

Good Evening! Grace and Peace from God our Father and Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

This passage from John presents such a challenge to us. We would expect that challenge to come from God or Jesus or maybe a prophet or apostle you know the usual suspects but instead we hear it from least likely, Pilate.

What is Truth?

Pilate says this to dismiss Jesus. To dismiss the issue. To ease his conscious on giving over an innocent man to appease the crowd. What is truth to Pilate? Truth is whatever gives him power and keeps him in power. There is a "truth" that our world so easily accepts for whatever reason. We are in a battle right now in our culture, in our world over truth. What is real, what is fake. What matters what doesn't. What is a lie and what is the truth?

A simple truth that we know every day is that sin is here. Sin is ripping us to pieces. Sin is tearing down every creation and seeks nothing else but destruction. We also know this profound truth. We know where god is present there is life and creation and connection. We know that truth. And we get to hear that over and over again in this text and in John.

We hear that and a few other truths. We hear how Jesus is a king. We learn about where Jesus' true kingdom is. About how those who hear him hear the truth of this world. Those who hear his voice here the good news of salvation.

Now if you happened to be thinking wow this all sounds a little familiar that's because it really is. A few weeks ago we were a few chapters back in John in chapter ten. It was about Jesus being the Good shepherd. About the flock hearing and knowing intimately the shepherds voice. About Jesus being a good shepherd to all the sheep in all the world, even those sheep that we don't know about but the ones he does.

Now fair warning I'm about to go a little bible nerd on you here but I think this is so cool and I know John had to have done this on purpose so it's worth pointing out.

In John 10, Jesus says all those things, I am the good shepherd, I'm for all the sheep everywhere, my sheep know my voice and will only follow my voice. I protect the sheep from the bandits and robbers. He talks about a wolf coming and scattering the sheep and the hired hand running scared from the wolf. He talks about having authority from the father to lay down his own life and pick it back up again. With me so far?

Here in John 18; Now we hear Jesus again saying I am the king, my kingdom is beyond this world, my followers hear my voice and know truth. I'll lay down my life for them and not say a word of defense for myself. And as you may know, we've also already heard last week about how when the wolves came, Jesus' first hired hand Peter abandoned the flock, just like everyone else.

Then the next story in John 10 is the Jews hearing Jesus reject Jesus and try to kill him.

And then here in chap 18, Barabbas the bandit enters into the story. Fun Fact, the name Barabbas comes from 2 Hebrew words bar – son and Abba – father. Barabbas literally means “son of the father” and the Jews once again reject Jesus and pick the robber.

Then the next story in chapter 10 is the death of Lazarus. The horrible sorry the sense of total loss from those who loved him most.

And so very soon we will hear the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

But then after his death comes the resurrection of Lazarus. Where Lazarus heard that voice of the good Shepherd. Heard the voice of his king from beyond the grave and heard its truth. And rises anew.

And soon, so very very soon we are going to hear that story, we will hear the amazing news, the incredible news, this news of new eternal abundant life that a sure and hard truth for us all.

And you’re probably thinking wow that’s pretty cool, but wait there’s more!

Back earlier in John we hear the story after the resurrection of Lazarus about Mary anointing Jesus

And who is charged first with this most important message, this incredible truth that all of creation rejoices over? Mary who anointed her savior.

John tells this story over and over and over and over and over in different ways. We need to hear this story over and over and over and over to believe it. To know the astounding truth behind it and within it. Maybe if Pilate would have been a Jew he might have understood a little more, maybe picked up on a glimpse of the truth that Jesus offered, but he had his mind on other things.

The truth that Jesus brings ultimately is God is and will be here for all people. The ultimate truth of God is that Jesus died and rose again for all people. The Son of the father died for the son of the father. The truth is that innocent was punished while the guilty went free. The truth we know, the truth that we answer in, is the Gospel of our Lord.

We are united in that truth, that one message, in our one Lord. We are never separated or scattered from our God. Never again. No matter who is proclaims fake news to us or trying to shout us down the loudest. No matter what seeks to drive us apart we are united in Christ now and forevermore. Amen.