

Pastor Jordan Gades 3.18.18 John 19:1-16

I talked about truth a lot last week. About how Pilate see's truth. Again and again he see the truth that Jesus is innocent. He has done nothing wrong. And yet truth for Pilate is also that which will keep him in his job. Keep him in power.

When have you felt the most powerful?

This one might be a guy thing but when I'm working on something, got my array of tools. And sometimes there's just that one bolts right? And when it finally gives! Or maybe when you're blowing through that wall with a 20 pound sledge. Tim the tool man Taylor got that much right. And more than just destruction, there's creation as well. You feel like you can build anything, do anything, when it all finally comes together right. Your just feel good, empowered to take on the world

But what about when you have you felt the most powerless?

At the birth of my first born daughter, Elora. 50 hours of labor in, Elora's heart rate was dropping during contractions. They told us they would need to do an emergency c section now. I was pushed aside, and then put in this room by myself for the next 20 minutes. With nothing I could do but pray and trust in the doctors and nurses taking care of my wife and child.

There are so many things in our world that give us the illusion of power. And yet time and time again there are just so many things that just show us how powerless we are. And in our powerlessness is where we tend to finally turn back to God. We know we should be turning to God all the time. We are striving to do that. But the truth of the matter we usually fail. There is a truth we have to face. It is a truth that comes along with Jesus. It is the power that comes along with Jesus. To reveal the truth. It is a power that is revealed over and over again in John. Even way back at the beginning with the woman at the well. He knew her truth. But His truth, Gods truth, the good news itself injected itself into her life. Through him she was brought back into the community which she had been shunned. And even early Jesus' first miracle, when the truth of our world said there was scarcity our God showed up and showed his power and his truth in an abundance of wine out of water. And when Peter said his truth about how powerful he was and how loyal he was, how great a follower of Jesus he was, the truth was made known.

And this week Pontius Pilate. Here was a man who knew a bit about power. Here was a man with a plan. He was the Roman governor of Israel. He was the highest authority other than the emperor himself to these people. He could do whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted. This man commanded legions, had complete say over taxes, had the right to sit as judge for any person from the highest to the lowest and pronounce any judgment he wanted. And he was a man with future aspirations. He wanted to get out of this rebellious little backwater and move closer to Rome with a respectful place to rule over. But he had to show he had the power to do so here in Israel.

So here we meet the man with all the power meeting Pilate, the man who thought he had all the power. If you noticed in this reading you see how much power Pilate has. With his meeting

with Jesus the truth of his power is revealed. Surprisingly enough, Pilate finds Jesus innocent. He makes a good judgement when it would have been easier to not to. To just dismiss completely this nobody from the middle of nowhere. But somehow all this power hasn't completely gone to his head. But he comes face to face with another truth, if he truly wants power he can no longer be for justice. This man with thousands of troops also can't lose face or let a rebellion break loose. He has to bow before the demands of the people.

It comes of a little strange for Jesus to proclaim that he has the power in this situation. But then again there is something strange about Jesus power. The power to lay down his own life, the power to pick it up again. The power to save us, us who turn away every chance we get, save us all from our sin. But first in order to bring life, he has to die.

That lays out the complexity of our faith. To have power as God Has power it first means thinking of others first. To wield power like our God wields power we must put others first in our actions. And this power is given to us freely as a free gift to use to change this world.

Of course the dangerous thing is that this power changes us as well. Instead of seeking more power we become obsessed with justice and love. This power that flows from our God fills us up so completely that we overflow in overabundance. We are so filled that that we cannot help but to rather seek out, promote, fight for, yearn for, justice and love.

It is when we let go of our own power that we begin to fully realize that God has in our lives and this world. That realization begins in our baptism. That is when we for the first time that God has all the power and that we are in complete and total need of him. And in that moment God comes and fills us and empowers us with the Holy Spirit which resides with us forever.

In this inverted use of power we find the story of the Jesus Christ laid out before us. We see the ultimate being, the one through whom creation was made into being, walk willing to his death. We see the example of full and complete might being poured out for those with none, with no judgement for who it is used for, nor payments for its use. We see complete power look like complete weakness. And so does the whole world. The power of our God stands as an opposite to power as we understand it in the world.

But why does this matter? What do we do with the story of our messiah?

We turn once more back to Pilate. What he knew of power and justice are what we know of power and justice. Our mind knows what power looks like and it knows justice when it sees it. But when confronted with God we are often wrong. Or we just choose power like Pilate did. We put ourselves first to keep or gain power. But our God works differently. And we have to continually do this as well. It is a more conscious choice, a choice to sit with the decision and look at it with the other person as more important one, as the one in need of empowerment. That is how God looks at us. God says to us how can I give you what you want and need, how can I give you more of my power, my love, my grace. How can I get you to accept it and

understand it in the midst of all the pain you have. Look to the Son. And you will see it. Here is your God giving of himself for your sake, because he cannot because he has to, because he loves you for no other reason than your existence. There lies the power of God. Amen.