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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
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Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 12, 2014
2nd Midweek Lent

Scripture Lessons: Psalm 56 Passion: Upper room,
Lord's Supper

Hymns: 159; 144; 155; 552:1-4

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 27:19

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)

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is
truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified Savior, dear fellow
Redeemed.

INTRO: *Remarkable incidents from Jesus' Passion*

Our midweek meditations this Lenten season are lessons
drawn from some of the remarkable incidents in Jesus'

Passion, some of which don't always attract our attention. There are so many which we do talk about almost every Lent, and yet there are others which we barely mention in passing which, if we stop to consider them a little more carefully, present a clear and important message for us about the sufferings and death of our Lord. This evening's mediation is based upon one such incident:

THEME: The Warning Dream received by Pilates's Wife.

From this incident we learn of God's concern for sinners -
I. that He warns Pilate and his Wife.

When we think of the warnings of our Lord against temptation and sin that would befall people during His Passion, the warnings that readily come to mind are the warnings which Jesus issued to Peter and the rest of the disciples, that they would all be offended because of Him that night, and then the follow up warning to Peter that before the rooster crowed twice in the early morning hours coming so soon, Peter would deny the Lord three times. Again the Lord encouraged the disciples to "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation." Perhaps we would recall how Jesus even reached out to Judas. In the upper room there was an inherent warning in Jesus identifying Judas as the betrayer. And then later, in the garden called Gethsemane, Jesus queried, "**Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?**" (Luke 22:48).

In our text we read of a different sort of warning. The warning came not from Jesus alone and the words which He spoke, but rather in the form of a dream which

Pilate's wife received in those early morning hours when the Priests and elders brought Jesus to Pilate's courtyard.

It was right when Pilate was hearing the case against Jesus that Pilate's wife sent him an urgent message, **“Have nothing to do with that just Man.”** She knew from the dream that this was trouble, and not of the ordinary sort. It was not just political intrigue and unrest among the Jews that was at stake. She knew this was trouble of an extraordinary nature. She had **“suffered many things in a dream because of Him.”** I suppose some might say she was spooked by a nightmare. Perhaps that is all that Pilate thought of his wife's words of warning. She was startled by the Jews awakening them both, and she had a bad dream because of it.

If that were all that it was, then Pilate was right to think little of it. However, if that were the case the Holy Spirit would not have bothered to share this remarkable incident with us. It was something much more. It was a message from God for Pilate, that Pilate should be aware of the significance of this situation, and of what he was doing in judging Jesus. Pilate was not dealing with just another matter of the Jew's troublesome ways. This was **not** only a matter of jealousy. Pilate was being warned about who Jesus was, and how this situation involved powers that were far greater than Pilate's, or even the power of Rome.

Pilate knew enough to be afraid. He feared even more as he correctly perceived and repeatedly declared Jesus' innocence. He marveled at Jesus when he heard Jesus' testimony regarding His person and authority. He marveled at Jesus' silence in the face of many obviously false accusations. He saw Jesus' majesty as well as His

innocence, and Pilate knew the right thing to do was to follow his wife's advice, and to heed the warning she had received. But that Pilate failed to do. In the end he caved into the pressure of the Jewish council and the assembled mob. First he had Jesus scourged, and then he condemned Jesus to be crucified. He did these things despite God's warning, despite the fact that he knew **this was a just Man!**

God warns. In sin or unbelief man often ignores the warning, or disregards the warning. God warns because of His mercy and love. He warns because He would not have the sinner die, but rather turn from his sinful way and live! God warns even those whom He knows will fail to heed His warnings issued in love and compassion, issued that they might live and not die.

God reached out to Pilate through Christ as well as through the dream. The salvation of God was right there before him, but Pilate, in all the wrong ways, wanted nothing to do with this just Man. Pilate failed that day. He failed to heed the warning of his wife's dream, and he failed to see in Jesus the divine justice that could have saved his soul.

All this emphasizes for us the importance of --

II. Heeding God's Warnings.

Without doubt the incident recorded in our text is remarkable because it is not the regular way of God interceding in our lives. Maybe we might think that we would do a lot better in paying attention to the warnings of God if we got a dream from the Lord, thinking, I sure wouldn't have done what Pilate did if I had received such

an explicit warning from God! I would have set Jesus free immediately! Really? Are you sure?

The Lord has issued us many explicit warnings in Holy Scripture. In Jesus' parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus, Abraham's words to the rich man suffering in Hades are right to the point. He told him concerning his brothers:

Luke 16:31 "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

All the words of warning recorded for us in Scripture telling us to flee temptation are words from God that we ought to heed. It may be the warning about fleeing youthful lusts, or the avoiding of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, or to beware of covetousness, they are warnings filled with the loving concern of the Lord every bit as much as this remarkable warning issued in the dream of Pilate's wife. God does go to great lengths to lead us away from the path of sin that we might walk in the way of righteousness and life. The failure lies within us, and not with God. The Apostle Paul writes of this in --

1 Corinthians 10:12-14 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Trials and temptations will come upon us. The pressure of the world to cave in to its way of thinking will be applied to us, and at times the pressure will be great that

we should conform to this world, and go along with them in the paths of unrighteousness. We need to look for that way of escape. We need to know that in the Scriptures we have the sword of the Spirit to wield against the devil, that we might defeat him. We need to appreciate that in Jesus' Passion we have the greatest evidence of God's love for us fallen sinners, and the power of the gospel to lift us up above the mire of this world, that we might live to the praise and glory of our Savior Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION: TLH 144:1,2

“Jesus grant that balm and healing
In Thy holy wounds I find
Every hour that I am feeling
Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within
Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril and from sinning
Keep me ere its first beginning.

“Should some lust or sharp temptation
Prove too strong for flesh and blood,
Let me think upon Thy Passion,
And the breach is soon made good.
Or should Satan press me hard,
Let me then be on my guard,
Saying ‘Christ for me was wounded,’
That the Tempter flee confounded.”

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.