud to be meted out by you to him

[26 : 02] I see in the pilot in a very responsible and accountable position he's got a conscience within that sympathizes to a great degree with the exercise of justice in setting this just man free what evil hath he done he asks and he doesn't find a resting place in submitting to the call for condemnation well now let us think of pilot tremendous influence was exercised from

Rome upon the spirit of pilot if you are Caesar's friend you're not set Jesus free in other words Jesus has made himself the king of the Jews according to a testimony previously recorded and the Jews lay hold of that and bring it down to an earthly level he will be in conflict with Caesar if by any means he exercises his authority and releases Christ from the cry of the multitude and then my friends what religious body we have in the scribes and the

Pharisees and the priests and the crowd that were crying leading so to speak the multitude down this terrible path of injustice and bringing Jesus Christ under the sentence of death by crucifixion and also I want to mention the preferential desire of the multitude when Pilate tries to find a way to escape by saying it's a routine experience within the kingdom at such a time to release a prisoner Jesus or Barabbas and they cry with a loud voice Barabbas Barabbas and let

Christ be crucified what an awful condition is revealed to us in reference to the mind and spirit of the multitude both professor and profane in Jerusalem at that particular period now my main purpose is to highlight the influence exercised by Pilate's wife contrary to the ultimate unfolding of God's will in the crucifixion the sentence of crucifixion by the Jews of the saviour of the world when he was set down on the judgment seat his wife sent unto him saying have thou nothing to do with that just man for

I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him she suffered and she suffered in a dream she had a dream a warning dream about those things that associated with her husband's authority and the general situation relative to the judgment hall and my friends the Lord has used dreams the Lord does use dreams by no means can we dismiss that experience that from time to time the Lord has sanctified and used to the furtherance of his own cause and his own people but by no means do we give the judgment that all dreams are overruled by

[31 : 42] God for good Joseph was a man of many dreams wasn't he and dreams in the prison when he was there with the butler and the baker having an influence with respect to his deliverance from the prison house of Egypt well they had dreams didn't they and he had a dream and so on and the Lord used the dreams of these personalities unfolding his will and his pleasure and the Lord does use dreams the Lord can speak to us by whatsoever means he will and he spoke to the heart of this woman Pilate's wife in this particular way that brought her to suffer she said

I've suffered I've suffered you see her mind obviously was influenced very strongly by the fact that Pilate was engaging in judgment with regard to one who was absolutely just and she couldn't have been more true in her judgment of the situation than to declare that he was a just man the Lord Jesus Christ now have nothing to do with this just man for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him we must needs be careful to a certain set of circumstances what I want to come to is this

I wonder if we consider the reflections from eternity with regard to the things that happen to us in time what Pilate would now think of his wife in regard to the message that she sent to him in an attempt to prevent him from going down the wrong path and sentencing Christ to crucifixion or if he had only listened to what his wife had to say oh if he had only given as it were credence to her constructive influence as opposed to the awful clamour and demand of the multitude to put him to death and it seems as one thinks upon the ultimate issue the awful judgment that

Pilate was left to express and execute that such an one as the absolute righteous one the only one born of a woman that has been sinless in nature in every aspect of his being he was just he was holy he was harmless he was undefiled he was separate from sinners everything concerning the true knowledge of Jesus Christ endorses him as a just man absolutely perfect never spoke a wrong word never exercised an influence to the detriment of pure truth he always exercised righteous judgment in what he said what he did and the promises that he made well now

Pilate's wife is here in sympathy with that characteristic of the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you look at the life of Christ there's a harmonious endorsement of the principle that he was always just he was always holy he was always perfect in his righteousness never man spoke like this man and there's his wife Pilate's wife pleading with him and he a poor man a poor man left left to hearken to the cry of the multitude rather than to face the consequences of his office as the judge appointed by

[38 : 07] Rome in Jerusalem how careful we must be but in my thoughts on this subject I wonder what influence you and I are exercising in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ you and you and we have an influence Pilate's wife had an influence that was absolutely lost or neglected in the heart of her husband because he felt the cost of letting Jesus free was greater to him than submitting to the false demands of the people and sending him to the cross of

Calvary what a tremendous situation we have in those words at the beginning when he was set down on the judgment seat and there are times when you and I are compelled to sit on a judgment seat the world is crying out to us the spirit of the world today is as much as it was in those days away with him away with him crucify him crucify him but my friends is there a harmony between our spirit and the spirit that was given to this wife of

Pilate in the dream the just one if you go the way of the world it's the wrong way if you go the way of Christ his word his spirit that's the right way we are brought in our humble measure to the judgment seat and it's good to examine ourselves to see whether we be in the faith or no are we doing right or are we doing wrong are we going the way of the world a world that is false in the judgment that is exercising regarding the only one that has salvation to give to sinners that they don't want anything to do with

Christ do they in the spirit of their hearts as the Lord Jesus may interfere with their heart's wishes and the sympathies of a fallen nature but oh what a wonderful thing if my friends by God's mercy there is created in our hearts a realization that Jesus is the just one Jesus is the only one that can save us how wonderful is the language of so many records in the experience of Jesus Christ himself when people sinners plead with him for salvation Bartimaeus and his companion sitting by the wayside have mercy on us oh Lord thou son of

David have you ever pleaded with God out of a sense of your need that he will make Christ as it were the criteria in respect to your thoughts and your actions as well as your words the world is saying we don't want Christianity we don't want the shackles of divine truth to hinder our liberty in doing what we want to do and running with the crowd as it were in the broad road that leads to destruction but what a mercy my friends if we see in the just one the just one the only one thing that was that was perfectly righteous in thought and in word and in deed was as pure in the exercise or experience of death as he was in the experience of the miraculous birth of which he was given to enter into the world not a blemish not a spot not anything that could justify condemnation but nevertheless for the sinner's sake he submitted to bear the sins of many in his own body on the tree

[44 : 10] Pilate's wife at this particular point whether it was a saving principle that caused her to make this utterance I say again I can't form a judgment but I do say this her influence was constructive to God whereas the influence of the crowd to which Pilate eventually submitted was to conform to the wish of the world and that Jesus should be crucified but in closing what a wonderful thing that amidst all these various facets of the truth in Christ's condemnation for the justification of all his people he died that we might live he shed his precious blood that sin may be forgiven there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ

Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit my friends is the spirit of things a powerful influence in our formation of judgment as we need to form judgments in regard to what we do the way we walk the companions that we walk with and the ways of the world in general Pilate's wife appears to be well in judgment she called upon her husband to exercise he turned away from that judgment and went the way that he thought convenient for his own advantage but how solemn how solemn that he was left in authority to command the sinless one to die in the sinner's place

Amen