

"The Truth About Jesus"

John 18:37-38

Rev. Brian Saunders – District President, Iowa East District

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" says Jesus. "And no one comes to the Father but by Me." "My Word is Truth" and "The Truth cannot be broken." These are but a few Scriptures that testify to the absolute necessity of the Truth for the sake of the church. They also verify that Jesus is the Truth and that every word that comes from His lips is the Truth of God. The Bible is God's address to man, God's authoritative message about my sin and his grace. This message is not negotiable. The Bible has come from God such as it lies before me. When I open it, I can do it in the full assurance that here God wants to speak to me in order to tell me something that I otherwise could not know, something that I for the sake of my salvation must know. It is the Truth that surgically divides bone and marrow, flesh and sinew, sin and righteousness. Without it there is no church, no salvation.

The miracle that took place in the incarnation when the word became flesh continues in the church and the sacraments. He who does not understand the truth of the sacraments will not understand the depth of what Christ has done for us. Faith becomes a philosophy. Jesus becomes a moral role model. The Holy Spirit is replaced with the idealism of good intentions. But faith in God's world embracing liberation deed in the incarnation, the jubilation in God's having come to us in His Son and freed us from sin and death, everything that is part of the great drama of our salvation, it all is obliterated, forgotten or reinterpreted. Therefore Christianity itself is dissolved. Living in genuine Christianity is in its innermost essence faith in the incarnation and the atonement. It is in its innermost essence sacramental, it is the message of God's real and wondrous presence in the midst of the fallen creation, and the Lord Christ and his church.

As the narrative of Jesus passion is laid out before in John 18, we are given witness to the said ability of man to stare Truth in the face and yet deny it. Pilate is a microcosm of the sinful nature in humanity. It confuses who Jesus is with what it wants Him to be. Sinful desire is more in tune with false doctrine than it is with the Truth. "Are you a king?" Pilate asks. Whether we hear and practice the Truth determines our answer to that question concerning the Truth about Jesus.

What kind of king does false doctrine want Him to be? How about a **provider** king? All four Gospels report the incident of Jesus feeding of the 5000. John reports that as a result of this miracle the people want to make him their king. Is this the kind of king you want? A king who will take care of all your physical and material needs? A king who will always give you good health? Personal security? Many do, and become disillusioned when they experience failure or bad health, or financial difficulty. They lose heart and, like his first disciples, give up on him. The "hosannas" addressed to the Palm Sunday king are changed to the "Crucify him!" "Crucify

him!" addressed to the Good Friday king. And finally the chief priests echoed the ultimate false doctrine of our day "we have no king but Caesar."

Or how about the false doctrine king of the **political** scene? Jesus is often regarded as a model revolutionary. Even acts of violence are carried out in the name of Christ. Will things really necessarily be better if we have a Christian president? Will the church be able to carry out its mission more effectively under a government which is favorable to Christians? The confession of a people filled with a false Christ.

Then of course there is the false doctrine king who is an **accountant**. Keeping track of my many good deeds and measuring them against all those other people in the world. Add to that the unnecessary suffering I experience as a victim and God will reward me with a special place in heaven. Of these and many more examples of the false doctrine kings in our lives we are called to repentance. To kneel before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, beat our breast and cry out "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner", "woe to me for I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips."

It is only the Truth that will set us free. It was only the Truth that could set Pilate free from his bondage to idolatry and death. The Truth is in Christ Jesus who had the night before given to the world a holy meal. A meal in which the Truth would be received and its effect would have eternal blessing. The body of Jesus that would be nailed to the cross, the blood flowing from his lacerated veins for the redemption of the world would be given for us to eat and drink. It would grant the heavenly promise of forgiveness and life. It is the meal of the King Jesus. A meal where He is the provider of the Bread of Life for body and soul. A meal where He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Ruling over Satan and death and making a royal decree of innocence upon our soul. A meal where Jesus is the accountant. He keeps track of every sin that he removed from me. He displays before the Father and clean slate on my behalf with the forgiveness of sins.

The Truth of the Lord's Supper is that it is a **confession**. It is a confession about my sin and my confession that Jesus is my only Savior from sin. The Truth about the Lord's Supper is that it is a supper of **remembrance**. We are at that Lord's table that once was set in the upper room in Jerusalem. We are given a historic reality that neither time nor space can deny. The Truth of the Lord's Supper is that it is **fellowship**. Where the circle ends at the chancel wall, the fellowship still continues; in the church yard is the resting place of the dead, the Lord's faithful, who now are partakers of the great banquet in heaven. The Truth of the Lord's Supper is that it is God's visible seal of the **forgiveness of sins**. We are there even though we have not deserved it nor can we deserve it. But our Lord comes and he says: "Take eat, given for you. Take Drink, given for you." The Truth about Jesus and His Supper is that it is a **mysterious union** with the Savior. That is why we bow our heads in reverence at the altar rail, trembling before God's miracle. The fit comes from the Savior Himself. The atoning blood and the life stream of the resurrection from our heavenly Lord are flowing into us making us the Body of Christ. The Truth

about the Jesus and His Supper is that it reconciles us to God that we may be **living sacrifices** to Him. In this meal we are dedicated to a life of love toward God and fervent love toward one another. In this Supper Luke 15:2 is realized "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Pilate was looking Truth in the face and missed it. Truth looks us in the face and by grace captures us for the Kingdom. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father full of grace and Truth." Amen.