

Kingdom of Truth

John 18:33-37

Introduction

“What is truth?” That was Pilate’s response to Jesus’ statement in **verse 37** of our Gospel lesson today, *“You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”* That seems to be the question today. In this age of half-truths, lies, misinformation, and disinformation, what is truth? Would the average person know it if they heard it. Back in the day, Walter Cronkite was known as the “most trusted man in America.” Today, when we hear something in the news, we take it with a grain of salt, maybe even a teaspoon. Everyone has an agenda, and they bend the narrative to fit their agenda. The days of Joe Friday’s, “Just the facts, ma’am” have gone by the wayside. Where does that leave us as Christians? How can we get by in a world that doesn’t even recognize truth?

Does Truth Matter?

Does truth even matter in the Church? Does doctrinal truth mean anything anymore? In the **American Baptist Churches**, where I pastored for twenty years, it didn’t matter if you held to points of Christian doctrine as long as you confessed, “Jesus is Lord.” In Bible study, the question wasn’t, “What does the Bible say, Pastor?” It was, “What do *you* believe about this, Pastor?” Liberal churches and liberal Christians far outnumber conservative ones. They think this makes the Gospel more attractive to others, if they don’t have to subscribe to a certain set of rules that they say are man-made.

Truth Matters

The simple fact is doctrinal truth *does* matter. Take the Virgin birth, for example. It cannot be explained; it’s a mystery. Because of this, many have a hard time “getting their head around it.” So, they choose not to believe it. They still confess Jesus is Lord and Savior, but they don’t believe in the Virgin Birth. It’s just not possible. However, if there was no Virgin Birth, then Jesus had a human father. In that case, He wouldn’t be the Son of God, as well as the Son of Mary. As Humans, we can’t even pay for our own sins, let alone the sins of others. The only death that would satisfy is the death of God. God can’t die; He had to become a man. Jesus had to be fully divine and fully human to pay for our sins. Just because it’s a mystery, doesn’t mean it isn’t true. Without the Virgin Birth, there is no forgiveness of sins, no salvation.

Where Do We Find Truth?

Jesus says of Himself that He came to *bear witness to the truth*. Elsewhere in John, He says He is *the Way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6)*. Jesus is *the Word (John 1:1)*. He is the Word of truth, and His Word is truth. *Whoever is of the truth, listens to [His] voice (v.37)*. We look to Jesus for truth. And where do we find Him? In God’s Word, the Bible. That’s what *Sola Scriptura* means, the Bible is our sole source of doctrine and our sole authority for living. That’s where we learn the truth. And Jesus said *the truth will set [us] free (John 8:32)*.

Living in a Fallen World

That brings us back to our original question, “How can we live in a world that doesn’t recognize the truth?” Let’s begin by examining the truth. The truth found in the Word of God is Law and Gospel. First, we have *all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)*. As a result, we are all worthy of *the penalty of sin, [which] is death (Romans 6:23)*. The Good News, the Gospel is this: *Christ died for our sins (Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)*. The truth is our sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We are reminded of this every time we hear the Word of God. We celebrate this every time we receive the Sacrament of the Altar. We live in this truth every day as we live out our Baptismal faith. This is the truth the world doesn’t want to hear. But this is the truth they must hear; we are all fallen, deserving of death, and in need of a Savior. Jesus is that Savior we so desperately need. This is the truth that saves. We can live in this fallen world when we stand on the Word of God, cling to our Baptismal faith, and rest in the hope we have in Jesus.

Our Hope

Our hope in Christ is our hope in His Kingdom of Truth. As Jesus said, this kingdom is an alien kingdom, not of this world. Right now, we have a dual citizenship, citizens of this fallen world of lies and citizens of Christ’s Kingdom of Truth. But when Christ returns, we will have one citizenship in that Kingdom of Truth. And we know that Christ is returning because He said so (Read **Matthew 26:64**).

Celebrating the Truth

So, while we still live in this fallen world that doesn’t recognize the truth, we celebrate the truth of Christ and look forward to His coming as we gather around this Altar and receive the body and blood of our Lord. Maranatha! Our Lord comes with His **KINGDOM OF TRUTH!**

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