

Truth

Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). Today, Christ will be arrested. He has healed, fed, and loved the thousands, and now both foreigners and Israel alike will turn Him in to be killed. His disciples will abandon Him, His zealous follower will deny him. The words on everyone’s lips as they look for answers: “What is the truth?” Do you follow Him? Are you Jesus of Nazareth? Are you a King? What is the truth? As we have discussed for weeks: John is writing this gospel to make a case for Christ, that Jesus is the Messiah, this account written so that we may believe. In this passage, Christ is put on the witness stand and shares His own purpose: *“For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.”* And all of us must also ask Pilate’s question and be sure to find the answer: “What is truth?”

Prepare Your Heart

I encourage you to read Isaiah 52:13-53:6 before you begin your study today. We will read about the arrest of Jesus, and it is good to remember that the arrest of Christ is the fulfillment of the promises from the Old Testament and a great hope for all of us - He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, even as we rejected Him. Praise Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, Lamb of God.

John 18:1-11 ¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” ⁵They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁸Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” ⁹This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) ¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

- 1) Read verse 4 again. Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him. Yet He still came to die. He still brought Judas into His inner circle. Why did He do that?

- 2) What causes the men to “fall to the ground”?

- 3) Even as Christ is being betrayed and taken away, what is His priority? (see verses 8&9)

- 4) In verse 10, we see Peter defend and fight back, boldly and rashly, by drawing his sword and cutting off the ear of a servant. Peter is often bold, first to speak, and a leader in the group. How does this scene fit those characteristics?

- 5) Contrary to Peter's reaction, what is Christ's reaction? (See verse 11)

- 6) Consider these three in the group. What are they feeling? What are their actions motivated by?
 - Judas –
 - Peter –
 - Jesus –

John 18:12-18 ¹²So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. ¹⁵Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

- 7) Let's take a moment to examine Peter's character traits throughout his time with Christ so far. Write what kind of character Peter has in these passages:
 - Matthew 14:27-32 –
 - John 13:8-9 –
 - John 13:37 –

- 8) Given these, are you surprised that Peter denies Christ?

- 9) What causes Peter to deny Christ?

- 10) What causes you to deny Christ? Where do you fail to acknowledge your faith, or fail to share who you follow?

- 11) What makes it difficult to follow Christ?

John 18:19-27 ¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said." ²²When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³Jesus answered him, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?" ²⁴Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

- 12) When Jesus is examined by the high priest, a man with authority, He seems to be the only one comfortable in the room. Jesus is testifying about what He's done and said, and reporting that there are witnesses. What's making everyone uncomfortable?

- 13) Here again, we see Peter deny Christ. He seems to be following the action but no longer coming into the spotlight, as he has in the past. He's standing in corners, and people are coming to question him. Compare and contrast Peter and Jesus in this passage. How do they act and react when people examine them and ask about the truth?

John 18:28-40 ²⁸Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." ³¹Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." ³²This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³³So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "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." ³⁸Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

14) What are the reasons that Jesus is being "passed around" from person to person?

15) Jesus says, in verse 36, that if His kingdom were of this world His servants would be fighting. But, His kingdom is not of this world. What are His "servants" (Jewish authorities, Roman authorities, and even those who have followed Him) all currently doing to Him?

16) What kingdom is Jesus talking about that is "not of this world?"

17) John has been writing this gospel, testifying to the Truth, "so that you may believe." In verse 37, what is the purpose Jesus gives for His own life?

18) Pilate asks, "What is truth?" Read John 14:6 and see if you can answer his question.

Reflect

When things got difficult, Peter lost his boldness and no longer defended the Truth. When are you tempted to do the same, and why? How can you pray for boldness and forgiveness in those things? (Spoiler alert - Peter still has the opportunity to love and follow Christ later. There is forgiveness through Christ!)

John the apostle/gospel writer, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself all boldly bear witness to the Truth. How can you reflect them and proclaim Christ? How can you do that even in this season of quarantine?

Do you believe that Jesus is the Way, Truth, and the Life? What does that mean to you today? Finish this statement: Knowing that God is _____, shows me that I am _____. Explain.

As you end your time, I hope you will praise Jesus for coming to bring Truth and to carry our sorrows. "Man of Sorrows" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iBA-WcjegY>