

### Week 3

Last week we discussed the Fall's impact on sleep, where community with God and neighbor was damaged by sin. But thankfully we serve a risen savior! God has sent Jesus to redeem all creation, and uses sleep to do so. This week we consider two moments in Jesus' story where life is restored: Joseph's first dream from the angel, and Pilate's wife's dream about the innocent King of the Jews.

In Matthew 1, Joseph decided to end his betrothal to Mary when she became pregnant before their union began. But in a dream, God's messenger defends Mary's innocence and then instructs Joseph to save his marriage and receive the Son. Though Joseph could have ignored the dream, he chose to listen instead, ushering in the One who would bring new life to the Holy Family and to all creation. God used sleep to help redeem Joseph and Mary's relationship. This act of redemption reaches back into creation: God used Adam's sleep to create fruitful community, and does even more so through Joseph's.

Our sleep can bear the pain of community ruined. Just like Joseph probably went to sleep with heavy heart before the dream, perhaps you too go to sleep grieved by relationships seemingly lost. I know I have. But Joseph's story shows how our sleep can also be a site of redemption, of seeing relationships anew. May we be open in our sleep to God's redemptive vision for our lives and for the treasured relationships that grieve us.

As Jesus neared crucifixion, sleep reveals God's redemptive work again. In Matthew 26, sleep weakened the bonds of community in Gethsemane. However, in Matthew 27, a dream about Jesus' innocence disturbs Pilate's wife, known as Claudia in church history, and she is impelled to advocate for his release. Her insistence further condemned the corrupt human systems that judged, yet would be judged by, Jesus.

In Claudia's dream and Joseph's, sleep helps the sleeper see innocence where others see condemnation. God can still do the same through us. Perhaps you are disturbed in sleep because of the injustices befalling others. (It is no coincidence to me that King's famous call on the Mall was framed as a dream.) Or perhaps you stand self-condemned. May God give you ears to hear the good news of redemption.

Harriet Tubman was like Claudia and Joseph. As a result of suffering head trauma from her overseer, she would sleep deeply, during which she would hear from God. One day she heard that her people *were* already free. This prophecy spurred her on to become "Moses," seeking the redemption of her enslaved kinfolk.

May we follow Harriet as she follows God. Amen.

***How does God use sleep to heal your grief and restore your connection?  
Is sleep showing you those wrongly condemned?***

Prayer: God, speak to me in my sleep that I may see with compassion those who stand condemned by our systems. Bring your clarity, and connect us again. In Jesus' name, Amen.