Sermon Series Title: *The Women at the Cross*

Sermon Title: “He Should Have Listened to Her”

Date: March 28, 2021

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-26

**While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” (27:19)**

**Passage Background and Summary**

In this Holy Week passage, Jesus, after having been arrested, stands before Pilate, the governor who is to decide if Jesus will live or die. First, as is the custom during the Passover, Pilate is to release one prisoner. Pilate asks the crowd if he should release Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Messiah? As he sits in judgment, his wife sends him a message telling him not to do anything to Jesus, whom she calls an innocent man. Pilate does not heed his wife’s advice. Instead, the chief priests and elders and the crowd persuade Jesus to free Barabbas and kill Jesus. Finding no fault with him, Pilate washes his hands of the matter, saying if the crowd wants him crucified they can “see to it [them]selves.” After this, Jesus is handed over to be crucified.

**Sermon Summary**

Pastor Warnock continues his series of sermons titled, *The Women at the Cross*, in which we have been journeying through the last days of Jesus’s earthly journey through the eyes of women in the Gospel narrative. In this week’s sermon, the woman focused on is Pilate’s wife. In the midst of Pilate deciding what to do with Jesus, Pilate’s wife messages him to advise him not to do anything with the “innocent man,” Jesus. Pilate does not listen to her but instead heeds the call of the agenda of the crowd, the agenda of the empire, washes his hands of Jesus, and places him in the hands of the crowd which calls for Jesus’s crucifixion.

Just as Pilate was the governor of the Roman Empire, we are the governors of our own souls. Thus, each of us must answer for ourselves: What are we going to do with God of truth, justice and righteousness? How will we respond when Jesus stands before us? Will we be guided by truth, righteousness and justice, or by our own agendas, ambitions and desires? When we are confronted with of what to do with Jesus:

1. **Don’t Dismiss Jesus** – The more you march with Him, the more His truth prevails.
2. **Don’t Distort Jesus** – So often we choose Jesus but we distort Him. Do you know the God who loves everybody?
3. **Don’t Distance Yourself from Jesus** – All of us have a choice to make, individually and collectively. God is knocking at your door!

**Reflection Questions**

1. In what ways do we dismiss Jesus, “push him in the corner of our minds”?
2. In what ways have we distorted Jesus and his Gospel?
3. In what ways do our agendas, ambitions and desires place distance between ourselves and Jesus?
4. From whom do you tend to seek advice?
5. Describe an instance where in hindsight you thought, “Should I have listened to her”?
6. What is the Church’s call to action in light of the passage of voter oppression legislation passed in Georgia and pending in other states?