

**What is truth?**

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Today is known as Christ the King, or Reign of Christ Sunday. It is the last Sunday in our church year and an opportunity for us to reflect and celebrate the authority and reign of Jesus. Next week we start the new Church year. Next week we begin our advent celebrations. Today, though, today we reflect on the journey of Christ our King—the journey Jesus took from birth to death. Though, the journey never really ends. We know this in Christ, whose life did not end with death on a cross, but with new life in resurrection.

Jesus had opponents—people who worked against him—and in the days coming up to his death, those opponents did not understand that a journey could be unending. They gave Jesus over to the state authorities. They had an opportunity to deal with Jesus themselves, in whatever way they wished; in fact, Pilate, who was the ruler in area, had tried to persuade the Jewish people who were against Jesus to use their own judgement in dealing with him—but they refused. For Jesus' opponents, Pilate had become the ultimate authority, or the ultimate ruler, and they believed that if they asked the ultimate authority to deal with Jesus, it would get done. Of course, what the religious authorities forgot is that while Caesar may have been the King of Rome, Jesus was the King of Kings—Jesus was the actual ultimate authority.

Pilate recognized that there was something odd about the whole situation. Jesus wasn't claiming to be the King of the Roman world, he was claiming kingship of the Jewish people—many called him the Messiah. As someone who was not Jewish, Pilate had no interest in Jewish kings or Messiahs. His loyalty was with Caesar and as long as Jesus wasn't trying to take him or Caesar down, then he was of no consequence to Pilate. But Pilate does ask Jesus, "What have you done?" Pilate wasn't a follower of Jesus, so he really had no idea that Jesus had been healing people and eating meals with people and preaching about God's kingdom. So, Pilate wants to hear what Jesus says he's done so he can see if it was really all that bad. But Jesus gives kind of a funny answer; he says, "My kingdom is not from this world."

What Jesus is trying to point out is that there is a kingdom and that he is the king, but also that it is not a part of the Roman world. But Pilate still doesn't get it, "So you are a king?" he asks. And the answer is yes! Yes, Jesus is a king! And yes, there is a kingdom! Yes, there is a God that rules that kingdom and Jesus is that God. And yes, that kingdom is the very kingdom

that Jesus had been preaching about and revealing all along his earthly journey, right since birth. Jesus says, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Jesus is explaining that his reign and rule is present wherever anyone accepts the truth that he is the Son of God and that God loves everyone. And Pilate’s response? “What is truth?” Pilate is not interested in truth. He does not see the eternal and revealing truth in front of him—Jesus.

We live in an age where distrust for authority is prevalent in many ways. We question people’s leadership, authority, and motives. We have become suspicious of others in power, and so we live in an age where, for many people, the greatest authority on anything is the self—we focus on the individual and our own authority over what we say and do, support or reject, praise or put down. Over the past number of years we have seen this on the world stage, as we watch powerful leaders and extremists take that self-authority to a horrible, painful and saddening level. Somehow some people feel they have the authority to label others as terrorists or “a stain on society” or as unworthy of human rights. There are some who choose to exercise their self-righteous authority in ways that do not fit in the kingdom of God. Who take measures into their own hands and use guns to solve problems. Who try to force tribes off of their land. Who try to erase identities. The list isn’t exhaustive—every day there is more.

Isn’t it good to know, then, that Christ’s authority, Christ’s kingship, is one of humility and service? A King who, through his good authority, gives freedom? A king who obtained his kingship, not through violence, but by simply being born; being baptised; being willing to sacrifice himself? This is the truth of Christ.

The Gospel of John places a great deal of emphasis on God’s truth. As Jesus journeys he spreads that truth. And now, at what looks like the close of Christ’s journey, the truth surfaces once more. Jesus’ opponents have rejected the “truth” and sided with the “world.” For them, the problem of placing one’s own authority above God’s isn’t actually seen as a problem at all—it’s what they want; the power and authority to make their own choices, even if—or perhaps in spite of—the fact that it involves killing a man. But what has Jesus done? Through God’s grace, he has enabled people to face the truth about themselves, their relationships, their faith, and the world in which they live. Pilate has the possibility to recognize that truth—he is looking it right in the face—but he, like so many others, is not interested in the truth.

We run up against people like Pilate in our lives. We see them in the media. We hear them during our daily commutes. We experience them in our workplaces and in stories from friends and neighbours. People like Pilate who, even when the truth is staring them in the face, ask “What is truth?” For them, if it doesn’t affect them, or if it pleases the masses, or if it fits their ideologies, then let it be so. But despite this, God’s truth is out there, God’s truth is in here—and we have the capability to see it. When we find ourselves bogged down with the truth of the world, let us remember to turn our thoughts and our prayers to God.

Our Old Testament reading talked about King David. King David was by no means a perfect king—he did lots to get himself in trouble; his list of sins was not short. But what David reminds us is that what we do or say is one thing, but what brings us closer to the truth is when we remember to always, always turn to God. David knows that when his kingship, his reign over his people, was at its best it was because he remembered God. David is able to point beyond himself to the real source of power. God is the authority we need in our lives. In God’s kingdom might does not equal right; might equals love, justice and mercy. In your struggles with what goes on in this world, remember that there is a truth; there is an answer. It is Christ. Our King.

Our journey in the year of the church is ending. We have done so much in a year. The world has changed so much in a year. Although we will turn our hearts and minds to the advent of Jesus next week, and begin the church year anew, the journey is never really about when; the journey is about who. Journey’s end is Christ, whose truth proves to us that there is no end. He is the king that keeps watch over us for all time.