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SERMON TITLE

What is Truth?

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

John 18:37-38

SYNOPSIS

Pilate's question to Jesus is relevant today. Is there such a thing as absolute truth, and what are the ramifications thereto?

HIGHLIGHTS



☛ What is Truth?

Last week we celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus and were reminded of his painful sacrifice for us, but that he also conquered death and the grave when he Rose Again after 3 days. Before his crucifixion there was a conversation between the governor and Jesus, which is relevant for us today.

☛ **John 18:37-38** (NIV) “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, **the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.**” **“What is truth?” retorted Pilate.**

We live in a society that no longer believes in the absolutes of truth. Our modern philosophy has been summed up as follows: “There are no absolutes except the absolute that that there are no absolutes.” Each person seems to be entitled to “his or her truth” and you are considered arrogant to contradict this position. A common saying today is, “What is true for you isn’t necessarily true for me.” And, in politics, often image is far more important than truth.

When Pilate asked this question of Jesus, it wasn’t a real question. He was saying it in sarcasm! He was essentially saying, “Truth! You’ve got yours, and I’ve got mine! What does that have to do with anything?” He wasn’t searching for answers. He was searching for a politically correct way out of the problem, without having to commit to anything.

So, this question continues to be debated in our time, and some don’t even think it matters much. But, here’s the irony of it all... We demand truth in virtually every area of our lives. For example:

1. loved ones (no one wants lies from a spouse or a child)
2. doctors (we want the right medicine prescribed and the right operations performed)
3. stock brokers (we want the truth about investments, not just what may benefit them)
4. courts (we want them to convict the guilty and pardon the innocent)
5. airlines (we demand truly safe planes and truly sober pilots)

We also expect to be told the truth when we pick up a reference book, read an article, or watch a news story; we want the truth from advertisers, teachers, and politicians – even though we rarely fully believe them. But, we do assume that road signs, medicine bottles, and food labels reveal the truth. In fact, we demand the truth for almost every facet of life that affects our money, relationships, safety, or health.

On the other hand, despite our unwavering demands for truth in those areas, many say they aren’t interested in truth when it comes to morality or religion. In fact, many outright reject the idea that any religion can be true. When it comes to religion some people say, “That’s true for you, but not for me,” but they never even think of such nonsense when talking to a stock broker about money or a doctor about health.

In a world filled with competing voices, conflicting narratives, and endless information, we may often find ourselves asking, “*What is truth?*” A person’s acceptance or rejection of truth has eternal consequences, so it’s extremely important that we listen to what Jesus says about it. Let’s always run to the Word to find the answer.



☞ **Subjective truth leads to injustice**

Jesus just declared that He came to testify to the truth. Yet Pilate, a man of power and authority, responds with sarcasm: “*What is truth?*” As a Roman governor, Pilate lived in a world of political maneuvering, where truth was often whatever served the interests of the powerful. To him, truth was relative and negotiable; a tool to be shaped, rather than a reality to be embraced.

Don’t we see this same struggle today? In our world, truth is often treated as subjective. We hear phrases like “my truth” or “your truth,” as if truth is something we create rather than something we discover. Social media, news outlets, and personal opinions compete to define reality, leaving us confused.

☞ In Pilate’s case, his subjective view of truth led him to **cave to the pressure of the crowd** to have an innocent man tortured and crucified. Pilate had the embodiment of truth standing right in front of him, but he yielded to the crowd, and allowed an injustice to transpire. Like Pilate, we may find ourselves facing the truth but choosing to ignore it, giving in to the pressures of this world which can lead to ☞ injustice. With subjective truth, **we can find ourselves condemning the innocent and congratulating the guilty**. In fact, haven’t we seen this a lot in our modern age? We cry out for justice to prevail, but subjective truth allows for distortions of justice beyond reason. It can lead to absolute absurdity.

Abraham Lincoln made an interesting point about this when he asked the question, “How many legs would a dog have if you called a tail a leg?” He answers. “Four. Calling a tail, a leg doesn’t make it a leg.” Subjective truth can be absurd and lead to injustice.

☞ **Rejecting the Truth has eternal impact**

Pilate’s question, “*What is truth?*” was not the end of the story. After asking it, he walked away. He had the opportunity to engage with Jesus, to seek answers, but instead, he turned back to the crowd, swayed by pressure and fear. In doing so, he rejected the truth and the consequences were eternal. Pilate’s decision to wash his hands of Jesus didn’t absolve him of responsibility—it revealed his failure to stand for what was right.

We, too, face moments when we must decide whether to embrace or reject truth. When we choose to follow the crowd, to choose comfort over conviction, or to ignore the still, small voice of God, we ☞ risk drifting from the truth that gives life. **Rejecting truth doesn’t make it disappear; it simply leaves you lost, searching for meaning in all the wrong places.**

Jesus said that he testified to the truth and that everyone on the side of truth listens to him. We know ☞ that **what you believe about Jesus determines your destiny**. **John 3:16** says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” And, **John 11:25** says, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.” Rejecting the truth has eternal impact.

☞ **Jesus is the Truth incarnate**

If he had only been sincere in his question, Pilate could have known real truth because he was closer ☞ to the answer than he realized. Standing right there was Jesus, who earlier declared, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)**. Jesus doesn’t just *speak* truth; He *is* truth. He is the Word made



flesh, the perfect revelation of God's heart and will. Every word He spoke, every action He took, every miracle He performed pointed to the unchanging reality – the truth – of God's love, justice, and purpose for humanity.

When Jesus says, *"Everyone on the side of truth listens to me,"* he invites us to align ourselves with Him. Truth is not an abstract idea or a philosophical debate—it is a person. **To know truth is to know Jesus, to follow Him, and to trust in His teachings.** When society is all wishy-washy, Jesus is the solid rock on which we can build our lives.

☞ **The Truth implemented**

So, how do we live in the truth in a culture that often echoes Pilate's skepticism? Let me offer three practical steps rooted in Scripture:

☞ **Seek Jesus daily:** Truth begins with a relationship with Christ. Spend time in prayer and in God's Word. Jesus promises, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (**John 8:31-32**). Let His words guide your heart and mind.

☞ **Scrutinize everything against Scripture:** The Bible is our standard for truth. With all these competing voices, we must be like the Bereans, who *"examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true"* (**Acts 17:11**). When you're not sure, turn to God's Word for clarity.

☞ **Stand firm in Faith:** Living in truth requires courage. There will be moments when the world pressures you to compromise, to stay silent, or to conform. But as Paul reminds us, *"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist"* (**Ephesians 6:14**). Trust that God's truth is worth defending, even when it's unpopular.

☞ So, the real answer to Pilate's question: *"What is truth?"* is Jesus Christ. Today, I invite you to **recommit yourself to the truth.** For the Christian, truth is not an abstract concept. Truth is a way of life. If we choose the truth, we choose to know Jesus and to follow Him all our days.

If you've been wrestling with doubt or uncertainty, bring those questions to Jesus. If you've been drifting from His teachings, **return to the One who is the truth.** As Christians we are called as Jesus said, to be "on the side of Truth". We are called to listen to Jesus, and his teaching needs to become part of the fabric of our lives.

Finally, if you've never fully surrendered to Christ, know that He stands before you now, ready to welcome you into the truth that sets you free. You must **resign so that He can reign** in you."

What is Truth?" Pilate asked. Scripture records the answer in **John 14:6** when Jesus said, **"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** The question is – do I really believe Him? If I do, then I must listen to Jesus and follow Him in my life. And, that's the truth!