

John 18: 33-38
Creekside COB
November 26, 2006
Christ the King Sunday

“The Truth Is a Person”

When I read this passage I find myself wishing Jesus had done a better job of representing himself. Having just come from an interrogation by the high priest Caiaphas, Jesus was handed over to Pilate for questioning. Pilate wasn't thrilled by the prospect. He could have cared less about a case the Jewish justice system should have handled. He especially didn't want get involved with religious matters. A man of his stature had no need of religion. He didn't want preside over Jesus judgment, but found himself drawn into the center of the storm.

It took Pilate just one look to see that Jesus was no ruler. Pilate wasn't sure of who Jesus was, but one thing was clear— he wasn't a king, at least not the kind of king he had seen before.

Jesus may have been better off if he had hired Johnny Cochran or F. Lee Bailey to represent him. Pilate had all the power, not Jesus. Pilate posed sharp questions. Jesus gave only vague replies. Pilate wanted it straight-- *“Are you the king of the Jews, or not?”* “I'm not the world's kind of king,” Jesus replied. *“But you are a king,”* Pilate asked. “I am a witness to the truth. It's the reason I was born. Everyone who cares about the truth recognizes my voice.”

Pilate's responded to Jesus with a question... a question asked centuries before Pilate that continues to be asked today. Great thinkers from Aristotle to Einstein have taken a stab at it, and still the question persists... “What is truth?”

I remember reading about a man in Kentucky who owned a tenant farm. He was walking the fields with a tenant and his four-year-old granddaughter. The old man came from a rigid

Pentecostal background, and every time something came up in the conversation that he didn't agree with, he said to the little girl, "We don't believe in that, do we?" Whether it was playing cards, dancing, working on Sunday, or equal rights, the response was the same. "We don't believe in that, do we?"

As they came upon the farm pond they saw that a duck had hatched her eggs and the fuzzy little ducklings were scurrying on the ground. The little girl sat in their midst, enchanted by what she saw. Then, in a moment of self-consciousness she said to her grandfather, "*Granddaddy, do we believe in ducks?*"

"What is truth?" There was a time that we thought we knew. We didn't question what we were told. We were insulated from different worldviews. Then along came new discoveries that shot holes in our assumptions. The world became a much smaller place and we discovered that people from other cultures do not see things exactly the way we do. Suddenly, our certainties weren't so certain. We discovered that the version of truth we were taught was just one of many truths.

What is truth? Today you will likely hear that truth is relative, or truth for you doesn't have to be truth for me, or truth is evolving and not fixed, or truth is whatever you want it to be.

Someone said that for centuries, "there have been politicians, scientists, theologians, philosophers, and poets to tell us what truth is. *The sound they make is like the sound of empty pails falling down the cellar stairs.*"

If you want a stable job, don't respond to want ads seeking kings or queens. Becoming royalty sounds exciting—all the pomp and circumstance, all of the pageantry and power, all the glory of the role. But history tells us that on the whole, there were many more bad kings than good ones. And even the good ones seldom ruled longer than four years because would-be kings fought to depose them.

You get the feeling from the encounter between Jesus and Pilate that Jesus is not the one on the hot seat. It was Pilate, not Jesus

who was being interrogated. The only power Pilate recognized what the power given to him by the state. The power Pilate knew was the kind where kings called their subjects to die for their causes. He didn't know what to do with a man whose power was given by God. He didn't know what to do with a king who served his subjects and was about to die for them.

Jesus said that truth was the reason for which he was born. When Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Jesus didn't respond. He just stood there. He didn't need to say another word. He just stood there and showed Pilate that truth isn't an idea clanging like a bucket down the cellar stairs. He just stood there so that Pilate would know the truth was a person.

Is Christ your king? If not, are you willing to get off the throne that belongs to him? If he is your king, be strong in the strength that lets you face life's troubles with calm assurance. Be strong because your king is the image of the invisible God. Be strong in the face of the world's demands because you answer to a higher authority. Be strong in the face of darkness because you are a child of the light. Be strong in the face of death because a home has been prepared for you in eternity. Be strong in the face of truths that clash and crash into each other, because truth isn't an idea, it is a person who said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Be strong, because Jesus is our king!