

We are living in the age of post-modernism. This way of thinking does not accept anything as absolute, but rather questions everything. According to this way of thinking, there is no authority that can determine absolute right from wrong. What may be right for one person may not be right for someone else, and who is to say that one way is better than another. So whatever opinions one expresses are valid only for that person, and dare not be forced upon someone else. This way of thinking is so pervasive that even gender reveal parties are being discouraged — discouraged because the unborn child has not yet determined whether it wants to identify as male or female. While there will always be disagreements about the wisdom of one action over another, such as where to locate a landfill, it is also true that there are certain things that are absolute — about which there should be no disagreement. We have an example of that in the question which is before us this evening. But even those things are questioned. Absolute truth can be a very elusive thing. So it really does not surprise us to hear Pilate this evening ask Jesus, WHAT IS TRUTH? I. The Truth is not always what we want to hear, II. But the Truth is something which we all need to hear.

After the Jews had convicted Jesus of blasphemy and therefore He should die, they had to have Him tried before a Roman court, because only the Romans were allowed to carry out the death penalty. That is why they brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the region. Pilate wanted to know what charges they were bringing against Jesus, and what evidence they had. The first accusations that were brought against Jesus were ones that were intended to get the attention of a Roman ruler: that He was stirring up the people, telling them not to pay taxes, and claiming to be a king.

Pilate knew he needed to get to the truth, so he took Jesus into the judgment hall and asked Him if He were a king. Before Jesus could answer that question, he wanted to know how Pilate understood the term, king. It was obvious that Jesus was not an earthly king that would cause trouble for the Roman government, but still it was true that Jesus was a different type of king. “You are a king then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, **“You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.”** (37)

Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world. But He did come to this world for a very specific reason. That reason was to testify to the Truth. This was an open invitation to Pilate to have Jesus tell him all about this Truth. But Pilate was not interested in this type of truth. All he was interested in at this time was the truth that would help him to settle this case.

When Pilate asked, “What is Truth?” he probably was not sneering at Jesus for it really seems that Pilate had a certain measure of respect and admiration for Jesus. But still that did not mean he was interested in this type of discussion. As an earthly judge presiding over this case, Pilate did not want to get into a religious or philosophical debate about what is really truth. He simply wanted to get this case over with.

The Romans were a lot like our society today. The old Roman religion no longer suited many of the people. Many were no longer following the old gods. They felt that they were too enlightened to believe in that mythology. But they did not have anything to offer in its place. So the Romans were becoming skeptics. As they listened to all of their philosophers expound on what they thought was truth, they did not believe any of them. They liked to listen, but they refused to take any of it to heart. We are fast becoming just like those old Romans. The religious truths taught in the Bible are considered old fashioned and no longer applicable to situations today. They will admit that many people still cling to those old religious beliefs, but not if they are truly educated and enlightened because there can be no such thing as absolute truth.

But absolute truth is exactly what Jesus came to this world to teach us. He came into this world from heaven so that He might testify to this absolute truth — which is the truth we all need to hear. Pilate may have rejected it for himself, but still Jesus wants to explain to us what this Truth is.

The Truth which we all must listen to is the Truth which we know only because it has been revealed to us through Jesus. All know that we are sinners because God has given each of us the law written upon our hearts, and a conscience to bear witness to that law. Now, our conscience is not always correct, but it still does remind us that we have failed to live as perfectly as God wants us to live. But we have no idea of how we might be able to set things right with God after we sin. Everything which we might try falls far short, and offers us no comfort.

It was for this reason that Jesus came into the world — to show God's great love and compassion for us. During His life on earth, Jesus gave oral testimony to the Truth which God wants us all to know. Now, we see Him giving His life so as to take away the sins of the whole world. No human mind would ever have been able to come up with this perfect plan. By punishing Jesus, God's righteousness remains intact. By punishing Jesus in our place, God's love shines through, for we are all forgiven through the work which Jesus came to this world to do for us.

Jesus gives us the testimony to this Truth as we have it in His Word. All of this has been written down for our learning and instruction, so that we might come to faith and be received as God's forgiven children. This Word bears God's almighty power behind it, for when it touches the heart, it is able to change that heart from one who refuses to believe, to one who receives with joy all of the blessings won for him by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Everyone on the side of truth listens to Jesus. Once one has been converted, convinced of the Truth that Jesus brings will now let that Truth rule in his heart. He will now let Jesus lead him throughout his life here on this earth. At times we may not understand what or why Jesus is saying something to us, but because we know that He always speaks the Truth, and has shown us His great love, we will gladly and willingly follow Him and everything that He has to say to us.

The philosophers and scholars of this world, using their own reason and understanding, will never be able to agree on what is the absolute truth. But we do not need them, because Jesus has revealed to us in His Word what is the Truth. Those who are on the side of the Truth, listen to Jesus. There can be no doubts when Jesus speaks, for He tells us what we need to hear in order to have eternal life with Him.