

John 18:33-38a

The King of Truth Speaks

Introduction: It is a common thing for someone to echo Pilate's question at the end of our reading: "What is truth?" One current idea is that truth is individual – that what is true for you is not necessarily true for me. Then there's the idea that "truth is out there" but we can't get our hands on it. And then there's the idea that there is no truth, nothing that gives reason to everything.

Today, as we celebrate Christ the King Sunday, the King of Truth speaks. He testifies to the truth, and he testifies for you. Listen to his testimony.

I. He testifies to the Truth

It is early in the morning on Friday, and many things have happened since dusk the night before. Jesus is being taken to the palace of Pontius Pilate for his third trial since being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's been a busy night. First there was the arrest, where Judas betrayed Jesus, who went willingly with a crowd that had prepared for a fight. Then there was the illegal midnight trial that found Jesus guilty of blasphemy. During this trial is when Peter denied knowing Jesus. Then, there was an early morning trial to give the appearance of a legal proceeding, and now, still early in the day, Jesus is being taken to the governor's house.

The Jews are bringing Jesus to Pilate so that they could shift any future blame from the startled crowds onto the Romans. This way, they wouldn't get caught. The only evidence they present to Pilate is that if Jesus weren't guilty, they wouldn't have brought him. So Pilate starts trying to sort the whole thing out.

Verse 33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate seems to waste no time in searching for the truth. He asks a direct question concerning the accusations brought against Jesus. He assumes that each side will work to give themselves an advantage, so he starts looking for the bottom line.

Pilate is searching for truth. Truth is a spotlight that puts sin on center stage. Truth exposes the reality of things. Aren't lies really a way of trying to hide in the shadows, concealing the wrong that has been done? Lies are a tool that Satan uses to confuse and lead astray. Jesus tells us in John 8:44 that **Satan is "a liar and the father of lies."** He uses half-truths to confuse even those who are trying to follow the truth.

So, we need to be clear: What is truth? Shine the spotlight of God's Word, and expose the lies. The truth is not tolerant of lies or half-truths.

The Truth is we treat Jesus just as badly as those Jews. We weren't there two thousand years ago, but we are just as guilty. We betray our King when we fail as subjects. Everything we do SHOULD bring glory to our King. The truth is, we fall far short of that.

By ourselves, everything we do dishonors the King, handing him over to scorn and disrespect. At work or school, does your production change when you have someone standing over your shoulder? How often does your selfishness cause frustration in your spouse? Do you come to church to fill an obligation, and go through the motions without thinking about what's being said and done? What about your faith? Deep down in your heart, doesn't the idea creep around that things aren't really as bad as people make out? 'After all, I'm not that bad. My sins

are puny; they don't do any real harm. It's not like I was one of those Jews that hated Jesus and worked to get him killed.'

The truth is that we are just as guilty as if we were in that crowd, and shouted "Crucify him!" Do not be fooled – on our own, every single one of us deserves only Hell.

The Truth is that Christ did not have to come. The King could have sat on his throne, and watched his traitorous subjects pay for their treason. That would have been the fair thing to do. To satisfy God's justice, sin had to be paid for. The penalty is death and separation from God. By nature, that penalty rests on the sinner. The wage belongs to you and me. God hates the sin and the sinner. That is true justice. This is Truth.

Transition: Our King is not only Just, he is also Love. His justice demanded that a payment be made, but his love would not allow that payment to fall on us. So the King of Truth testified that we were on our way to Hell. This is the loving thing to do. It would be unloving to allow us to go on unaware, like letting a blind person walk into traffic. But our King testified to the Truth. He testifies for You.

II. He Testifies for You

Our King did not treat us as we deserved. Christ, the King, set down his Crown of Glory to take up the crown of thorns. The King came down to serve his servants, do the duties that he had assigned. He lived our life, but never failed to give perfect glory to His Father in Heaven. He did his work faithfully. He showed love and attention to the crowds, even when they interrupted his time of rest. He offered perfect praise, and honored God in all things. Where we failed, he succeeded. Where we lied to hide in the shadows, he shone the light of the Truth, and removed our sin.

Vs. 37 For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Christ, our King, came to die for his subjects. He lived the life of a servant, died the death of the guilty, and paid the penalty for all sin. Then that King rose to prove that the transaction was finished. By Christ's life, death and resurrection, you have been made pure and innocent of all sin. Your King has made you perfect, so that you can reign with him forever in Heaven. You have been made royalty, for you are now sons and daughters of the King through faith in Christ Jesus.

Transition: Now that you have been made perfect, how will you treat your King? You have been given everything as a free gift. How will you respond to that gift? You will want to show your love and gratitude to the one who has given you everything. The King of Truth speaks: listen to his testimony.

III. Listen to His Testimony (vs. 37c)

Jesus concludes his testimony before Pilate as recorded by the Apostle John by saying, **"Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."** Our king gives us direction to live our lives to His Glory. Listen to Him.

Keep His Word on your heart. Devotion and Bible study at home, Bible Class at church, and time alone with your Savior. The more you know, the more you'll appreciate. Only by focusing

on the Truth can we recognize the lie. By keeping your relationship with your King as the primary goal in your life, you set your sights on the Truth.

Keep His Word on your lips. Give honor to God's name in every circumstance, so that others may hear your confession and be benefited by it. By your words and actions, show that you are thankful for the blessings you have received. Worship your King always remembering that you went from a slave of sin, to being royalty. He has given you everything.

Keep His Word in your ears. Singing and praying in worship benefits those around you, building them up in their faith. It's been said that the off-season is when a player improves individually, and practice is for improving as a team. Private devotion builds up your faith, and worship benefits the family of the church.

In all of these things, God tells us how he blesses us with grace for eternity. God does not benefit from our service and devotion to him. We do. The church at large does. God blesses us through other Christians when we come together to worship him. We receive God's blessings through others, and we are a blessing to them.

Conclusion: The King of Truth Speaks in His Word. When Jesus testifies, he reviews for us the great things he has done for us. We respond to His Grace and Truth with joy, thanksgiving, and other fruits worked by the Holy Spirit. Appreciate what the King of Truth has done for you. He Testifies to the Truth, he testifies for you. Listen to his testimony. Amen.