Pilates judgement hall

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[0:00] You will find my text this evening in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 27 and at verse 19.

Matthew chapter 27 verse 19. When he, that is Pilate, 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. The Jewish authorities have been trying Jesus.
Those evil men, the scribes and the elders, the religious leaders of the Jewish people, have decided that Jesus must die.
But the trial is a travesty of justice. Even the very court, the Sanhedrin meeting by night, is illegal. It was quite illegal for the Jewish council to meet in the night time.
[1:17] The charge they bring against Jesus is the charge of blasphemy. He claimed to be God.
Now, as I have said, they were determined that Jesus should die.

But those Jewish leaders did not have the authority to sentence him to death and to execute him. Only the Roman authorities could do that.
And so, to the Roman governor, to Pilate, Jesus must go. The charges brought against him before Pilate are different from the charges that were brought against him at the Jewish court.
There, he was charged with blasphemy. But such a charge would not stand before Pilate in the Roman court. Pilate would simply dismiss the case and tell them to deal with a matter themselves. That was a matter to do with their own religious beliefs. And so they bring three other charges against Jesus. Pilate would simply be the case and tell them to be the king of the Roman authorities. They bring the charge of sedition.
[2:25] They say that he's a person who is causing trouble, political trouble. They're all political charges that they bring. He's stirring up the people to rebellion. They also complain and accuse him of teaching the people that they must not pay taxes to the Roman authorities.

And they say further that he claims to be a king, to be the king of the Jews. They were all trumped up charges.
And nonetheless, they are determined, you see, those evil religious leaders of the Jews, they are determined that Jesus should die.
And so there before Pilate, Jesus is accused. What kind of a man is this Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea?
He is an unscrupulous man. He is a cruel, unprincipled man. He had massacred many of the Jews By his callous disregard for the most deeply held religious convictions of the Jewish people, he had earned their hatred.
[3:46] They detested him. The Romans had always recognized that the Jews were really a special case. Because of their particular religion, they had to be treated very carefully.

They applied the kid glove, as it were, in their treatment of the Jews. But this Roman governor, when he took over, applied the mailed fist.
And the Jews detested him. He had misbehaved grossly in many ways. And what Pilate feared, more than anything else, was that the Jews would report him to the emperor himself, make a complaint directly to the emperor, and so he might be brought into disgrace, and lose his lucrative post, be dismissed from his position.
For there were many complaints that the Jews could justly bring against him before the emperor, before Caesar, in role. And so, when the Jews bring Jesus before Pilate, although Pilate hates those Jews, he nevertheless is afraid to offend them, afraid that they'll use their influence with the emperor himself against him.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13

He's afraid that they'll report his misdeeds. He's afraid to offend them. And yet, yet this prisoner who has been brought before him has made a profound impression upon the Roman governor.
[5:25] He genuinely desires to set him free. We notice then, first of all, as we look at Pilate here tonight, that God spoke to him.

God spoke to him. It's early in the day. Pilate is trying the prisoner. He's there, sitting on the bench. He's sitting on the judgment seat in the Antonia fortress there in Jerusalem. But there's a lull in the proceedings.
When a Roman soldier enters the judgment hall and brings Pilate a message. The message is a message from Pilate's wife, whom I think it is clear from the narrative Pilate loves very dearly.
And the message is this. Have nothing to do with this just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
[6:31] Can you doubt but that this is God speaking to Pilate? He's sovereign. He is in complete control. It was not mere chance that after Pilate had gone out to his work that morning, his wife turned over in the bed and fell asleep again and dreamed her dream.

This Roman lady had her dream. It would certainly be by the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God that Jesus would die.
But nevertheless, Pilate must be made to face and to realize his responsibility. And so this Roman lady dreams her dream.
It's something in the nature of a nightmare. She has to suffer because of what she dreams. I have suffered, she says, many things this day in a dream because of him.
We're not told the details of her dream. Perhaps it was that in her dream she saw Jesus standing there in the judgment hall before Pilate, her husband, who was sitting there on the judgment seat.
[7:46] Perhaps it was that she saw her husband being judged, Jesus on the judgment seat at the final judgment on the last day.

We don't know. But the dream affected her terribly. She was so concerned for her husband that at once she has to call for a maid.
She loves her husband very dearly. I'm sure of this. At once she calls for her maid and tells her to send one of the soldiers at once to the judgment hall.
With this message to Pilate, her husband, have nothing to do with this just man. for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
It is, I say, God's doing. The events of providence are under God's sovereign control. This is the means, his wife's dream, this is the means that God is using to speak to the Roman governor.
[9:02] God has spoken to you, has he not, in providence? It may be that he's spoken in a dream. We mustn't dismiss this. There are those who would dismiss this kind of thing, but God is in complete and sovereign control and he can still speak if he chooses through dreams, through one's own dream or the dream of another.

Spurgeon, preaching on this text in a great sermon, says, even dreamland knows no God but God. You may be able to explain some dream you have had by referring to the events of the day previously.
You may be able to explain it as wish fulfillment. You may be able to account for it simply by the fact of overindulgence and certain foods before retiring to bed.
But the fact remains that God is in sovereign control and that he can speak as he chooses. Just as he spoke to Joseph through dreams long ago, just as he spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, just as he spoke to this Roman governor's wife in a dream, and just as he has spoken to many others throughout this Christian era in a dream, so he can speak to you or to me too in the same way, in a dream of one's own or in the dream of another.
No providence, my friend, no providential occurrence is by chance. But it may not be in a dream that he speaks to you in providence.
[10:42] It may be in an illness, an illness of your own or an illness of someone near and dear to you. Many a person who, when he has been laid low in illness, wondering whether he would live or die, has had to face this fact, I'm not ready to die.

I haven't fled to Christ for salvation. I don't have Christ as my Savior. And if death should claim me tonight, I would be lost forever.
it's the voice of God speaking. And there are those to whom he has spoken at such a time who have faced up to what he has said and who have turned to Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13

Their illness has been blessed to them. Perhaps he will speak to you in a bereavement. So it was with Robert Murray McChain who was to become one of the saintliest ministers ever in the Scottish Church.
It was through the death of his brother David that he faced up to his need of Christ to be his Savior. There's a sense in which every bereavement you ever suffer is the voice of God speaking to you, urging you to turn to Christ and receive him as your Savior.
[12:03] I'm amazed that people can attend a funeral and see an acquaintance laid in the grave without being solemnized.

Every time you see an acquaintance die, slip from you, that is the voice of God speaking to you. God is saying to you every time, here you have no continuing city, set your house in order.
It is appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment. When you see someone slip from you, that should move you to concern about your own salvation.
It is the voice of God sounding in your heart. Or it may be that the providential occurrence through which he will speak to you is simply disappointment, the loss of employment, failure to gain promotion, a business failure, can be the means through which he speaks.
Such a disappointment can cause you to stop in your tracks and examine yourself. It can cause you to see I am not master of the situation.
[13:20] Someone else is in control and that someone else is calling me to seek himself. When everything is going well, then you can say I don't need God.

But when things begin to go against you, then you can come to realize that you are not self-sufficient in yourself, that you need God.
The eternal God is speaking to you, telling you that you need him, telling you that you need Christ, telling you that you need the Savior.
He can speak to you too through your success. There have been those who have succeeded and who have suddenly stopped and asked themselves, where did all this success come from?
Am I thinking at all about the God who has given me such success? Do I know him? Do I seek him? Do I serve him? God speaks to us, my friends, in the ordering of our circumstances.
[14:29] A man goes and he spends a night in a hotel room, and while he's there he sees a Bible left there by the Gideons. He takes it up and he reads it, and as he reads he comes to realize his own need of a Savior.

He comes to realize that Christ is the Savior he needs, and comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God that is the story of many a life. I believe that there have been many terrorists in the Mays prison in Northern Ireland who while they were there in that very prison were brought into contact with the Gospel and were converted to the Lord Jesus Christ.
I've read that and heard that on several occasions. You've made a new friend. friend. That friend is a Christian. That's God speaking to you.
You have a new colleague at your place of work. That colleague is a Christian. That is God speaking to you. You're here tonight in a Christian church, in the place where the Gospel is being preached.
That's not by chance. This is God speaking to you. as he spoke to Pilate through his wife's dream, so he speaks to you.
[15:52] He spoke to Pilate through the person who was closest to him, his own wife. And it seems to me from the narrative that there was a very close and loving relationship between Pilate and his wife.

As soon as she had that dream, she had to send the message at once to her husband. So concerned was she that she had to interrupt him even in the course of his duties there and send this message to him, have nothing to do with this just man.
For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. This is love speaking. God sometimes sends his message through those who love us most, through those whom we love most, to make that message more powerful.
It makes a deeper impression when it comes through such and one. Could there be someone here tonight still unconverted and your wife is a Christian, your husband is a Christian, the one nearest to you is a Christian, one whom you love very dearly and whom you would do anything to please. And that one has been pleading with you, speaking to you, telling you the gospel and imploring you to turn to Christ. Is that not the voice of God reaching you?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13

[17:20] Do you have a child who has become a Christian? Does that not affect you? What about that parent of yours who was a Christian? Perhaps he's in heaven now or she's in heaven now.

You remember how your mother longed for your conversion? How she spoke to you and urged you to turn from sin and unbelief and to receive Christ as your own saviour?
You remember the Bible she gave you when you left home? Have you read it? You're remembering all that tonight. This is just the voice of God speaking to you.
You have a friend, have you, who's a Christian? That friend is pointing you to the saviour. He's been talking to you. She's been talking to you about Christ, presenting the gospel to you, doing so out of love.
And this is the very means that God is using to speak to you. God spoke to Pilate and God speaks to you.
[18:25] God spoke to him. That's the first point I notice here tonight. And the second is this, he knew the truth. he knew the truth.

There in the judgment hall, Pilate asked, Jesus, are you the king of the Jews? Yes, Pilate, weak man that he is, thinks he can compromise with them.
I'll have him flogged, I'll have him scourged, and then release him. But no, that won't satisfy the Jews either. Jesus must die. Then Pilate thinks he can find another way out of the difficulty.
There's Barabbas there. It's customary at the Passover time to release the prisoner. And surely, surely those Jews will prefer that Jesus should be released rather than that notorious wicked insurrectionist Barabbas.
He knows that for envy the Jews have delivered him. Over and over again, Pilate declared Jesus innocent.
[19:40] And it was just at this point that the message came from his wife. Have nothing to do with this just man, this righteous man, this upright man.

the Jews won't have it that he should be released. They cry out for Barabbas. Let's have Barabbas. They persuade the mob to cry out that Barabbas should be released and that Jesus should be crucified.
Give us Barabbas. But what shall I do, asks Pilate? What shall I do with Jesus, the one whom you call King of the Jews? What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?
Pilate knew perfectly well what he should do with Jesus. He knew he was innocent. He should declare him innocent and release him.
Those Jews could not touch him. They couldn't touch Jesus without Pilate's authority. What evil has he done? Asks Pilate. He knows that Jesus is innocent.
[20:47] He knew that Jesus had done no evil. He knew that what he ought to do was to declare Jesus innocent and release him.

There he is before the crowd washing his hands and as he does so he says I am innocent of the blood of this just person.
This just person, this upright, this righteous person. It's the very term that his wife had used in the message that she sent to him. that term, that word had pierced him.
Pilate knew that he was just, that he was righteous, that he was innocent and he knew he ought to release him. Pilate knew the truth. You know the truth about Jesus don't you?
You who are still unconverted you know the truth. You know that he's the sinless son of God. You know that he's all that he claimed to be.
[21:53] You know that he came to seek and to save the lost. You know that he died upon the cross to pay sin's penalty. You know that he rose again the third day. You know that he's the only saviour.

You know that apart from him you cannot be saved. You know all that. The evidence is crystal clear. You don't doubt it for one moment. And you know what you ought to do with Jesus.
By faith receive him as your own saviour. Come to him in repentance and in faith. Yield yourself to him. Commit yourself to him.
And become his whole hearted follower. You know that. You know that you cannot rely upon any good deeds of your own.
You know that your own best deeds fall far short of what God requires. You know that salvation is not by any works of your own at all but that it's all of grace of undeserved mercy through faith.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13

[22:59] You know that. You know all that. And my friend let me ask you have you acted upon it? Has there come that definite time in your life when by an act of faith you received Christ as your own personal saviour?

Intellectually you know the truth but have you by an act of will received Christ to be your own saviour and Lord?
It's a dreadful thing to know the truth and not to act upon it. God has spoken to you my friend spoken to you as surely as he spoke to Pilate there that day.
He has spoken to you by one means or by another perhaps by many different means. Have you paid heed to what God has said? Have you acted upon it?
Have you personally received Christ? Have you? He knew the truth God spoke to him.
[24:15] He knew the truth and now thirdly we notice this he disclaimed responsibility. He disclaimed responsibility.

Pilate saw that he couldn't persuade the crowd that Jesus should be released. An uproar was taking place. There was a chump a great disturbance cross and Pilate yielded to that Jewish crowd. He knew Jesus was innocent. He knew what he ought to do but instead he delivers Jesus to be flocked and to be crucified.
Before he pronounced the sentence, Pilate sent for a basin of water. There before the crowd, in public, he washed his hands.
It was a dramatic act. I'm innocent, he said, as he washed his hands. I'm innocent of the blood of this just person.
[25:23] See you to it. I'm innocent. The responsibility is upon you, not upon me. it's upon you Jews the responsibility for his death.

I disclaim responsibility. He disclaimed responsibility. But it would take more than a little water to free Pilate from the blood of Jesus, to remove the guilt from Pilate, to set him free, to take away from him the responsibility for this terrible deed.
You remember how in Shakespeare's great drama Macbeth, Lady Macbeth in her sleepwalking kept on washing her hands. Would all the perfumes of Arabia sweeten this little hand?
No, they couldn't. And neither could the water in that basin that day remove remove a Pilate's guilt from him and cleanse his hand from the blood of Christ.
Those Jews, they were guilty, certainly they were, their guilt we can say was even greater than Pilate's, but that did not excuse him.
[26:52] He, the Roman governor, the one who was there in Judea, put there by Caesar himself in authority in Judea, he sentenced an innocent man, knowing that he was innocent.

Pilate was responsible. However much he might disclaim responsibility, he would have to bear a very large share of the responsibility for the dastardly deed, the terrible crime of that day.
And why did Pilate do it? He did it because he was double-minded, he lacked proper integrity, and as James reminds us in his letter, a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.
He was a divided personality, part of him recognized, part of him wanted to release Jesus, and to set him free.
But another part of him was concerned rather to safeguard his own interests. He was afraid that his own misconduct would be reported in Rome, and that he would be dismissed.
[28:11] He was a man being pulled in two directions, and he does what is the wrong thing, knowing perfectly well what is the right thing to do.

could it be, my friend, that you sometimes are like that? You know that it is right to come to church, and so you're here this evening.
You know that it is right to read the Bible, to pray to God, and to keep the Sabbath day holy. You attend to all these matters. But you know, too, that it is right to respond to the gospel, to repent, to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, personally, by faith, to receive him as your own saviour.
You know that that is right, too. But you won't do that. You resolve to tear yourself in two, to go in two different directions, to remain in the church and in the world.
You're double-minded. it. But, oh, my friend, remember this, that whoever may be influencing you to behave in that way, you can't shed responsibility.
[29:25] If you're rejecting Christ, you must bear the responsibility for doing so. And if you're not receiving him, if you're not believing upon him as your own saviour, then you are in effect rejecting him.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13

He that is not for me, he says, is against me. Why did Pilate do it? He did it because he was a coward.
He was afraid of the Jewish mob, afraid of the Jewish religious leader. He knew that he had done many wrong deeds himself, politically wrong deeds, and he was afraid that they would report him to the emperor himself, and that he would be in trouble as a result.
He's the one who's in authority, and yet he's afraid of the Jewish people there in Jerusalem. Is this why you do not receive Christ as your saviour?
Why you do not do what is right? Is it that you're afraid? Afraid you'll be laughed at, afraid you'll be mocked, afraid of the ridicule, afraid of the sarcasm, afraid of what others will say, that they'll say that you're going to extremes, afraid of what will be said at your place of work, afraid of what they may say perhaps in your own family.
[30:53] Oh, my friends, if they are influencing you against Christ, then they most certainly are not blameless. But you cannot disclaim responsibility.

God has spoken to you. God has shown you the truth. You know what to do. And if you don't do it, you must bear the responsibility.
We've been tonight in the judgment hall in the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem, Pilate's judgment hall. hall. But I see another great aside.
I can see another judgment. And I can see there a great white throne, and the judge is sitting upon his throne. Who is he?
Why? He's none other than the one who is a prisoner there in Pilate's judgment hall, the Lord Jesus Christ. And there I see Pilate, standing there before Christ who sits on his judgment throne.
[32:04] It's Pilate who is being judged at this great assize on the last day. He's having to answer to Jesus for that terrible deed that he did.

He's refusing to release Jesus. He's sentencing him there that day. And I see someone else there. Someone else who has to bear witness against Pilate.
it's his own wife. I can hear her say, I told you, I warned you, I sent you that message that he is, as he was, a just, a righteous person.
She has to bear her witness against him. You will be at that judgment, my friend, as I will be. you will be there.
Will there be a wife there, a husband there, a child, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a father, a mother, a friend, who will have to bear this testimony.
[33:12] testimony. I told you the way of salvation. I pleaded with you to turn from sin and to receive Christ as your own savior.

Will there be one day who has lovingly pleaded with you while here on earth, but who at that judgment will have to give his or her amen to the sentence of condemnation when it is pronounced upon you.
Depart into everlasting fire. Oh, my friend, it need not be so. If tonight you will repent of sin and unbelief, if tonight you will turn to Christ and personally receive him as your own savior, relying solely and only upon him for your salvation, there will be for you no condemnation whatsoever.
I trust that by speaking to you, telling you again tonight the message of the gospel, and by urging you to respond to that gospel, I've been discharging myself of my responsibility, and that one day your blood will not be required at my hand.
If you remain tonight on the broad road that leads to destruction, if you remain tonight out of Christ, if tonight you still reject Christ and will not receive him as your own savior, then the responsibility is yours.
[35:00] let us pray. We pray, O gracious God, that thou solemnize us in thy presence.

We pray that thou show to us just what is our responsibility, and that thou cause us to face up to that responsibility. We pray that our minds might be renewed, that our minds might be enlightened, and that the will will be renewed, that we may personally by an act of will, a will renewed by thy spirit, receive Jesus Christ, and so go forth rejoicing in that great salvation of his, for we know that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
O God, we pray that thou wilt bless to us thy word this evening, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-06 07:03:13