

"Jesus' Kingdom"

John 18:33-37

26 November 2006, Christ the King

The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

[Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church](#)

John 18:33-37

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' ³⁴ Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' ³⁵ Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' ³⁶ Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' ³⁷ Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, '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.'

Prayer.

"What is Truth?"

is the question edited out of today's gospel lesson.

The loyal drone of Caesar thought he knew a few things about the truth as he saw it. Truth was Pilate had all the power over life, death, and everything in-between. Truth and power, influence and affluence, all were his to hold or wield as he saw fit. The strong rule the weak. The powerful judge the weak. Rome demanded peace and obedience.

Pilate thought he knew a few things about truth: It had proved to be useful

to befriend the religious authorities to enlist their help to keep the peace to become the conveyor of money delivering tax income to Rome. Some considered it collaboration with the enemy. The religious authorities saw it as a means to an end. Whatever the justification; When Rome was happy Pilate was happy.

Pilate held all the cards, Jesus had none. Or, so Pilate thought.

Truth was the spineless Temple priests charged Jesus with blasphemy but didn't have the courage to face him themselves without the power of Pilate to back them up.

"Jesus' Kingdom"

John 18:33-37

26 November 2006, Christ the King

© The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

[Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church](#)

Pity Pilate and his lackey Temple priests.

Their assumptions about truth had all been wrong.

The question

“What is truth?”

simply points to

the depth of their ignorance,

the absence of their faith.

Truth does not change with time.

What was true yesterday

is true today

and will be true tomorrow.

Truth can be replicated by others.

making it universal in its application.

It crosses all divisions

of gender, race, culture, and

economics.

Truth is valid

in every time and every circumstance.

Therefore,

Contradiction undermines truth.

It creates an imperfection,

distressing incongruities,

and leads to failure.

The truth about God

is that there is more than what is seen.

Had Pilate been able to see

what we see through the lens of history

he would have seen the fall of the

Roman Empire

the Ottoman Empire

Nazi Germany and Axis Japan.

Pilate would have been faced

with God’s larger truth that

the strong do not rule the weak,

rather,

in God’s kingdom,

domination leads to failure

power leads to corruption

and money leads to not being able to

enter the kingdom

because of being prevented from passing through the eye of the needle.

If Pilate had been able to see

the larger picture,

absent of contradiction, imperfection,

and incongruity,

he would have seen that

that God favors the poor,

the weak,

the least, the lost, the disadvantaged,

all those who get left behind.

The truth about God

is rooted deeply in faith;

that what is beyond what can be seen

at any one time

is a reality in which

God is in control.

While we may be preoccupied

with the minutia of everyday

living and dying,

God is doing far greater things:

shaping and molding

from the vast to the particular

into His ultimate, final will.

Faith that God is in control

frees the self

from equating cure with healing,

from connecting affluence with

blessing,

and insisting that punishment

is the only solution for sin.

Faith in God

frees the self

from the necessity to always take

charge,

and allows us

to give away

and let go.

Faith that God is in control

allows one to recognize

the fact that we do not need to know all

things,

“Jesus’ Kingdom”

John 18:33-37

26 November 2006, Christ the King

© The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

[Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church](#)

to be a part of every decision,
to trust,
ultimately,
to allow God to be.

The truth about God
is also rooted on a foundation of love;
the source of every
divine motive
from the beginning of time
through every eon of eternity.
Love overcame the flaw of sin;
the garden's imperfection.
Love gave Moses a voice
Abraham a covenant
and the prophets a connection.
Love brought Jesus to earth
forgives all flaws
and brings victory over the grave.
Love brings light and salvation
to a world hiding in darkness and sin.
We are a forgiven people because of
God's love.
We are a resurrection people because
of God's love.
We are a claimed people because of
God's love.
Where ever love can be found
it is possible
to trace its origins
back to the source
back to from whence it came
back to the Lord God, Almighty himself.

"Everyone who belongs to the truth
listens to my voice,"
Jesus informs
the imperfect personification
of stubborn, selfish, human will.
We know in our heart
that he is right.
But to listen
and to obey
implies
surrender

of the will
to the Divine will.
Yes,
this is the price
of Truth;
the only price that we are asked to pay.
"Are ye able,
said the Master,
to be crucified with me?"
to surrender the self
wholly to Christ,
to go
only where he leads?
to follow
only his voice?

"Are you the King of the Jews?"
asked a ruler
who thought he knew.
"My kingdom is not from here,"
Jesus answers.
Thank God.
Thank God
Christ's kingdom never was built on
political power, military might, or state
wealth.

Thank God
we can handle the truth;
The truth that God is in control
The truth that faith is able to free us
The truth that love is God's only motive
pure and unblemished
now and forevermore.
Amen.

"Jesus' Kingdom"
John 18:33-37

26 November 2006, Christ the King

© The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

[Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church](#)