

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “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.”

³⁸**“What is truth?” Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. (NIV84)**

Theme: Jesus: the truth.

1. The true way to salvation
2. His word is true.

What is truth? Pilate was not the only one to ask that question. People have been trying to figure out what truth is for thousands of years. From religions to philosophies, many claim to have the truth. For some, truth is found in the use of science and reason. For others it’s all about how you feel.

So who is right? And how do you know? Can one even tell if someone is right or wrong about truth? That is the question many ask but only one can answer. This evening we see that Jesus is the truth. He is the true way to salvation and his word is true.

It was early Friday morning by the time Jesus was brought to Pontius Pilate. The Jews wanted him executed, but they didn’t have the authority to do so. So they twisted some words of Jesus, saying he claimed to be king over Caesar. **We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Cesar and claims to be Christ, a king.** This was a serious accusation. They claimed that Jesus was a threat to the king and was trying to gain supporters against Caesar. So Pilate had to investigate. He turned to Jesus in hopes of finding out the truth.

During our last midweek service this year Pastor Seafert will be taking a look at this conversation Jesus had with Pilate under the name of Jesus: King. For us today it is simply enough to say that Jesus indicated that he was a king because he talked about his kingdom.

You are a king, then! Pilate said. Jesus replied, **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. Jesus testified to the truth—he was a king. But through Jesus’ other words it was clear he was no ordinary king. For he came down to this earth to testify concerning the truth. Jesus claimed to know, to have, to possess the truth.

What is truth? Pilate scoffed. His answer is how we expect an unbeliever to answer. It was full of skepticism and doubt. This was brought on by the numerous religions and philosophies at the time. The Romans, like the Greeks had a polytheistic religion. Their false gods were more fickle than humans. Many saw them for what they really were—myths and fables. The philosophies of the time varied greatly. Some followed the motto: “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Others deemphasized feelings and emotions for the sake or reason and virtue. All the philosophies and religions tried to answer what truth is. But they all disagreed with each other. So Pilate figured that no one knew truth.

The world today is no different. They ask the same question. What is truth? Their answer is “No one knows for sure what truth is. What makes you so sure? What makes your version of truth better than another’s? You can’t insist that you know better than they do—so don’t shove your religion down my throat.” To many truth is subjective. They say, “What is true for you may not be true for me.” Truth for them is what you make it. There is no absolute truth.

But Jesus told Pilate he came **to testify to the truth.** Not only was Jesus a king, he was also a prophet. And as a prophet he spread God’s Word. That was the focus of his ministry. He confessed that he was the promised Messiah. The one chosen from before the beginning of the world to save the world from their sins. But Jesus not only spread the truth, but he also attacked the lie. Following man-made laws didn’t earn one eternal life neither did performing outward rituals; rather it is through faith in him through which we receive salvation. Just a few hours before he was betrayed Jesus told his disciples, **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** Jesus truly is the Savior of the world. For he truly lived, suffered, and died for us. He is the true and only way to eternal life. There is no truth found outside of him. There is no eternal life outside of Christ. There are many ways that lead to death,

but only one way that leads to eternal life. All other religions and philosophies are the same, they do not all have the truth. They don't tell us about the work of Christ, who alone has saved us. And they don't tell us the truth—that we are saved by grace through faith.

Not only is Jesus the truth, but his Word is also the truth.

At the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed for his disciples, **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** The Bible is God's Word. And as God's Word it contains no lies. There are no errors or mistakes or contradictions. It is true. And it contains the message of the truth. So we don't have to be skeptical about what is found on it's pages. We don't have to doubt that his Word is true and that it works.

For it tells us that we are not saved by what we do, but by God's grace alone. That is through the work of Christ, which we receive through faith, that our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. The truth is that everyone who believes this word of truth will live eternally with Christ forever. That message is found only in the Word of the truth—the gospel. No other religion has it. To them, what one does is the focus. It is all about pleasing God. No philosophy has it. They search for happiness, the meaning of life, and so on through reason, logic and science—or for others, feelings and emotions. But they find nothing that satisfies their longing. For in the end it all leads to death. That is why Paul warns against them in Colossians 2. **See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.**

That is something that Pilate did not do. When he responded to Jesus he wasn't asking a serious question. He wasn't seriously wondering what the truth is. It was an answer dripping and skepticism and doubt. It was a statement, not a question. He didn't even give Jesus an opportunity to respond. Before Jesus could tell him the truth, he walked away. He didn't know the truth. And he didn't care to know. He is like the people of the world. Many search and search for the truth. They know they don't really have the truth. But when they hear the truth of the gospel, they reject it. They turn away. It doesn't agree with their reason. It contradicts science. They reject it because it

doesn't correspond to their lifestyle. So they walk away from the truth. And they reject their Savior.

But as Christians we know that God's Word is truth. That is why we listen to the Word. That is what Jesus told Pilate. **Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.** To listen to Christ is to hear and pay attention to his Word. To read it, study it, to meditate on it daily. It is what we do as Christians. We are completely involved in the Word. Because it alone contains the truth. And the truth is found in no place else.

The truth is that Jesus did no wrong. Even Pilate, who didn't want to know the truth, knew that much. He went out to the Jews and told them, **I find no basis for a charge against him.** Jesus was perfect. Yet eventually Pilate caved. A few hours later he would sentence Jesus to die. But not after he was crowned with thrones, mocked, spit upon, and flogged. The truth is that as God, Jesus didn't have to suffer and die. He had the power to walk away from the whole deal. But he didn't. He willingly suffered and died for us. He did that so that he could take all our sins upon himself. And so he could suffer through the pain and agony of hell in our place. As a result, in the eyes of God we are pure and innocent. Through the work of Christ alone we are perfect and holy—just like he is.

What is truth? People search for the truth through many different means. But whether it's a philosophy or religion, no real truth can be found. They contain nothing but lies and deception. There is only one truth—Jesus. He is the true and only way to eternal life. And this truth can be found only in the Word of truth—the gospel. So we gladly listen to the gospel of Christ, the Truth. And he will truly bring all believers home forever.