

## John 18 -19 What is Truth?

Here is a sad and cynical question which Roman Governor Pilate asks while interrogating Jesus. 'What is truth?'

It's understandable. The uncomfortable truth that Pilate knows well is that humanly speaking this is a set up, the culmination of a jealous vendetta by Jewish leaders desperate to cling onto their limited power. So is he! Word of unrest in Palestine must not get back to Emperor Tiberius in Rome. So they're all going to do what is politically expedient and crucify the innocent preacher from Galilee whose teaching has excited some of the people.

Apparently this happens all the time. Authorities do what they feel they must to keep order. Whatever deal is deemed politically correct, culturally acceptable to those making most noise or the best damage limitation proposal is quickly and ruthlessly put into operation. By tomorrow night there'll be some different story on the teatime news to distract everyone and life will go on as usual, they hope!

This is the only truth Pilate knows, he's built his career on it, so, not for the first time he suppresses what's left of his conscience and signs the death warrant.

But there's more to the truth than Pilate and many others might wish to see!

The truth is there is a higher throne, a higher judgement seat than his, or that of any human authority. It's not Jesus Who is on trial, it's Pilate and the High Priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin! They're being weighed in the balances of the Almighty and found sorely wanting! Spiritually empty and morally bankrupt they face the judgement of heaven's court!

The truth is the clock is ticking and time is running out for these men, and for a world that thinks it knows better than God.

The Apostle John who was eyewitness to and recorded these sordid events writes of a better and higher truth than just our shameful human compromises with evil. His purpose in writing is to proclaim the Gospel, the '*Good News*' of Jesus, eternal Son of God Who has come into the world from the Father 'full of grace and *truth*' to be the Saviour of all Who believe.

The divine 'Word' became flesh and made His home among us that whoever receives Him and believes in His name is given power to become children of God and will not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus is the source of all light and life, come into a world lost in darkness, not to condemn us but to save us, if we are willing. John has presented us with examples of people discovering this light and life and salvation. The guests at the wedding party, the Pharisee Nicodemus, the woman at the well in Samaria, a disabled man, a blind man, a dead man! A woman almost stoned to death for serious sin but given another chance.

Jesus says that those who hold onto and practise His teachings are His disciples who 'know *the truth*', and are liberated by it! We are set free from sin, the guilt and shame, the binding habits, the hopeless pursuits of darkness to celebrate 'abundant life', life in all its fulness to the glory of God.

Jesus offers Himself as the 'living bread' from heaven to satisfy our deepest longings. He offers the 'living water' of the Holy Spirit, in ch 14 called 'the Spirit of *truth*', to bring us to new birth and constantly refresh and sustain us. As 'Good Shepherd' He lays down His life for His sheep. As 'True Vine' He assures His followers of the strength and support we need. He promises resurrection and a secure home for all in His Father's heavenly 'house'.

This is the truth, the good news of Jesus. He is the only way for sinners like us to approach the judgement seat of God and call Him 'Father'. 'I am the Way,' He declares, '*I am the truth, and the life!*'

On the cross Jesus demonstrates and puts into effect the truth of God's justice, His uncompromising holiness coupled with His amazing grace and love. God detests our sin and rebellion, but he loves us dearly! Justice is satisfied, sin atoned for by the offering of the pure and perfect Lamb of God. All this mercy and forgiveness and generous blessing of life is paid for with our Lord's suffering.

The way is cleared, the truth made plain, the life offered to all who will receive it. Jesus prays we might come from darkness to light and be saved and made holy in the fellowship of God's people by this truth found in the Word of God.

Jesus, Son of God, Saviour of the world, the Holy Spirit sent to live in the hearts of His followers, the Word of God, written in Scripture, these are the truth, the greatest, most vital truth the world needs to hear! This is the message that brings us from death to life. Eyewitness John is unapologetic about his agenda as he comes towards the end of his Gospel.

'Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples that are not recorded in this book,' he says, 'But these are written that you may believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.’ (John 20 v 30-31)

Christians want other people to become Christians too. John and the other apostles did. For this cause they gave up their homes and careers to preach far and wide and most were eventually martyred for their faith. Yet 2000 years later this truth of Jesus remains and continues to transform lives in every corner of every continent. We who profess to know the Lord must share this passion to pray and share and see family, friends, neighbours, work associates come to know Him also.

Because it’s not just Pilate and Caiaphas who are on trial here. The whole world stands guilty before its Maker. You and I are being weighed today in the balances of the Almighty. What will the verdict be?

May it not be: condemned because they loved darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil, but rather: saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, to live abundantly and serve fruitfully to the glory of God.

Amen