

[the wife of pilate]

:: matthew 27.19 ::

It's easter week and so I thought it only fitting that we look at a one-verse-wonder from the events of Jesus' crucifixion.

This morning we'll be at Matthew chapter 27, verse 19, where we learn about an interesting character: the wife of Pontius Pilate.

Matthew 27.19 - While [Pilate] 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."

Our God speaks. He calls out to each person on this earth in an attempt to reveal Himself to them.

As Christians, we have accepted the call of God to salvation, the call of God to serve and the call of God to share His Son with the lost and dying world.

But God is not through speaking to us. He continues His communication to us through His word, through His Spirit and by many other avenues.

If we are not hearing God speak regularly in our lives, then we need to figure out why we're not hearing Him. It is quite possible that we're missing the messages that He's been sending us.

At the time of our verse, Jesus had been illegally tried by the Jewish authorities the evening before. Now, He had been delivered to Pilate, the Roman governor of the region, who had the power to punish and execute on behalf of Caesar.

Matthew points out earlier in the chapter that when morning came the Jewish leaders brought Jesus in to the judgment hall, so it is very possible that Pilate had been awakened from sleep early to come in and preside over this trial.

Pilate then questioned Jesus as to whether He was the King of the Jews, to which Jesus said, "It is as you say." But after that preliminary question, Jesus did not say one word.

While we don't want to identify with Pontius Pilate, we can learn this morning about how God speaks to us and how we can search for His leading so that we do not become people who feel as though we never hear from the Lord.

Many times we can get to a point in life where we feel like God isn't really speaking to us on an important issue or trial or just in general.

It is natural for us to envy those Biblical characters like Moses or Abraham or Samuel to whom God spoke audibly. In many ways it seems like that could be a better arrangement: I hang around and pray and eventually God will audibly, directly speak to me.

Of course, we know that we have a much better situation than those Old Testament saints.

John 14.26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

We have a moment-by-moment communion with God that Believers before the day of Pentecost could never enjoy. If we can grasp what it means that the 3rd Person of the Trinity lives within us, then our prayer lives and devotional lives and physical lives **will** be revolutionized.

Still, there are those times where it seems as if God is silent. We know that He is a God who loves to reveal, so if we feel as though He is not speaking, then perhaps we can learn to listen more effectively from our passage.

Matthew 27.19 - While [Pilate] 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."

Pilate's wife was probably named 'Procula.' That is the name given to her in the Apocrypha, while not inspired is still an ancient historical text.

There is no other reference to her in scripture, but when we look back at tradition and church history, we get a little more information.

Origen, the 2nd century scholar and theologian, suggests that she became a Christian sometime after the Lord's crucifixion. In fact, the Eastern and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches have even sainted her for her life after conversion.

Here's what we can see in our text: One - she had a dream about Jesus that night. Two - she viewed Jesus as a righteous, just, innocent man. Three - she was effected enough to impress upon her husband that he should not condemn Jesus to death.

Let's make some comparisons between Pilate, his wife and ourselves.

First, they were brought face to face with the Person, Jesus Christ.

As a member of Judaeon high society, Procula and Pilate would no doubt have heard of Jesus of Nazareth. They would've heard about the amazing things He said, the incredible things He did. They would've heard reports that He was raising the dead and healing the sick. That He was a Man unlike any other man. And, whether Procula held this view before her dream or realized it after, she knew that Jesus was a just Man. Meaning that He was righteous and innocent.

She suffered in her dream because, having been brought face to face with the Messiah, she was found in that group of people who were in rejection of Him. His Deity and righteousness revealed that she was not safe in her current spiritual state.

God doesn't simply want to reveal to us who *He* really is, but He also wants to reveal to us who we really are: People who are sinful, empty, spiritually bankrupt but for His grace. People who need correction and direction and transformation.

As we see God revealed in our lives it should also reveal to us ourselves. As we spend time with the Lord we should understand more and more our inadequacy in light of His grace. We should find thankfulness and worship growing as we learn more and more about Jesus, who is the pure and righteous King who died that we might be saved.

Pilate and Procula really didn't respond so well.

In fact, Procula gets out of bed and sends a message to her husband saying, "have **nothing** to do with that just Man."

Not, "We need to repent and follow Jesus."

Not, "I think He might be the Messiah."

Instead, we see a response of rejection. "Have **nothing** to do with Him."

When God speaks to us, we must respond with acceptance, not rejection.

While we are not unrepentant sinners like Pilate and his wife were at this point in time, we **can** be unrepentant saints. We can harden our hearts to reject those things which Christ wants for our lives and for our relationships with Him. It is a mistake to view our Christianity as simply a destination. Yes, our great hope is heaven and the resurrection, but our faith is about a lifetime relationship and work and transformation with Jesus Christ here on the earth. For that reason, God continues to speak! He speaks in great volumes to us about our hearts and our decisions, about our relationships and our calling. And when God speaks, we choose to either accept those things or to reject them.

In Procula, I would say that we see an example of a rejecting heart. A heart that takes what the Lord has shown and then says, "I don't want to deal with that right now." When we do that, we find ourselves in a place of rejection, not submission.

The second application we can make from this couple is this: Are we recognizing *when* God is speaking to us?

In this little scene we see that God spoke to Pilate and Procula in a variety of ways. Jesus spoke directly to Pilate. God spoke to Procula in a dream. Some scholars believe that Pilate's wife was probably Jewish, in which case God would have spoken to her through His word.

As Christians, we know that God speaks to us powerfully through the Bible, which is our inerrant authority in life. He speaks by His Holy Spirit. Since all believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit, God speaks to us through other Christians. He speaks through creation. He speaks through metaphor and parables. He speaks through those He calls to teach. He speaks through dreams and visions.

Our God is a God who speaks. Our part is to listen. We listen by reading the Word, by praying throughout the day, by spending time in Godly activities with other believers, by regularly being taught the Word of God. But we also must remember that God can speak to us through things as unusual as dreams or visions.

When you go to bed tonight, think about the fact that perhaps God is going to speak to you as you sleep. Perhaps this evening God is going to show you some phenomenal thing that will change your life forever while you lay unconscious.

In all seriousness, if we live with a heavenly, biblical mindset, then we will discover more and more that even the most mundane parts of our day can be used for God's glory. We will discover that Christ is revealing more about Himself to us all the time. We will discover that there is no need for worry or strife or anxiety, but that Jesus has delivered us from those things by giving us wisdom and giving us power and giving us more of Himself through many wonderful avenues.

God is faithful to speak and to instruct, to call and to reveal.

He is calling to unbelievers.

He is speaking to believers.

Today God has a message for you and He has sent it so that you might have a more abundant life, a more transformed life that is lived above the pettiness of earth and on the glorious, purposeful plane of heaven.

Don't be like Procula who, in this rejected the message of God.

Don't be like Pilate, who ignored the message of God in favor of the opinion of the worldly multitude.

Instead of responding that way, remember that your life is on God's mind and He is speaking to you that you might have and share more of Jesus wherever you are.