**Truth and Kingship** John 18:33-38 Nov 24, 2024

***You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.*** (37)

* Interesting and worth noting that Jesus makes this parallel between being king and truth.
* He said that the reason He came into the world was to both be king, and to testify to truth – *the two are inseparable.*
* Today it seems that truth is often whatever we want it to be. What is truth?
* Unfortunately today, to speak truth in a Christian context can be a very unpopular thing.
* When truth is spoken all too often the messenger comes under attack and is accused of being judgmental, intolerant, or phobic.
* Consequently, we have many supposed messengers of God’s Word today who have watered the message down in order to not offend people and the result is, in many instances, the truth is no longer spoken.

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* And if it is not truth that is spoken, then it is not God’s word – it is man’s word.
* Even worse, it is often man attempting to take God’s word and twisting and manipulating it to suit his own circumstances or whatever is the most popular teaching of the culture around them.
* If we are familiar with Scripture at all, we shouldn’t be too surprised as Scripture is very clear in telling us that this will be happening.
* ***For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and*** ***turn aside to myths***. 1 Titus 4:3-4)
* If people get upset because truth is spoken or if the preacher chooses to either not speak truth or to twist it around to suit some circumstances, it doesn’t change the reality one iota.

**Truth is still truth.**

* Today on the Christian calendar, we

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celebrate “***The Reign of Christ***”.

* It marks the transition from the season of Pentecost to that of Advent.
* It is a significant festival because it is supposed to be a symbol of unity within

the Christian denominations.

* But what exactly is the unity that is celebrated when different denominations or even different churches within a denomination differ on what is truth?
* There should be only one reason that we celebrate the Reign of Christ and that should be that Christ is indeed king and that He reigns in our lives and His truth guides our lives.
* We cannot call Christ our king unless we are willing to live in His truth.
* That is the only unity that matters.
* What is truth?
* In today’s gospel reading, Jesus said that he “***came into the world to testify to the truth”***.
* In response Pilot asked Jesus, “***What is truth***?”
* Truth is a powerful thing.
* As much as the word may be disliked by some, it has the potential of determining

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our entire lives - what we do with our lives, what we stand for, and how we live our lives each and every day.

* Pilate asked a very good and valid question when he asked Jesus, “***What is truth***?”
* The problem is that he walked away and didn’t pursue a response from Jesus, nor did he really hear the answer that Jesus had given him earlier – that indeed He was a king.
* Do we always live in truth?
* Although Pilate and the Jewish religious leaders represent extreme examples of untruth, I believe that we may be able to see bits of ourselves in their situations.
* Context of today’s gospel - Jesus is on trial. He is brought before the high priest and then He is brought before Pilate.
* Assuming this trial represents truth and justice, and is judged on that basis, I think a valid question in this whole interrogation might be, “***Who is really the one in control?***”
* On the basis of truth, Jesus is the one very much in control.
* Both Pilate and the Jews represent

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anything but truth.

* In this trial, we can see where they compromised everything they and their positions stood for, and which in turn makes them the ones on trial.
* Pilate was the governor and procurator of Judea; and as procurator, Caesar had given him the power of life and death. Only Pilate could inflict the death sentence on anyone.
* Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent of anything that warranted the death penalty, but, and not unlike the Church today, Pilate was entangled in a political situation that meant more to him than the truth.
* At this time Palestine was a very important location because it was the bridge between Syria in the North and Egypt in the South.
* The Romans were the occupying and ruling force in Palestine, yet there were some limitations. It was important to have the Jewish people under their control, but at the same time it was important not to have riots and insurrections that could interfere with

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this important bridge and trade route.

* Pilate had already been reported to the emperor for having been the cause of previous insurrections, and the last thing he wanted to do was offend the religious leaders and cause more trouble for himself.
* So knowing Jesus did not deserve death, he attempted to appease the Jews so that he could release Jesus.
* He began by presented both Jesus and Barabbas and offered to release one of them – but the Jews chose the release of Barabbas.
* When that didn’t work, he had Jesus scourged and flogged in an attempt to appeal to the emotions and the pity of the Jews, but they still demanded that Jesus be crucified.
* Pilate compromised the truth that he knew and gave in to the blackmail of the

Jews, and we know the rest of the story.

* He didn’t have the courage to stand for truth and therefore didn’t want to make a decision.
* So in this sense, Pontius Pilate himself is on trial. And ultimately he is found

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guilty.

* But Pilate is not the only one. The Jews are on trial as well. And the text clearly finds them guilty of duplicity, because they end up committing the very crime they accuse Jesus of committing.
* They pressure Pilate to execute Jesus for the blasphemy of claiming to be the Son of God. But in spite of their supposed meticulous obedience to the Jewish law, when Pilate asks them whether they want him to crucify Jesus who is alleged to be the king of the Jews, these Jews cry out, “***We have no king but Caesar!***”
* And when they say that, they are themselves guilty of blasphemy, because

Caesar had made himself out to be God.

* For Jews there is no other God but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There is no king but Yahweh. They compromised everything that represented truth to them, even God.
* When it comes to truth, the church in today’s world is no different.
* The head of the Anglican communion is supposed to be the Archbishop of Canterbury – Justin Welby.

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* He’s not anymore because he too lost sight of truth and a couple of weeks ago he was forced to resign as Archbishop of Canterbury.
* He protected and covered up a man who was responsible for sexually and physically abusing over 130 young boys.
* There is more fallout to come as other leaders in the Anglican Church are also implicated.
* What was his truth?
* It certainly wasn’t from the gospel as just a few weeks before this scandal broke he had come out and endorsed sexual activity between anyone, gay or straight as long as they were in a committed relationship.
* The Church needs to rediscover truth.
* *What is truth?*

***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth***. (Jn 1:14)

* *What is truth?*

***For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus.***

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***Christ***. (Jn 1:17)

* *What is truth?*

***Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.*** (Jn 14:6)

“**Truth is the divinely revealed reality of God manifested in the words and in the person of Jesus Christ*”***.

* Truth liberates from sin. And wasn’t that the whole purpose of Jesus – to liberate you and me from our sins?
* When Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit, He described Him as the Spirit of Truth.

***“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you***

***forever--the Spirit of truth.****.****”*** (Jn 14:16-17)

***“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.”*** (Jn 16:13)

* Jesus came to tell people the truth – to witness to the truth.

***The truth about God – the truth about themselves – the truth about life.***

* It is only in that truth that we can stand in the kingdom of God.
* But it is a truth that is overshadowed in every way by love – a love so great that

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we can’t even begin to comprehend it.

* It wasn’t a truth that was shoved at the world by commandments, but rather it was introduced by a love so great that He was willing to die for us.
* Each one of us comes face to face with

situations every day where we have to choose either to stand for truth or to compromise it.

* Sometimes we compromise truth simply by our silence.
* But when we choose to stand, it certainly isn’t going to be the easiest way –because it may mean being unpopular or being labeled.
* There is tremendous pressure on Christians today who stand for the gospel.
* What we choose however depends on whether we are living our lives for the very limited particle of time that we will be on this earth, or whether we are living them for eternity.
* To live under the reign of Christ is to be assured of and focused on eternity.
* Under His reign we live and stand for

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the same truth and love that He is.

* Christ is king and He reigns over all. But unlike any kingdom of this world, He doesn’t reign by force. Rather, he reigns by choice – our choice.
* Do we choose Christ to reign over our

lives?

* Do we choose truth and receive the love that He has already demonstrated for us?

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