



**“What is Truth?”**  
**John 18:19-40**  
**Sermon Date: March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon**

**Prayer**

As you begin your study, spend some time thanking Jesus for being the true King of kings who came into the world “to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your desire to know Him, live for Him, and worship Him as you spend time in the Word this week. As you pray, make the following words your own before the Lord (prayer written by Scotty Smith and taken from Everyday Prayers).

*“King Jesus, what but the gospel can explain the change in Peter’s life? The same disciple who nervously tried to protect you from being arrested by the authorities by cutting off ear of the high priest’s servant (John 18:10—11), the same disciple who then fled into the night and denied you three times out of fear—this same disciple calls us to fear only God and to live as model citizens in our broken world filled with broken kings, governors, and authorities. What but the gospel can explain his movement from fear and frenzy to faith and freedom?”*

*And who but you, Jesus, who reattached Malchus’s ear to his head (Luke 22:51); who but you, who could’ve dispatched ‘more than twelve legions of angels’ (Matt. 26:53); who but you can give us the freedom and courage we need to ‘silence the ignorance of foolish people’ (1 Pet. 2:15) as we live to your glory in our cities?*

*Though your kingdom is ‘not of this world’ (John 18:36 NIV), your kingdom has broken into this world and one day will utterly transform this world. Because this is true, Jesus, I need you to free me from both extremes of naïve passivity and fear-mongering aggression. Very practically, show me what ‘obeying God and not men’ looks like when the claims of your kingdom clash with the values of this world. How do I submit to the authorities for your sake while primarily only bowing my knee and heart to you as my King?*

*Please, Lord Jesus, may I only suffer for doing good—not for being fearful, obnoxious, or paranoid. May I be busy with your kingdom and not simply be a busybody (2 Thess. 3:11). Keep changing me the way you changed Peter. I pray in your most glorious name. Amen.”*

## Scripture

### **John 18:19-40 – (English Standard Version)**

*19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 20 Jesus 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. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.” 22 When 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?” 23 Jesus 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?” 24 Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

*25 Now 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.” 26 One 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?” 27 Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.*

*28 Then 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. 29 So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” 30 They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.” 31 Pilate 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.” 32 This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*

*33 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34 Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” 35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” 36 Jesus 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.” 37 Then 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.” 38 Pilate 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. 39 But 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?” 40 They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.*

## Handling the Word

1. Our passage in John partly concerns the trial of Jesus before the religious authorities. For theological reasons, John leaves out much of what the other Gospel writers include about these trials. Look up the following passages to get a more rounded context of what is happening during the trials of Jesus:

- Matthew 26:57-68 –
- Mark 14:53-65 –
- Luke 22:66-23:5 –

## **Understanding and Applying**

1. In the opening scene of our passage in verses 19-24, Jesus is questioned by the high priest and even slapped by an officer of the court. Jesus responds in a proper manner, but He is still misunderstood and misrepresented as having done something wrong. Have you ever been in that position where you have been falsely accused or misrepresented? How did that make you feel? How is Jesus' response to even physical abuse an example for us of how we should respond? Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about how we should biblically respond to persecution:
  - Matthew 5:9-12 –
  - 1 Corinthians 4:11-13 –
  - 1 Peter 4:12-19 –
  
2. The Bible is clear that God is our defender. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about this glorious truth. While it is so easy to get discouraged, how should these truths help us when we find ourselves in situations where people make false accusations against us?
  - Psalm 18:1-6 –
  - Psalm 62:1-8 –
  - Psalm 121:1-8 –
  - Romans 8:31-33 –
  
3. We read of Peter's last two denials of Jesus in verses 25-27. Take a moment to go back and read what Peter said in John 13:37. How do Peter's words in chapter 13 make these blatant denials of Jesus worse? On the other hand, can you relate to Peter with your own "denials" and failings to live up to what you hope to be for Jesus? Knowing that Jesus is going to use Peter in significant ways in the future of the church (Acts 2:14-41) despite his denials, how does this encourage you to keep following Jesus in spite of your own failures? Can you think of others in the Bible who failed and yet God showed grace and mercy and used them in effective ways as well?

4. In John 18:28, the religious leaders are not willing to enter the home Pilate for fear of being defiled. To be clear there is no specific law in the Old Testament that prohibits a Jew from entering a Gentile home. The religious leaders were simply erring on the side of caution as it may have been “possible” for something in Pilate’s home to render them “defiled.” On the other hand, they were absolutely willing to break a clear command of God—“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13)—by having Jesus, who was an innocent man, crucified. What hypocrisy. As we’re honest with ourselves, how do we see similar hypocritical thoughts and actions in our own lives? Are you quick to follow certain standards (and even judge others for not following them) and yet break other clear commands of Scripture? What are some of those specific things? We would urge you to make time to repent and ask God to help you be more consistent in your own obedience.
5. While those who had arrested Jesus and were questioning him about his claim to be the King of the Jews, we know that Jesus was in fact the Messianic King as stated by Jesus Himself (John 18:33-37). Look up the following verses and write down what they say about Jesus and his authority as Messiah and King. How should these verses cause you to worship and obey Jesus in a deeper, more meaningful way? In addition, read through and write down some of the truths of this article from Ligonier ministries on Jesus being the King of Kings: <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/jesus-king-kings/>
- John 1:41, 49 –
  - 1 Timothy 1:17 –
  - 1 Timothy 6:13-16 –
  - Revelation 17:14 –
6. Verse 36 is crucial to this whole passage as Jesus speaks of His kingdom being “not of this world.” Why is it important to understand that Jesus’ kingdom is not a physical or geographical kingdom but a *spiritual* kingdom? The kingdom Jesus refers to here can be defined as *wherever God is ruling and reigning over the hearts of His people*. Are you in the kingdom of Jesus? How is God ruling and reigning over your own heart? What does that look like in your everyday life?
7. In regards to Jesus being King, there is a sense that Jesus is “already” King and “not yet” a fully realized king. Jesus is God and is currently ruling and reigning over the hearts of people throughout the earth—that is the kingdom that is “already” here. But there is still a kingdom that is “not yet” fully realized—that kingdom will come when Jesus returns and physically rules over all creation and all people for all eternity. Read through Phillipians 2:9-11 and write down what Paul says will happen when Jesus becomes King on the earth. Is Jesus your King? Have you bowed the knee? Have you confessed Him to be your Lord? How is that reflected in your life?

8. In verse 37, Pilate asks Jesus if He is a king, and Jesus responds by agreeing that He is indeed a king. What does Jesus say is his role as a King? Importantly, Jesus says, “everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice” (v. 37). Is it possible to hear but not really listen? Can you think of examples of this in your own life? Next, are you “of the truth,” and if so, how are you listening to the voice of Jesus? What specific things has Jesus said to you through His Word that you are listening to and being obedient to accomplish for His glory? Are there things that He has said through His Word to which you have not listened or been obedient? What are some of those specific things, and what can you do to repent and listen to your Savior and King?
9. Pilate asks the penultimate question in verse 38: “What is truth?” What does our modern society say about truth? How do they define truth? Do you agree with them? Why or why not? Read the following verses and write down what you learn about biblical truth. How must these verses have an impact on our daily lives?
- Psalm 19:7-11 –
  - John 1:17 –
  - John 14:6 –
  - John 17:17 –
  - 2 Timothy 2:15 –
10. What glorious truths about Jesus, His grace, or the gospel in these verses lead you to worship Him? As you finish your study, spend a few minutes worshipping Him for these truths.

*“We might have expected that Jesus would have said, ‘I came into the world that I might be a king.’ But He explains that, as a Witness to the truth, He was the King.”*  
C.H. Spurgeon