

Not of This World

John 18:28-38

Midweek of Lent 5

Introduction

The main charge the Jewish leaders had against Jesus was blasphemy. He has confessed to be the Son of God. However, Roman law had made provincial executions illegal. Only the state could execute a prisoner. The catch was this charge wouldn't carry much weight with a Roman court. They had a plethora of gods. What's one more? The Jews needed a charge the Romans would take seriously. If they could make the Romans think Jesus was a political threat, their case would be closed. The Messiah was to be a conquering king. So, they said that Jesus called Himself the King of the Jews. This was a charge of treason, punishable by crucifixion.

Are You the King of the Jews?

The trial is being held on Pilate's porch. Going in his house, as was the custom when petitioning Pilate, would have made the Jewish leaders unclean and they would not have been allowed to celebrate the Passover. Isn't it interesting that they were so concerned with their ritual purity while they were involved in this treachery to kill the Son of God, a man Pilate called innocent? It shows us that how we live is more important than how we worship. If he is to try this man, Pilate wants to question Jesus himself. So, he goes inside and calls Jesus to him to question Him. His opening question is to the point. *"Are you the King of the Jews?" (v. 33)*. It should be simple. If Jesus says, "Yes," He's guilty. If He says, "No," He's not guilty and no threat to Rome.

Is That Your Own Idea?

Jesus counters with a question of His own. He's not intimidated by the authority and power of this representative of Caesar. He knows Pilate needs answers. He wants to make sure the right questions are being asked. His question is designed to get Pilate to think. What does he believe? This doesn't impress Pilate, as he shouts, *"Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You over to me. What have You done?" (v. 35)*.

My Kingdom Is not of This World

Jesus responds by clearing the air. *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world" (v. 36)*. This should remind us of how Jesus, in His High Priestly Prayer in **John 17**, says that His followers are not of this world, as He is not of this world. But what does it mean to be not of this world? it doesn't mean that Jesus' kingdom is removed from this world. The kingdom is present and active in this world. As Jesus said in **Mark 1:15**, *"The kingdom of God is at hand."* Jesus' point is that His authority is not derived from or dependent upon political agency. The kingdom of God has an impact on the world, we all have worldly responsibilities. But the church is not dependent on the state for its authority or even its survival. God's kingdom is counter cultural.

Kingdom of Truth

Jesus goes on to say that His kingdom is a kingdom of truth. He has come *to bear witness to the truth and everyone who is of the truth listens to [His] voice (v. 37)*. We live in a world that says that all truth is relative. They say that there is no truth. In reality, there is truth, but it's not of this world. So, the world doesn't recognize it.

What Is Truth?

Then we have Pilate's famous reply, *"What is truth? Quid est veritas?" (v. 38)*. Pilate was a politician, used to dealing in half-truths, compromises, and lies. He had been doing that for so long, he had lost sight of the truth. Jesus calls us from a world that doesn't know the truth into the kingdom of truth. Out of the darkness, into the light. Out of the nighttime and into the daylight.

The Way and the Truth and the Life

Jesus had said in **John 14:6**, *"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* Jesus is not only the Truth, but the Way to the Truth. He calls us to His kingdom, and He provides the Way there, through salvation in Him. Return to the kingdom, the kingdom of truth. Believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
