

# What is Truth?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let's turn back the passage we read in John chapter 18. John chapter 18 and let's read verse 38.

John 18 at verse 38. Pilate said to him, What is truth? And after he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, I find no guilt in him.

And especially for our attention this evening is the question of Pilate to Jesus at the beginning of verse 38. What is truth? For us this evening, I want us just to spend a little bit of time with respect to the question that Pilate has and the question that he presents to Jesus.

A question that I think is important to every single person. The identification of what truth is. And we ourselves live in a society and an environment that bombards us with theories and claims of exclusivity.

Claims of truth. Claims that demand to be taken at face value. Claims that demand to be taken as fact.

[ 1 : 37 ] And we have these questions ourselves of what is truth. For I believe that every one of us is on that quest that we all search for truth.

That we all want to know what is right. It's a question that comes to ask really, what is it we really believe? That every single one of us believes something.

That we've accepted some claim and some theory. And something that has been postulated as truth towards us. Whether it is in the realms of religion or science or whatever it is.

We are all on a search and a quest for truth. And that quest for truth is something that belongs to more than just the subjective.

That it belongs on a very personal level. That every one of us are building our lives on something. And so it's a question not just of theory but of conscience.

[ 2 : 45 ] Because to know and find out what is right, what is truth, is to know how to live right. We base our behaviour on what we believe.

What we understand and know between right and wrong. What we understand and know as what is truth. And what is right. And every one of us are called to evaluate and to face our own dilemma and crisis.

And to understand and know what it is we are about. What our conscience rests on. What our heart tells us. What our lives are built upon.

And for us here tonight in verse 38. We come before a very well known character in the Bible. The Roman governor Pilate.

Pontius Pilate. And he comes and he presents this question to Jesus. After his dialogue and interaction with Jesus. As he interrogates Jesus.

[ 3 : 49 ] He says to Jesus. What is truth. And although this is a very important question. I think that we find for ourselves. I think that we find for ourselves.

An element of sarcasm. In Pilate's question. That we feel here that this is a man. Tired of the claims of exclusivity.

That here is a man who is fatigued. With everything that he's heard. And what he is really communicating for himself in verse 38. As he here encounters Jesus.

Is this skepticism. That he is able to communicate. After he has heard the gospel truths from the mouth of Jesus. And we are here this evening going to spend just a short time.

Considering what he's been exposed to. In the person of Jesus. And in the words of Jesus too. As he here comes. To interrogate Jesus.

[ 4 : 45 ] As part of the trial. That leads to his crucifixion. And I want us just to reflect. Mainly on two things. And the first of all. It's misunderstanding.

Jesus. And we can realize here. That many people. Around this narrative. Are misunderstanding Jesus. We considered a little of that this morning.

And surely it's true. That if they didn't misunderstand Jesus. They wouldn't have placed him here. What they've done is. It's been done out of ignorance. Judas is involved here.

The Jews are involved too. The high priests are engaged in this. And now it comes to the Roman authorities. It comes before Pilate. Pilate.

And Pilate here in verse 33. This dialogue is introduced to us by John. By Pilate saying to Jesus. Are you the king of the Jews? He's asking him.

[ 5 : 44 ] Who he is. He is asking him. What he is about. And for us. Here is this great event. In the life of Pilate.

Pilate. Standing right before Jesus. And he could ask Jesus anything. In fact for Pilate. He could ask Jesus as many things as he wanted to.

He's not restricted to asking him just one question. And I'm sure for many of us. We've got many questions. Many questions we would like to ask.

To ask God. And here in respect to this unique position Pilate has. Many things maybe we would feel ourselves. That we would wish were asked.

Many people ask questions of social injustice. Of natural crisis. Some people ask questions that are more personal. Why is this happening to me God?

[ 6 : 45 ] Why is this going on in my life? And yet this is the question that Pilate has chosen to ask. Are you the king of the Jews?

And for us I think that we need to appreciate a little bit of Pilate. To appreciate in a very large degree. That this is a man who would have been. A very powerful man.

The most powerful man of his day. In this area. This is a man too. Who would have been intelligent. Who would have been involved in the military strategy.

Of the Roman Empire. This is a man who is political. This is a man who has risen to this position. And yet here he is the most political. The most. Himself here standing.

As the most powerful man in Jerusalem. In a natural way. And yet he feels the tension. And the pressure. And discomfort. And he knows why Jesus is here.

[ 7 : 42 ] He understands how unjust the whole thing is. Because to the credit of the Romans. They had a very high view of the justice system. And he knows that Jesus is here for the wrong reasons.

That he's been led here by the Jewish leaders. Without any fair trial. And for himself. He understands that there is no just cause.

For him to be here. And he interrogates them in this way too. In verse 29. Pilate went outside and he said. What accusation do you bring against this man?

He knows what's going on. He knows that Jesus is a victim of their hatred. And their plot. And their evil. He's engaged here himself.

When Jesus is delivered to him. He engages Herod also. And what he's asking is. Why is Jesus standing here? Awaiting sentence.

[ 8 : 44 ] Awaiting condemnation. Awaiting crucifixion. Awaiting crucifixion. Awaiting crucifixion. Why is Jesus here? And the Jews themselves. Are saying to Pilate.

In verse 30. If he were not doing evil. We would not have delivered him over to you. And then again. They respond in verse 31. It's not lawful for us.

Put anyone to death. And what's inferred. And that is. The Jews are saying to Pilate. It's up to you. This is a done deal. All you have to do is. Take this man.

And crucify him. Stop asking questions. Just deal with this. And they're standing here. Before this formidable governor.

And what's happening here is. That mob rule is threatening to break out. We see something of that. In verse 40. The crowds are crying out to Pilate.

[ 9 : 39 ] That they want Barabbas. And not Jesus. We saw earlier on today. How they're shouting. Crucify him. Crucify him. And yet he stands here. In this difficult position.

Troubled within himself. Troubled at what's going on. In the realization of the inconsistency. Of this charge. The inconsistency of their actions.

Would the Jews really deliver their king. To a Roman governor. And demand he put to death. Death. And so when Pilate enters in. Again in verse 33.

He moves behind the facade. He wants to move beyond the superficial. Time is running out.

And he needs answers to his questions. He needs something substantial. Are you the king of the Jews? In verse 34.

[10:41] Jesus said. Do you say this of your own accord? Or did others say to you about me? You see what Jesus is doing in verse 34. Is he's asking them.

Are you genuinely interested? Is this a sincere question? Because we all know that. Pilate here is going on second hand information.

And Pilate knows it himself. And so Jesus speaks in this way. Is this what others have told you about me? And what Jesus is placing before Pilate is.

Is this enough for you? Is second hand information enough? Is that all you're going to go on with in life? About me?

And could that not be a question that we ask ourselves too? Have we really ourselves come to have an encounter with Jesus? Or are we constantly going on second hand information?

[11:41] We've heard what other people have said about the gospel. We've seen the change in other people's lives. But have we really come to examine Jesus for ourselves?

Have we really come to answer these questions? Are we here because we're genuinely interested in Jesus? Or are we keeping him at arm's length? It's all second hand information.

We've never come to truly know him for ourselves. It's not our opinion. It's other people's opinions. We're basing everything on. And in the background to this.

The Jews are there. Crying for his crucifixion. And the contrast between Pilate and the Jews. Is that they didn't really want to know.

They weren't really interested. Jesus is here because they haven't understood. They haven't come to know him for themselves. They've passed judgment on him and dismissed him.

[12:40] And said we don't want anything to do with this man. Get this man away from us. They don't understand all they want is they want rid of Jesus. They want him to go.

They want him to be silent. They want him to be put to death. But what of Pilate? And what of you? Have you got any interest in this man? In verse 35 Jesus says. Am I a Jew? Your own nation.

The chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? What have you done? Is this question. Further interrogation.

What has Jesus done? What has brought him here? Why is he standing here before the governor? And in verse 35 of the first part. He said am I a Jew? I'm not interested in your religious squabbles.

[13:41] This is not a question about religious squabbles. This is a question about whether you truly know Jesus. Whether you are genuinely interested in him.

Not a debate that the Jews are involved in. But this is something more personal. Here it's between Jesus and Pilate. Tonight it's between you and Jesus.

The question is personal. Others have rejected him. And what will you do?

Jesus responds to the question of verse 35. And he says my kingdom is not of this world. The whole charge was treason. That the Jews are trying to make a case.

That this man is a threat to Caesar. The great Caesar. The king of the empire. That this man is claiming to be a Jew. And what Jesus is doing here is demonstrating.

[14:43] That he's not a threat. He's not a threat to Caesar. It's a different kind of kingdom. This is the divine disclosure. Of the kind of kingdom Jesus has.

My kingdom is not of this world. That's not the kind of king I am. That's not the kind of empire. Kingdom that I have. Caesar is the king in Rome.

And he rules over the vast empire. And the vast empire has conquered through nations. And has gone through continents. This great empire.

One of the greatest empires of the world. And Jesus says. My empire is not like that. That's not my kind of kingdom. It's not of this world. It's not about this world.

Caesar is ruling lands. Jesus has come to rule hearts. This is a spiritual kingdom. Where the people come in. And Jesus is Lord.

[15:41] That Jesus becomes everything to you. The one whom you need. He has freely offered in the gospel. And what's amazing here.

In verse 37. That Jesus invites Pilate. And I think for us. This is really the climax. Of this court drama.

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. Can you hear

that Pilate?

Pilate. There is truth. And this great extraordinary situation. That the accused invites the judge. And he shows him that he has everything to offer.

And he tries to entice him with the word of truth. Is Pilate really interested in this? Does Pilate really want to know? Does Pilate really want to understand?

[16:42] Does Pilate want to have a real substantial purpose? In his life. Or to carry on from one thing to another. In the midst of a broken world.

That offers nothing but emptiness. And here is Jesus. Offering freedom. Offering life. Offering healing. And life. Here is real truth offered.

Do you understand Jesus? Do you understand what he has to offer you? And secondly. The second point really is.

That there is a battle here. A battle for truth. And conscience. And we see this in verse 37. Where Pilate is speaking.

And questioning. So you are a king. And then Jesus invites him. As we have seen. And here is Pilate standing. Listening to these things. And I think Pilate is fatigued.

[17:45] Here is a man who lives in the Roman Empire. He has heard of philosophies. Every nation. That the Roman Empire has gone into. They have got their own religions.

He has heard of the theories of science. He has heard of all of these things. And again and again. There is little substance. Of foundation. When these claims are searched out.

All the same claims. Of exclusivity. And so Pilate here is fatigued. With so called truth.

And when he comes here. What is he going to do? Can he really understand? Can he really understand that before him.

That this is the moment of genuine revelation. That finally he has come before truth. Is he able to perceive.

[18:44] That this is sincere. That this is real. Maybe he has forsaken his own quest for truth. Maybe he is so tired of all the voices.

He has put his search of. And he just goes on with the mundane of life. With nothing before him. No purpose. No meaning. No truth. And yet this is the greatest moment of Pilate's life.

This is the moment where he finally comes to encounter truth. For himself. When Jesus speaks. When Jesus speaks. To his situation.

And to his heart. And soul. This is where you need to come to friend. In your search for truth. And in your search for meaning.

And purpose. That you need to come to Jesus. Jesus. And maybe this is the moment of your life. The greatest opportunity of all.

[19:47] Where Jesus is speaking to your soul. And calling you to listen to his voice. Calling you to come to him. To find freedom.

To find truth. What's interesting. Is that in the search for truth. Truth begins to search us.

And there is a battle of conscience. In verse 38. After he said this. He went back outside the Jews. And he told them. I find no guilt in this man.

Because when you come to encounter Jesus. A response is demanded. That you have to respond in some way. And you're coming to encounter Jesus again.

What do you think? What do you think of truth? What do you think of Jesus? What do you think of his word?

[20:50] As it's speaking to you here. Is he telling the truth? And Pilate is going out. And he says. I'm finding no guilt. He is coming to this point.

And he said to Jesus. What is truth? I don't understand. I don't know. He's filled with sarcasm. And questioning. And he's in this position.

That leaving life. The way it is. And this is how so many people are living. That they're demonstrating sarcasm. To the exclusive claims of Christ.

And leaving life to fuzzy logic. And feelings. That's how we live. We live by our feelings. We'll do what we feel is right. Because we don't know what is right.

There's nothing concrete there. We can't discern between right and wrong. And Jesus says.

Everyone who is of truth listens to my voice. Here is truth.

[21:49] This is the Jesus that you cannot ignore. You cannot ignore him. He makes claims on your soul. On your life.

And he calls you to assess. He calls you to question. He calls you to search yourself. And to search him.

And finally. Pilate says. Not guilty. We know that this verdict is not going to stand. The Jews are going to make him change. But at this point he is saying.

No guilt. This man has done nothing wrong. That's what he does. After he has encountered Jesus. That's his response to Jesus.

And so we also have to come. And to take this seriously. Because this is the battle of our conscience. Is what Jesus says right?

[ 22 : 48 ] Is he telling the truth? And he comes and he searches our soul. And he searches our conscience.

And what's been asked of us is. Are we doing what is right? Are we living in a way that is right? Have we done things that are wrong?

Is our lives littered with wrong? Because when we come to encounter truth. It demands right and righteousness.

And when we come to encounter Jesus for ourselves. He searches us. He impacts us. He makes demands on our heart and soul.

Searches out what is wrong in our lives. Demanding truth. Demanding right. And this is the point where we have to see. That truth changes people.

[ 23 : 49 ] It transforms them. It makes them new. It brings them to the point where they are convicted. That they have sinned. And they need a savior. You will never come to your recognition.

That you need a savior. Until you see that you've sinned. Until you see that you've done things wrong. And you stand guilty. Before God.

Here is Jesus. Standing before Pilate. Before his death. Fulfilling the purpose of God.

He is to die for the sins of his people. That his righteousness would be imputed to them. Their trespasses to him. Here he is as the only savior.

The only solution. The only hope that we can possibly have. Here is the greatest moment of Pilate's life. Face to face with Jesus Christ.

[ 24 : 50 ] Interrogating him. Questioning him. Encountering him. Having his words search into his heart and mind and soul. And what does Pilate do?

What does Pilate do? Verse 38. After this. After he had said this. He went outside. You'll see what Pilate is doing here.

He's turning his back on Jesus. Elsewhere we're told. That he tries to wash his hands of Jesus. He turns his back on Jesus.

And he leaves truth behind. He's encountered the truth about Jesus. He's encountered the truth about himself. And he has heard the wonderful gospel invitation.

And he has declined. He has wasted the single greatest opportunity of his life. He's let it go. He's turned round.

[ 26 : 01 ] And walked out on Jesus. That he wants nothing to do. With this man. And this is the stark reality. Of this man.

And this is. The greatest moment. And the greatest opportunity passed by. Because he gives up on truth. And he gives up on the quest for truth. And he gives up on Jesus.

What a frightening reality. And people are doing this every day. In the moments that God is speaking to them. And the truth about Jesus Christ.

Is their experience. And they choose to wash their hands. And turn their back. And walk away from truth.

And walk away from Jesus. Jesus. And. And. And. So really what I want to ask you tonight. Is. What about you? Is that not enough about Pilate?

[ 27 : 08 ] Pilate is gone. Pilate's time and opportunity. Is away. Today. Today. Pilate is in eternity. The scripture indicates to us.

That Pilate is in a lost eternity. That after his death. He lifted his eyes. In torment. And for eternity. This moment will haunt him. What is truth? Forever he will suffer. Because he went back outside.

Because he tried to wash his hands of Jesus. That is enough about Pilate. But what about you?

That you've got a life.

That you've got a quest for truth. That you've got a soul. That will go on for eternity. That you've got an eternity. Live for yourself.

[ 28 : 14 ] And what will you do with truth? What will you do. With Jesus. And his voice is speaking so powerfully.

And so clearly. Everyone who is of the truth. Listens to my voice. Will you listen to the voice of Jesus?

Will he enter into your heart? Will you have a real. Meaningful relationship. With truth. With truth. Do you really want it?

Do you really want him? This is quite a simple plea. And quite a simple question. To you. That the question is one.

That you have to realize. For yourself. A question. That stands. Between you and the Lord. And your encounters with him. And who knows.

[ 29 : 13 ] That this is not the greatest opportunity. Of your life today. Who knows. That truth. Might be your encounter tonight. In such a unique way.

Like you've never experienced before. Who knows. That maybe tonight. It's you the Lord is speaking to. But you're called. To make a response.

You're called. To evaluate. The truth yourself. And Pilate is coming here. In verse 38. Saying I find no guilt in him. We're asking Pilate. What's your response?

He's saying. The man's not guilty. But I will not go with him. He will suddenly. And quickly. Give him back up. To be haunted forever. Friend.

There is an eternity for you. And praise God. That the good news is. That there is a heaven. And praise God. That the gospel is. That Christ came to save sinners.

[ 30 : 14 ] To make the way open to us. To go to that cross. Having here been sentenced. By Pontius Pilate. To go to that cross. To suffer and to die.

In order that we may live. Praise God. I can say to you. That there is a heaven. And I believe. That by your very presence. Here tonight.

That you want somehow. To be there. That you want somehow. That you will be found in heaven. That in the reality. Of your own evaluation.

Of the word of God. And the truth of the gospel. That you don't want to go. To a lost hell. That you don't really want to turn your back on Jesus.

But I'm telling you. That you can't leave life to fuzzy logic. And feelings. You need to have more. You need to have something concrete. And substantial. You need to come to Jesus.

[ 31 : 13 ] For he tells us in the gospel. That this gospel. Is exclusive. This is exclusive truth. I am the way. The truth. And the life.

And no man comes to the Father. But by me. There is no other way to heaven. He is the door. He is the straight and narrow way we must go.

He is the only way to salvation. There is nothing else. And you can't carry on. Living. Listening to the broken promises.

Of this world. When you know it's meaningless. And you know that this is the only reality. What God has said. And a heaven and a hell.

That is presented before you. And I wonder as I look at you. What will you do? What will you do with Jesus?

[ 32 : 16 ] Will you really tonight turn your back? Would you really be willing to go to a lost eternity? Everything is ready. Everything is done.

All you have to do is come. Repent of your sin. Leave it all behind. Leave the old life behind. Come to him.

To experience the wonderful power of truth. And how it transforms life. And changes the course of everything. So that friend you would be saved.

Do you want to be saved? Do you want to know truth? He is here in the gospel. And he is freely offered.

May it be so. That you seek him. While he is to be found. Let's pray together. God our Father in heaven.

[ 33 : 20 ] And we give thanks to you for your word. And we give thanks to you for your word. It's great gospel invitations and encouragements. We thank you. We thank you and bless you and praise you. For all that you mean to us.

The one who is truth. The one who changes our lives and gives us hope. Save us we pray oh Lord. That we would not be lost. Grant to us that we would find that safe haven.

That we would be found in Jesus. That we would have a heaven. That we would belong there. But grant to us that we would take seriously.

What the gospel says. We need to be born again. Bless us then we pray and forgive us our sins. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Let's sing again to God's praise in Psalm 119 on page 403.

Let thy sweet mercy is also. Sorry. Psalm 119 page 403. Verse 41. Let thy sweet mercies also come. And visit me oh Lord. Even thy benign salvation according to thy word.

[ 34 : 44 ] So shall I have. Wherewith I may give him an answer just. Who spitefully reproacheth me. For in thy word I trust. The word of truth.

Out of my mouth take thou not utterly. For on thy judgments righteous my hope. That still rely. So shall I keep forevermore. Thy law continually. And so that I thy precepts seek.

I'll walk at liberty. I'll speak thy word to kings. And I with shame shall not be moved. And will delight myself also in thy laws. Which I have loved.

To thy commandments which I loved. My hands lift up I will. And I will also meditate upon thy statutes still. Let's sing these words together.

The praise of God. Let's stand to sing. Let thy sweet mercies also come.

[ 35 : 47 ] And bless. Let's sing you with us.

to thy word. So shall I have withereth I may give him an answer just.

First thy glory reproach at me for in thy word I trust.

The word of truth at all my mouth take thou not utter me.

For all my judgments righteous my hope does still rely.

[ 37 : 21 ] So shall I keep forevermore thy law contenderly and set the time thy peace and sea I'll hold at liberty I speak thy word to kings and I with shape shall not be moved I will delight myself always in thy

Lord which I love to thy commandments which I love my hands lift up I will and I will also meditate upon thy statue still now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen for