

What is Truth?

John 18: 33-38

Christ the King year B

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Redeemer, Southfield

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May the God who creates us, redeems us, and sustains us, be with us this day, and remain with us always. Amen.

Good Morning!

What is truth? What is truth friends? This is the question that Pilate poses to Jesus as he stands in front of him. Just before Pilate goes back out to the clamoring crowd, and says to them, *"I find no crime in this man."* Just before that pivotal moment, Jesus and Pilate stand facing one another.

Pilate is confused and confronted by Jesus' grounded stance. Jesus does not cower, he does not beg, he simply explains to the Governor of Judea, that his kingdom is not of this world. Jesus says to Pilate,

*"If this was my world, then my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over."*

But no fight ensues.

Jesus' followers have seen for the last three years, the world in which Jesus longs for us to inhabit, the world that Jesus longs for us to create. Jesus makes it clear through his actions and his words that the truth of his life, the truth of his teachings are that those who would follow him, are to love one another. We are to lay down our lives for one another. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger.

This is the revolutionary truth of Jesus: Love one another as I have loved you. To show us the extent of that love, to embody that love Jesus lets himself be taken prisoner, without a fight. He shows his confused, frightened followers that his world and his way to holiness, involves dying, in an insanely humiliating, painful way. And it confuses and scares everyone. The path to power for Jesus, is not the path to power in the world. The path to power for Jesus, is not the path to power in the world. This is Christ's truth.

Jesus tells Pilate that he has come to testify to the truth and those who value truth listen to him. To which Pilate replies, "What is truth."

Then Pilate leaves the room, tells the raging crowd that he finds Jesus guilty of no crime. He asks the crowd, shall I release him? They scream back, "We want Barabbas the robber." We know what happens after. Pilate succumbs to the threats of the crowd, ignores his internal moral compass, for political expediency and pronounces a death sentence upon Jesus.

What is truth?

Truth is that sin, quickly follows when we are unable to hold to our moral values and our ethical absolutes. Sin comes soon after we start, living in the shadows of our souls, when our stories excusing our behavior weave circles around our steadfast beliefs. When this happens, when we look to the world around us to validate our actions then the truth is that we have lost a portion of ourselves and we veer to sin.

Is their hope for Pilate? Is there redemption for what he did?

I hope so. Because if there is hope for him then there is hope for every single one of us, for you and for me, all of us who have at one time or another, violated our beliefs and acted in opposition to our souls because of peer pressure, political expediency, greed, ambition or sheer cowardliness.

Pilate sinned. I sin. You probably sin. We all have sinned in the past and are likely to do so again in the future.

And for this, Jesus shows us a different way, a different world.

A world where refugees are welcomed, not hunted.

A world where people are loved and embraced, regardless of the pronouns they claim.

A world where self-determination and the bodily integrity of women is honored.

A world where we look with clear eyes and open hearts at the stories of our past and own where we have fallen short of the greater Glory of God and make changes so that we can do better going forward.

A world where we can be stunning people, doing amazing activities and none of them involve tearing down or belittling people who look different, or think different from us.

A world where we do not think everything is a pie, and if you get a big piece, I must wind up with a small one. A world instead where we understand that God's grace and love is a class five raging river from which we can all drink freely to our heart's content.

A world where we are willing to forgive one another. And share with each other.

What is truth?

Truth is living and loving as God loves us, though we be sinners and lost souls. Still God has called us, chosen us, to live into a different way, a different world.

The truth is, that there is hope for all of us.

Amen.