

**JOHN 18:36-40**  
**WHAT IS TRUTH?**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 18 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we have seen over the last several weeks in our study of John, Jesus has been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas lead some 600 Roman soldiers, plus the Temple police or the Jewish religious police and I am sure crowds of people were following them up the Mount of Olives to find Jesus. Maybe over 1,000 people!

And Judas, with a kiss upon the face of Jesus, identifies who Jesus is and He is arrested.

With that we saw the first of three religious trials begin. The first was before Annas, who was the High Priest before Rome removed him, but he was still the power behind that position.

Then Jesus stood before Caiaphas who was the son-in-law to Annas, and Rome had placed him as the High Priest.

And finally, Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin or the Jewish religious Supreme Court you might say, with Caiaphas overseeing all of this.

In these trials they tried to come up with charges against Jesus, but they just couldn't agree. And then one that stuck out is that Jesus claimed to destroy the Temple and in three days raise it up again.

They thought He was speaking of the literal Temple, but He was speaking of His body and that in three days after His death He will rise from the dead!

And listen to what we are told in Matthew 26:64-68, **“Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?’”**

Now they had Jesus, that He being a man made Himself equal with God and thus, they were going to put Him to death. But they lost the right to capital punishment, Rome took it away.

So, early in the morning they bring Jesus before Pilate, maybe 6 in the morning when this took place.

But Pilate and Rome could care less about their religious beliefs, as long as it didn't cause them any trouble.

So they had to come up with another reason why Pilate should put Jesus to death. And in Luke 23:2 we are told what they told Pilate, and, as you will see, it has nothing to do with their religious beliefs, but they are accusing Jesus of coming against Rome!

This is what we are told in Luke, **“And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’”** And we dealt with this last time. What I want you to see is the hatred that these Jewish religious leaders had for Jesus. They were willing to lie before Pilate to have Jesus put to death!

In our study this morning we are going to focus on something that Pilate said to Jesus,

**“What is truth?”**

That is a very interesting question in the world we are living in today. First of all, let me start out by sharing with you what Noah Webster said in His dictionary from 1828 about this word – *TRUTH!*

He wrote, *“Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been or shall be. . . . True state of facts or things.”*

But things have changed in our day. We have entered a period of time that has been known as moral relativism. Let me share with you the change that has taken place from when our Founding Fathers established this great nation.

We are told,

The founders had the unique ability to articulate exactly what these values were in simple and unambiguous language in documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and later the Bill of Rights.

When we go back and look at what they were able to accomplish, we learn that the politics of their day were very much like the dysfunctional politics of today, and that the systems they created were the result of much angst [anguish] and compromise. We find that these were human beings with family dramas and personal flaws just like the rest of us. What is remarkable is what they were able to accomplish, in spite of this.

So, what was it exactly that enabled all these very talented yet very flawed human characters to come together to create something great? I believe that they had something that we, in 2022, have in short supply. *They had moral absolutes.*

What is a moral absolute?

A moral absolute is a statement from a higher power where there can be no equivocation.

The system that they designed was taken directly from the Judeo-Christian Bible. The Ten Commandments, the central tenet in law then and now states, “Thou shall not commit murder”. Murder is wrong, period! That is a moral absolute.

In a recent survey of today’s college students more than 70 percent believe that there are no moral absolutes. They instead believe that there are degrees of right and wrong, and that morality is a matter of perspective.

The danger here is that when moral relativism becomes the norm, what is right and wrong gets blurred, and people lose a sense of a moral society. They feel that it is okay to cheat a little here and there, as long as you can get away with it and no one is looking.

- <http://bit.ly/3WpXVxy>

Look at our nation today and I think you can easily come to the conclusion that we no longer have moral absolutes, but like the Bible says, “**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” Judges 17:6.

Yes, this occurred during the time of Judges in Israel, but keep in mind, we have removed God from this nation and thus, there truly is no King who rules our lives. And because of that we do what we feel is right because there is truly no right or wrong!

And this is not good for a nation or individuals.

For example, in a 2011 interview for the conservative nonprofit American Enterprise Institute, then representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin said, *“Moral relativism has done so much damage to the bottom end of this country, the bottom fifth has been damaged by the culture of moral relativism more than by anything else, I would argue. If you ask me what the biggest problem in America is, I’m not going to tell you debt, deficits, statistics, economics - I’ll tell you it’s moral relativism.”*

- <http://bit.ly/3J8idZh>

I totally agree!

Think about this for a minute because this is what we are seeing today.

[This] notion that there are many truths might seem well suited to a diverse society. But when everyone is free to define truth as he or she prefers, as at present, the result is an intellectual and moral shouting match in which the people with the loudest voices are most likely to be heard.

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How true that is. How has all this immorality grown so quickly?

Because the unsaved of this world have shouted and pouted and screamed and demanded these things and they have won the battle!

Praise the Lord we are starting to see Christians rise up and take back what Satan has put forth and to bring back righteousness in our homes, our schools, our cities, and so on. But it is truly a battle and the voices of the unsaved are fighting back. We must stand strong against these things!

Now, when it comes to truth, that is all relative and based on me getting what I want out of it. Thus, I can lie, as long as it benefits me and that is okay.

And thus, our study – ***WHAT IS TRUTH?***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***THE KING OF KINGS – JOHN 18:36-37***

***WHAT IS TRUTH – JOHN 18:38***

***A WAY OUT – JOHN 18:39-40***

As we get to our first point here, understand that Jesus is answering a question that Pilate had for Him.

This is what Pilate said to Jesus during this first civil trial, **“Pilate answered, am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”** John 18:35.

Pilate wants to know what has caused these Jewish leaders to bring Jesus to him. And that is the question that Jesus is going to answer – **“What have You done?”**

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 18, beginning in verse 36 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study His Word and we look at this topic – ***WHAT IS TRUTH?***

**JOHN 18****VERSES 36-37**

Keep in mind that Pilate could care less about the religious practices of the Jews unless it interfered with his authority and Rome.

And if you remember when Jesus faced the last of the three religious trials, this one before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, they accused Jesus of blasphemy.

Why?

Because Jesus, being a man, claimed to be God!

But they could not bring that claim before Pilate, so instead, this is what they did, **“Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’”** Luke 23:1-2.

Obviously Rome would not stand for any of these things and neither would Pilate. You could not speak against Rome. You had to pay your taxes to Caesar. And you were not the King, Pilate saw himself in that position there in Israel and obviously the Caesars were King, and they saw themselves as even more than just a King, they saw themselves as gods!

And what we see here is that Jesus is answering this question, **“What have you done”** or are you rightly accused of putting down Rome, of not paying your taxes and claiming you are a King? And it is that last one that Pilate will focus on, their claim about Jesus saying He was King!

Now the answer that Jesus gave probably surprised Pilate. He said that He was not some zealot, some political insurrectionist who was looking to overthrow Rome and establish His own Kingdom.

But make no mistake about it, Jesus is a King, but not a King whose power comes or originates from this world, but from heaven, from God the Father.

Earthly kingdoms are based upon power, pride, money, praise, self-interests, and they try to restrain wickedness to maintain order.

But Jesus tells us His Kingdom is far different, it is based upon love, sacrificial love.

Yes, one-day Jesus will rule and reign on this earth for 1,000 years but until that day He can rule and reign in our hearts if we let Him in.

You see, to be part of His Kingdom you are not forced to come in, but you are invited to come in. It is the new birth that takes you out of the kingdom of darkness and places you into God's Kingdom!

Paul put it like this in Colossians 1:13-14, "**He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**"

Also, Jesus tells us in John 3:3, "**. . . 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'**"

You see, unless you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, you are dead in your trespasses and sins. It is only as you come to Christ that your sins are cast away and you enter into the Kingdom of God!

One writer summed it up like this,

***This is the crucial point. While human politics is based on the premise that society must be changed in order to change people, in the politics of the Kingdom it is people who must be changed in order to change.***

- Charles Colson – Kingdoms in Conflict

How that is true today as many Christians look for the salvation of this nation in a particular political party when our salvation comes from Jesus.

And the reality is, you can make all the laws you want, but if hearts are unchanged, it won't matter.

We have laws against murder, drugs, speeding, stealing, and people still do it.

Why?

Because of their hearts, laws don't stop people from doing things, for the most part.

You see, society is changed one heart at a time not by rules and regulations, but by Jesus Christ.

Think about it. Abortion is legal, so how many of you women, if you were pregnant, would have an abortion? None, I hope!

Why wouldn't you have an abortion, it is legal in many parts of this country?

Because your heart has been changed by God and it doesn't matter if something is legal or not, if it goes against what God has said, against the standards that God has set, you won't go down that path, at least you shouldn't!

And I love how Jesus concludes this conversation with Pilate.

He says in John 18:37, “... **‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.**

**Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**”

And this is going to lead Pilate to make some interesting statements about truth.

Before we look at what Pilate said, Tenney tells us, “*The obvious inference from his words would be that he came into the world from another realm, that whoever did not listen to him would not be characterized by truth, and that if Pilate really wanted to know what truth was, he would give Jesus his earnest attention.*”

Why do people listen to what others have to say instead of what Jesus has said in His Word?

And when I say, “*What Jesus has said*” I mean from Genesis to Revelation for Jesus is known as the Word and the Holy Spirit inspired all these writers to put down these words for us.

But what is the truth? That is important for us to understand. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

Two men had an argument. To settle the matter, they went to a Sufi judge for arbitration.

The plaintiff made his case. He was very eloquent and persuasive in his reasoning. When he finished, the judge nodded in approval and said, “*That’s right, that’s right.*”

On hearing this, the defendant jumped up and said, “*Wait a second, judge, you haven’t even heard my side of the case yet.*”

So the judge told the defendant to state his case. And he too was very persuasive and eloquent. When he finished, the judge said, “*That’s right, that’s right.*”

When the clerk of court heard this, he jumped up and said, “*Judge, they both can’t be right.*”

The judge looked at the clerk of court and said, *“That’s right, that’s right.”*

- Roger von Oech, Ph.D., *A Whack on the Side of the Head*, p. 23

As funny as that is, that is how some people think. There is no absolute truth. But Jesus has a different take on that as He said to Pilate, **“... that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** John 18:37.

In other words, if we are listening to the voice of Jesus, in accordance with His Word, then we will have the truth. If we reject the voice of Jesus that is found in the Word of God, then we will not have the truth. And it doesn’t matter how certain we are, the Word, Jesus is ***TRUTH!***

And make no mistake about it, Pilate was listening to every word that Jesus said. Listen to the response of Pilate to these words of Jesus regarding His voice being the ***TRUTH!***

### VERSE 38

What an interesting question, *“What is truth?”*

How do you think Pilate said that?

Was he interested in the truth, or did he say it sarcastically?

I don’t believe he was interested in the truth because when Jesus said it; he just walked away, ignoring the question, not wanting a response by Jesus.

He was sarcastic, probably mocking Jesus; he wasn’t interested in the truth, as Jack Nicholson said in the movie *“A Few Good Men,”* *“You can’t handle the truth!”*

You see, Pilate couldn't see this because he was not of the truth, wanted nothing to do with the truth, he only believed what he wanted, his truth. That is all that mattered to him and in the end, he found out that his truth was meaningless, worthless while the truths of God were life, abundant life!

Today there are many Americans who don't believe there is such a thing as absolute truth, and they are absolutely sure about that? Which is funny when you think about it.

But today many feel that whatever you feel is right is okay and no one can say anything against it.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

In the words of the well-known 19th century atheist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, ***“You have your way, I have my way. As for the right way, it does not exist.”***

From this statement flows the underpinning of our modern secular thought on ethics. No person has the answer as to what is actually right and wrong, and everyone is entitled to have his or her own truth with no objective standard to look toward.

Few people understand the implications of this philosophy of moral relativism of which Nietzsche spoke. Just think for a moment of the consequences of this belief.

If moral relativism is true, then who can say it was wrong for Adolf Hitler to murder over [six] million Jews in the Holocaust? Who can say it was wrong for slavery to have existed in this nation until 1865? Who can say any action a human being ever takes, whether it be murdering someone or feeding the homeless, is right or wrong?

The answer from the atheistic worldview is it doesn't matter one bit. If there are no moral absolutes, any behaviors - whether rape or giving to charity - aren't inherently right or wrong.

If Hitler's society taught it was right to kill Jews, that's what was right for him and his people, according to this atheistic philosophy. This philosophy conflicts with reason and sanity.

. . . If God exists, then we can absolutely say moral absolutes do exist and return to sanity by reaffirming what we already inherently know to be true: murder, stealing, cheating, mischief, rape and all other wrong behaviors are absolutely wrong and not subject to man's opinion. . . .

In the words of Fyodor Dostoevsky, *"If there is no God, everything is permitted."*

Unless we have society that understands moral absolutes of right and wrong do actually exist as a result of a God whose very nature is goodness, we have no grounds to ask any single person on the planet to behave in a particular way.

Again, if all ethics are simply man's opinion, there is nothing inherently wrong with the Holocaust, the Spanish Inquisition or any other atrocity in history. I firmly believe atheistic moral philosophy, which came to rise in the nineteenth century, gave rise to the bloody twentieth century. Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin - who combined killed over 50 million people - were great admirers of Nietzsche's philosophy, and Hitler even gave copies of Nietzsche works to his Italian ally Benito Mussolini.

Atheism is a license to kill. The only approach that values the worth of human life, dignity and ethics and satisfies sanity is the belief in a creator God. . . .

- <http://bit.ly/3XsMVki>

I agree that once God has been removed from the picture, anything and everything goes. And look at our nation and world today who has rejected God and what they are into.

Let me share this with you because it again shows how many people are moving away from God and thus, it has brought them to this wicked idea of there not being any absolute truth!

We are told,

There was a time when most Americans respected the Bible, and you could quote it with authority.

In 1963, according to Gallup, 65% believed the Bible literally; today the number is only 32%. There was a time when most Americans were familiar with biblical doctrine. You could say, "Believe in Jesus," and at least they knew what you meant. But today most would be mystified.

Newsweek tells of a child who saw a crucifix and asked, "Mommy, what's that man doing?"

There was a time when most Americans accepted absolute standards. They might disagree on what those absolutes were, but they knew that some things are really right or wrong.

Today 70% reject moral absolutes.

- Chuck Colson, Christianity Today, November 9, 1992, p 112

So the question is – ***WHAT IS TRUTH?***

The answer is - Truth is the Word of God and it will lead us down the right path, for its truths are unchanging.

These truths applied to God's people 2,000 years ago and they apply to us today.

Peter put it this way in II Peter 1:2-4, **“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

Notice what Peter is saying here. All we need for spiritual vitality and godly living is attainable through the knowledge of God and that is obtained as we read, study, and apply His Word to our lives as the Holy Spirit teaches us and leads us in all truth!

Also, in II Timothy 3:16-17 notice what Paul tells this young pastor, Timothy. We read **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

Notice Paul does not say *“some of the Scriptures”* or *“most of the Scriptures”* or *“you pick which Scripture you want to be of God”* but he says that **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”**

Do you know what the Greek word for **“all”** means?

It means ***ALL!***

So the Scriptures were breathed from the mouth of God and then Paul tells us they are **“profitable.”**

In other words, by reading, by studying, by applying the Words of God to our lives there is an advantage, there is a benefit, something for us to gain if we do.

What is it that we gain from doing these things?

Paul tells us that . . .

*God's Word shows us what is right – doctrine.*

*God's Word shows us what is wrong – reproof.*

*God's Word shows us how to get right when we have gone astray – correction.*

*God's Word shows us how to stay right, to stay on track – instruction or training or discipline in righteousness!*

But it doesn't end there.

Paul tells us as we read God's Word, study God's Word, and apply God's Word it will make us complete or ready, furnished for service you might say.

Now, compare that with what the world has for us, as Paul says in Colossians 2:8-10, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”**

Again, do you want to be complete in God or empty in the world?

Do you want to follow the life-giving Words of God or the deceitful traditions of men?

Do you want to follow the principles of God that give to us peace and joy or the elementary principles of this world which are empty and constantly changing, in a state of flux.

The choice is ours, but the answer seems so simple if we would only surrender to Him and believe in His promises to us!

Now people don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God, or they may think the Bible just contains the Words of God. While others think the Bible is full of errors and contradictions and thus, it can't be trusted.

Let me say this, as much as the Bible has been placed under the microscope of scrutiny, it still stands!

Do you think that if the Bible could be exposed as a fraud that it would have been exposed already?

You bet, but it can't because it is truth, it is the Word of God and not just containing the Words of God!

Listen to these statements to show you what I mean.

Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, former professor of Semitic philology at Princeton Theological Seminary, said, *“After forty-five years of scholarly research in biblical textual studies and in language study, I have come now to the conviction that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament. Where there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible, in the original text, have stood the test.”*

And the noted Dr. J. O. Kinnaman said, *“Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by the archaeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause, or sentence of the Bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the Biblical record.”*

I wish more would understand this truth that we can trust the Word of God, the Bible because, as one writer put it, *“[the Bible] is the truth about life and death, time and eternity, heaven and hell, right and wrong, men and women, old people and young people. It is the truth about children. It is the truth about society. It is the truth about every relationship between God and man, between man and man, and between man and creation. It is the truth about everything that's needful.”*

Absolutely!

Now, in saying that the Bible is truth, let me share a few truths with you so you will not misunderstand what the Bible is saying. And you may not agree with it, but it does not change the fact that it is truth!

In John 14:6 we are told, **“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”**

In John 1:1 and 1:14 we are told, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

In John 8:31-32 we are told, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

In John 17:17 Jesus said, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

I like this one in Psalm 119:160, **“The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.”**

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:13-14, **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

And lastly, and there are many more, in Psalm 25:5 we are told, **“Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.”**

So, if you want to know the truth, look to Jesus and His Word and you will find it.

Does the world have truth?

Sure, but there are a lot of lies out there and thus, how do you know what is truth and what is a lie?

The Word of God because the entirety of the Word of God is ***TRUTH!***

But here is the problem. People are trying to understand truth apart from God and it does not work. It would be like trying to understand sunlight without the sun!

Let me explain. Truth emanates from God the way sunlight emanates from the sun. Thus, you can't understand sunlight without focusing on the source – ***THE SUN!***

And the same is true for the truth. You can't understand truth without focusing on God as its source!

One pastor put it like this. He wrote,

Ask anyone today, “***What is truth?***” and you're sure to start an interesting conversation.

Try it on a university campus and you're likely to receive laughter, scorn, and derision.

The concept of truth has clearly fallen on hard times, and the consequences of rejecting it are ravaging human society. So, let's go back to the starting point and answer the question: What is truth?

One of the most profound and eternally significant questions in the Bible was posed by an unbeliever [Pontius Pilate]. Pilate, the man who handed Jesus over to be crucified - turned to Jesus in His final hour, and asked, “***What is truth?***”

It was a rhetorical question, a cynical response to what Jesus had just revealed: “***I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.***”

Two thousand years later, the whole world breathes Pilate's cynicism. Some say truth is a power play, a metanarrative constructed by the elite for the purpose of controlling the ignorant masses.

To some, truth is subjective - the individual world of preference and opinion. Others believe truth is a collective judgment - the product of cultural consensus, and still others flatly deny the concept of truth altogether. So, what is truth?

Here's a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: ***Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God.***

Even more to the point: ***Truth is the self-expression of God.*** That is the biblical meaning of truth. Because the definition of truth flows from God, truth is ***theological.***

Truth is also ***ontological*** - which is a fancy way of saying it is the way things really are.

Reality is what it is because God declared it so and made it so. Therefore, God is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter, ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth... . . .

In fact, the one most valuable lesson humanity ought to have learned from philosophy is that it is impossible to make sense of truth without acknowledging God as the necessary starting point.

Truth is not subjective, it is not a consensual cultural construct, and it is not an invalid, outdated, irrelevant concept. Truth is the self-expression of God. Truth is thus ***theological***; it is the reality God has created and defined, and over which He rules. Truth is therefore a ***moral*** issue for every human being.

How each person responds to the truth God has revealed is an issue of eternal significance. To reject and rebel against the truth of God results in darkness, folly, sin, judgment, and the never-ending wrath of God.

To accept and submit to the truth of God is to see clearly, to know with certainty, and to find life everlasting.

- John MacArthur

It doesn't matter if people agree with this or not because truth is truth and Scripture is God's truth to us!

Now we do have free will and you can agree with it or disagree with it, like it or not like it, but again, it is truth!

Then what seems to be the problem?

The problem is simple. People don't like the truth of God, they fight against what God has said in His Word, the Bible because it is offensive to them, or it is offensive to the way they want to live their lives. But again, God's truth is unchanging!

Since they are so against the truths of God found in the Word of God, they fight against those who hold onto these truths, authentic Christians. And when you look at this divide today between the two, it seems to be growing wider and wider!

And here's the thing. The Devil is not opposed to bits and pieces of truth. Let me give you this example from a bumper sticker I saw on a car a month or so ago. This is what it said,

***"Hello, you beautiful being of light!"***

Some of you might be thinking, ***"What is wrong with that?"***

What is wrong with that is this. What Paul wrote in II Corinthians 11:13-15, **"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."**

The Devil and his workers love to portray themselves as workers of God, and they are not. That is dangerous.

You see, one day . . .

The Devil was walking along with one of his cohorts. They saw a man ahead of them pick up something shiny.

*“What did he find?”* asked the cohort.

*“A piece of the truth,”* the Devil replied.

*“Doesn’t it bother you that he found a piece of the truth?”* asked the cohort.

*“No,”* said the Devil, *“I will see to it that he makes a religion out of it.”*

- Klyne Snodgrass, *Between Two Truths - Living with Biblical Tensions*, p. 35

The Devil uses truth and mixes it with just enough lies to move you farther and farther from God.

That is why we need the – ***TRUTH!***

And the answer to the question – ***“WHAT IS TRUTH?”*** is this.

***Truth comes from God and is expressed in the pages of Scripture, the Bible!***

***You can believe it and be saved, or you can reject it and you will find yourself eternally separated from God!***

Now, after Pilate asked Jesus this question, notice what he does. We are told, **“... And when he had said this, [What is truth?] he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”** John 18:38.

Remember that the Jews did not enter the Praetorium because Passover was coming and they did not want to defile themselves by going into a building that was a Gentile building, it was where Pilate was at. So Pilate goes out to them.

Also, notice that Pilate found nothing to convict Jesus of so that should have been the end of the story, but it is not.

Remember Pilate was the judge, but the reality was, the people were in control, and they will force him to do that which he does not want to do, put Jesus to death!

But, as we will see, Pilate thinks he found a loophole to get out of this, but in the end, the crowds were just too much for him and he will give into their ways!

For Pilate, he did not want to hear from Jesus anymore. Morris put it like this, ***“It was a way of dismissing the subject. Pilate has learned what he wants to know. Jesus is no revolutionary. He represents no danger to the state. He may be safely released, and indeed He ought in common justice to be released.”***

Thus, Pilate tells them, **“I find no fault in Him at all.”** John 18:38. And what we will see as we read on and finish up this chapter is a loophole, as I have said, for Pilate to release Jesus. Look at how this plays out.

#### VERSES 39-40

This is the third civil trial we are reading of here in John 18:39-40 and it continues on into John chapter 19. We just finished looking at the first civil trial, and that was before Pilate.

What about the second civil trial?

John does not record the second civil trial and that is before Herod!

Why Herod?

The reason being is that during this first civil trial before Pilate the crowds mentioned that Jesus was from Galilee. (Luke 23:5)

When Pilate heard that he thought that he could wash his hands of this mess and sent him to Herod to take care of the problem since Herod was over the region of Galilee. So he sends Jesus to see Herod.

And when we read that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod in Luke chapter 23, the word for “**sent**” in the Greek was a technical word for sending a prisoner from one authority to another. That is what happened here.

Now please understand that Jesus was not sent to Herod in Galilee. Not at all!

Luke tells us that Herod was in town, and you may be wondering why?

The reason is simple. He was in town for the Passover feast and thus, Pilate sends Jesus to Herod to decide what to do with Him!

Clarke gives us this summation of what is going on here. He wrote, “*The city of Nazareth, in which Christ had continued till he was thirty years of age, and that of Capernaum, in which he principally resided the last years of his life, were both in Lower Galilee, of which Herod Antipas was tetrarch. Pilate was probably glad of this opportunity to pay a little respect to Herod, whom it is likely he had irritated, and with whom he now wished to be friends.*”

Now who is this Herod Antipas?

He was the son of Herod the Great, the one who massacred the infants in Bethlehem and rebuilt or beautified the Temple.

And Herod Antipas was the one who had John the Baptist put to death. And as we are going to see, Jesus is not going to have anything to do with this “**sly fox.**” (Luke 13:32)

Why?

Because his heart was so hard and cold that nothing was going to penetrate it. And when Jesus has nothing to say to a person, that is truly a sad state to be in.

Now look at what happens in this second trial of Jesus, now before Herod.

Let's look at Luke 23:8-12, where we are told, **“Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.”**

As you can see, Herod wanted to be entertained by Jesus, a few magic tricks you might say. When I was in Junior High School, many years ago, the play Jesus Christ Superstar was out.

The music was great, their theology was awful! But when it came to Herod, looking back on it now, they did hit the nail on the head. This is what he sang,

Jesus, I am overjoyed to meet you face to face.  
 You've been getting quite a name all around the place.  
 Healing cripples, raising from the dead.  
 And now I understand you're God,  
 At least, that's what you've said.

So, you are the Christ, you're the great Jesus Christ.  
 Prove to me that you're divine; change my water into wine.  
 That's all you need do, then I'll know it's all true.  
 Come on, King of the Jews.

Jesus, you just won't believe the hit you've made around here.  
 You are all we talk about, the wonder of the year.  
 Oh what a pity if it's all a lie.  
 Still, I'm sure that you can rock the cynics if you tried.

So, you are the Christ, you're the great Jesus Christ.  
 Prove to me that you're no fool; walk across my swimming pool.  
 If you do that for me, then I'll let you go free.  
 Come on, King of the Jews.

I only ask what I'd ask any superstar.  
 What is it that you have got that puts you where you are.  
 I am waiting, yes I'm a captive fan.  
 I'm dying to be shown that you are not just any man.

So, if you are the Christ, yes the great Jesus Christ  
 Feed my household with this bread.  
 You can do it on your head.  
 Or has something gone wrong. Jesus, why do you take so long?  
 Oh come on, King of the Jews.

Hey! Aren't you scared of me Christ?  
 Mr. Wonderful Christ?  
 You're a joke. You're not the Lord.  
 You are nothing but a fraud.

Take him away.  
 He's got nothing to say!  
 Get out you King of the,  
 Get out King of the,  
 Oh get out you King of the Jews!  
 Get out of here!  
 Get out of here you,  
 Get out of my life.

- <https://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/jesuschristsuperstar/kingherodssong.htm>

But Jesus did not come to entertain us but to save us. What is sad today is that we see that same mentality in some churches and with some Christians. They are looking to be entertained by Jesus, and that is not why Jesus came. He came to save that which was lost, you and me. He came to heal the broken hearted, you and me. May we not forget that!

And in this crowd watching were these religious leaders and they continue to try and bring Jesus down. And Herod, not happy that Jesus won't entertain him, and won't answer his questions, begins to mock Jesus!

Now the reason that Jesus did not answer Herod's questions is that Herod was not interested in the truth and thus, Jesus was not going to waste His time.

So, as the mocking ends, we see Herod send Jesus back to Pilate for the third and last of the civil trials!

Interestingly enough, Pilate and Herod were not close friends but this issue regarding Jesus united them.

Now, at this point, Pilate tries to end this charade of the Jewish leadership seeking to railroad an innocent Man.

He does so by putting into practice his annual goodwill gesture toward the Jewish population living in and around Jerusalem, a custom the Jewish leaders requested, and Pilate went along with. And that custom was to release a Jewish prisoner every year at Passover time.

In knowing that Jesus was innocent, I think Pilate took the most wicked prisoner that they had, a man who was going to be crucified that day, and of course they would want Jesus to be let go and this man, Barabbas to be put to death.

One an innocent man and the other, well, not a good man!

Barabbas was accused and found guilty since they were going to crucify him, of three crimes.

In Mark 15:7 we are told that he was one of several insurrectionists!

Not only that, but he also committed murder in this insurrection!

And in John 18:40 we are told that he was also a thief!

Thus, to the Romans he was a terrorist!

For Pilate, he thought they would let Jesus go and send Barabbas to the cross, to death because he was a murderer and an insurrectionist and Jesus was not, He was innocent!

But they didn't do that, they wanted Jesus to be put to death!

Do you see how ugly hate can be? Do you see where hate can lead? To the death of an innocent person and the release of a guilty person, ourselves!

So, Pilate is going to put to death an innocent man because the people are forcing him. May we never be forced to do anything contrary to what God has said because of peer pressure, crowd influence or whatever! Fear God and not man!

Jesus took the place of a guilty man, a sinner, Barabbas. And when you think about it, He did the same for us. We are all guilty before Him and He took our place, He paid for our sins on that cross. We deserved death and God has given us life through Jesus Christ.

Praise God for His tremendous love for us. Never lose sight of that and thank Him for that love that has given to each of us, that abundant life, that eternal life!

Now let me say this and I don't mean to offend anyone here, but it is a reality – ***WE ARE ALL A BARABBAS!***

Maybe you are thinking, ***“What in the world is he talking about. I am not like that wicked man?”***

Listen carefully. Spurgeon put this all into perspective for us. He wrote, ***“You and I may fairly take our stand by the side of Barabbas. We have robbed God of his glory; we have been seditious [rebellious] traitors against the government of heaven: if he who hateth his brother be a murderer, we also have been guilty of that sin.”***

I think you can see what I mean - ***WE ARE ALL A BARABBAS!***

People today still reject Jesus and choose another. Their Barabbas might be lust, it might be intoxication, it might be self and the comforts of life. ***“This mad choice is every day made, while men prefer the lusts of their flesh before the lives of their souls.”*** (Trapp)

If that is where you are at this morning, I pray that you come to Jesus and receive the wonderful gift of life that He has for you.

Now, as we get into John chapter 19 next time, keep in mind that we are still in this third and final civil trial before Pilate.

And I will close with this – ***WHAT IS TRUTH?***

And the answer to the question – ***“WHAT IS TRUTH?”*** is this.

***Truth comes from God and is expressed in the pages of Scripture, the Bible!***

***You can believe it and be saved, or you can reject it and you will find yourself eternally separated from God!***

***NEVER FORGET THAT!***