

## Day Sixteen

### Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

### The Witness

**John 19:13-15(NLT)** When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. **Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha).** <sup>14</sup> It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!" <sup>15</sup> "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back. <sup>16</sup> Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

**Matthew 27:11-19(NLT)** Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor. "Are you the king of the Jews?" the governor asked him. Jesus replied, "You have said it." <sup>12</sup> **But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent.** <sup>13</sup> **"Don't you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?" Pilate demanded.** <sup>14</sup> **But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor's surprise.** <sup>15</sup> Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. <sup>16</sup> This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas. <sup>17</sup> As the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning, he asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" <sup>18</sup> (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.) <sup>19</sup> **Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night."**

Jesus faces all of His accusers alone. He has been brought back from Herod to stand again before Pilate. Herod peppered Him with questions, but Jesus did not say anything. Now He is before Pilate for a second round. The leading priests and elders are tossing out their accusations like a possessed pitcher. Yet, Jesus remains silent. Pilate demands a response, but Jesus is not swinging at any of their accusations. This surprises Pilate. Pilate, who obviously has had many others appear before him, is used to a much more rigorous defense from those who are accused; maybe even some begging or pleading for some kind of mercy. But not a word out of Jesus; all the accusers with their witnesses, dominating this proceeding.

Jesus is all alone in this. No one to witness on His behalf, no one to speak up for Him; not a single person to defend Him. Where is His posse? Where are the crowds that shouted Hosanna? Where are the ones that He healed? Where are the bread and fish eaters (remember the little boy's lunch)? How about any of His disciples? We know

Judas is hanging from a tree and Peter is wallowing in his denial. But what about any of the others? Where's John, where's James? Not a single individual has come forward to say anything good on behalf of the One who only did good. From John's account, it seems like Pilate is trying to buy time. He is not getting a defense from Jesus or, for that matter, from anyone else, so he has Jesus flogged. When the Roman soldiers are done flogging Jesus, he brings Jesus out to them; as to say, "Look, Jesus has been beaten within inches of His life. This should satisfy your gluttony for punishment." Pilate reiterates, "I find no fault in Him." Pilate tries to give them an alternative. So, he picks a murderer, a criminal of the worse kind, an alternative to Jesus. Surely, they would not want a murderer running around on the streets of Jerusalem, would they? So, he offers them Barabbas. But to his shock and surprise, the crowd picks Jesus to be crucified and a murderer to be released. Incited by the Jewish leaders, they are demanding not just blood, but death! Death by crucifixion. As a wily politician, Pilate knows he is about to have a riot on his hands and could ill afford one during Passover.

So almost in resignation, he sits down on the seat of judgment, and is about to give the people what they want. But suddenly, He is interrupted. Wait! Who would have the gall, who would be brave enough or stupid enough, if you will, to interrupt the governor as he is about to make his final judgment? We read this in **Matthew 27:19(NLT)** ***"Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night.'"***

Finally, a witness on Jesus' behalf. Who is this witness? Who is this witness that would step up at the last moment and speak up for Jesus? It is no one else but Pilate's own wife. We don't know much from Scripture about Pilate's wife, Claudia Procula, or even from history. What we do know about her is written in approximately thirty-one words. Yet, these few words about her describe a woman that is absolutely conflicted, not only about her experience, but also about the ramifications of her husband's actions towards and innocent man.

What do you do when you are married to a madman? What do you do when you live in a society that does not value you, your gender, or your opinion? Then, to crown that, you are married to a lunatic. A man that would be given to outbursts of anger, malice and cruelty. A madman who would much rather kill and maim, than value anybody else's opinion. What do you do when you dream a dream about a Man standing trial before this man who happens to be your husband? Would you speak up or remain silent? Even though you know that voicing your opinion would not change the outcome, but rather place you in a precarious position yourself. I think the obvious question here would be, "Was this dream more for her or for her husband?" She is obviously conflicted.

I used the word “conflicted,” but she uses the word “suffered.” We know that her dream did not change the outcome because Jesus was still crucified. Could it be that through her action, regardless of the conflict within her soul to remain quiet, she spoke up and thereby demonstrated a willingness to risk for the sake of another? When no one else spoke up for Jesus, when no one else came to His defense, she did! We are asked by Jesus to confess Him before men, instead of denying Him. And by our act of public confession, He procures our heavenly witness before the Father in heaven.

Do you confess Him before difficult people? Do you confess Him even though you know it might not make a difference to the outcome or the decisions being made? Notice, she sent this message while Pilate is sitting on the judgment seat. She defends Jesus even while her own husband is ready to judge and condemn Him. Speaking up does not mean the outcome will change; it leaves the decision in the hands of the hearer, but not without protest. We must be as bold and courageous as Claudia to speak up for our Savior and then trust Him for the outcome.

Bible scholars believe that she is the same Claudia that Paul references in his second letter to Timothy. ***2 Timothy 4:21(NLT) “Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus sends you greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.”***

Not only did she speak up for Jesus, she later followed the Man of her dream...

**Prayer:**

- **Pray for boldness to speak up for Jesus even when it is difficult.**
- **Ask the Lord to show you who to specifically pray for so that you may share Jesus with them.**
- **Pray for your family members that have a negative view about Jesus. Pray that the Lord would send someone to love them to life.**
- **Pray that the Lord will help The Rock Church be a bold witness for Christ even at the risk of rejection.**
- **Pray for the harvest of souls in our Valley.**