October 8, 2017

Series: What is Truth?

**Simple Truths**

John 19:16-42

Growth Track Step 2 today …

Generosity

Prayer

**Intro:** Simple truths - sometimes the simplest truths are the hardest to accept … common examples for intro …

When Jesus was on trial before Pilate …

John 18:36-38 - Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”

Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

“What is truth?” Pilate asked.

This has been a question of the ages … debated by philosophers …

As we study the end of this book written by one of Jesus closest followers, John tells us of the crucifixion & resurrection of Jesus Christ - and we find answers to the question, “What is Truth?”

As we look today at the story of Jesus’ death by crucifixion, we see affirmed 5 simple truths:

**> Jesus is Lord**

John 19:16-22 - …So they took Jesus away. Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, “Change it from ‘The King of the Jews’ to ‘He said, I am King of the Jews.’”

Pilate replied, “No, what I have written, I have written.”

A characteristic of John’s writing is to use double meanings and irony. It seems clear here that Pilate wanted to acknowledge Jesus was different - He wanted to acknowledge that Jesus just may have been who He claimed to be - or He may have just wanted to stick it to the Jewish leaders … they were always causing him problems - he wanted to stick it in their eye in one of the most public ways he could do it.

Jesus is Lord - This is the final statement of the world.

By “the world” I mean the world system - in this case Rome.

Pilate was the representative of Rome … This is his final statement on the matter. He had it written in 3 different languages - He wanted everyone to know! This was the charge - this was the claim - this is what many believed - and this truth has been believed, proclaimed, and people have died for this truth now for 2000 years!

In the coming years, Rome, the world power, would try to stamp out Christianity …

They would fail …

Ultimately, Rome itself, and the most powerful man in the world, would recognize Jesus as the Son of God … Christianity made the faith of the Empire …

When the Roman Empire fell, the Church would remain ….

There is another sense in which this is the final statement of the world -

Just like with Rome, when all is said and done, every world power, every world ruler, will recognize Jesus - this Jesus - this One hanging naked on a cross in shame - every world power will agree with the statement that Jesus is King of King and Lord of Lords -

Philippians 2:8-11 - he humbled himself in obedience to God

and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor

and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is going to happen - Just like Rome bowed its knee to Jesus, every ruler and every person in the world will eventually bow the knee to Jesus.

Whether you do it now or not, your knee will eventually bow to Jesus. You will kneel before Him in submission. But today is the day of salvation - today is the day to recognize His lordship. For those who wait until they stand before Him in judgment, if that’s the first time they recognize Him after a lifetime of rejection and rebellion - it will be too late.

Every other prediction in the Bible has come to pass - I would be cautious about disbelieving this one.

Which leads us to the second simple truth -

**> The Bible is true.**

John 19:23-24 - When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said, “Rather than tearing it apart, let’s throw dice for it.” This fulfilled the Scripture that says, “They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing.”So that is what they did.

The Bible is true - this is the final statement of the soldiers - they simply thought they didn’t want to tear up a garment without seams - so they gambled for it instead -

They didn’t realize that this had been prophesied - they were fulfilling the prophecy without knowing it -

Look at what was written nearly 1000 years earlier -

Psalm 22:1 - My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Psalm 22:6-8 - I am scorned and despised by all!

Everyone who sees me mocks me.

They sneer and shake their heads, saying,

“Is this the one who relies on the Lord?

Then let the Lord save him!

If the Lord loves him so much,

let the Lord rescue him!”

Psalm 22:14-15 - My life is poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax,

melting within me.

My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay.

My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.

Psalm 22:16-18 - They have pierced my hands and feet.

I can count all my bones.

My enemies stare at me and gloat.

They divide my garments among themselves

and throw dice for my clothing.

All of this prophesied - all of this fulfilled - and more!

Over and over again - the Bible proves itself to be true!

Jesus is Lord! Jesus was the Messiah - God the Son - sent from heaven to die for the punishment of our sins - He rose from the dead - He is coming back again - I know this because the Bible is true - it has proven itself over and over again!

**> Jesus cares.**

John 19:25-27 - Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, “Dear woman, here is your son.” And he said to this disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

Jesus cared for His mother -

Think of this - He is dying on the cross - crucifixion is the most horrible, torturous death from which anyone could die … there have been modern medical articles written about the excruciating pain …

* chest caves in
* hanging by nails in hands and feet - the pain is incomprehensible for most of us -
* Each time the victim speaks, they have to push up on the nails to get breath - gasping for air - it took hours to die -

We are told that Jesus spoke at least 7 times while hanging on the cross …

One of these times was to make sure His mother was cared for …

He cares as much for you …

If He cared for His mother more than He cared for you - He would not have gone to the cross. He would not have fulfilled God’s plan. He would have stayed to take care of His mother …

But - He cares for you just as much - that’s why He went to the cross instead of staying with her to care for her.

And even as much as it is obvious here that He cared for her physical well-being and provision in this life - He cared more for her eternal soul - that’s why He was hanging and speaking from this cross of death.

If Jesus cares, shouldn’t we care?

Soldiers are gambling at the feet of a dead man who is bleeding and suffocating to death at their hands - a few feet away a group of women are weeping agony over the sight and the loss - In the midst of this, Jesus cares - even enough to forgive those soldiers.

Shouldn’t we care -

* For orphans and widows
* For those in prison
* For those who are sick and dying
* For those who are in the agony of grief and loss
* Even for those who persecute us and attack us

This is Jesus. This is His example. He cares for all.

**> Jesus died for you.**

John 19:28-37 - Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn’t want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn’t break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of his bones will be broken,” and “They will look on the one they pierced.”

There we see again the fulfilling of Scripture from Psalm 22 that we read earlier.

No man took His life from Him … He gave it up … unusual for a crucifixion victim to die this fast …

John 10:18 - “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

He was fulfilling His own words - His own prophecy -

Why did He do this? He did it for you! He did it for me!

We have all sinned!

Genesis … fall … passed on to every person … we all sin … we all do wrong …

We have all been dishonest at some point … we have all hated at some point … we have all cursed at some point in some way … we have all withheld good from those who deserve it … we have all put our own interests before the interests of others …

We have all disregarded God at some point in our lives - our nature and the pull of this world is away from God, not toward Him!

The only way to be forgiven of sin against God is death - so in the OT - there were the sacrifices -

Study them - they all point to Christ -

John said, “Behold, the Lamb of God…”

Jesus said, “I sacrifice my life …”

He fulfilled all the prophecies and all the pictures … He was offered on Passover to make this picture as plan as He could to the Jewish people… and even the Romans who lived among them …

He was God’s offering for our sin. All we have to do is believe and accept - this death was for everyone - for the world. Anyone can receive.

**> You have a choice.**

John 19:38-42 - Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus’ body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus’ body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

These men were part of the party that pressed to have Jesus crucified …

Nicodemus had previously come to Jesus at night … didn’t want anyone to know … spoke up at the trial …

Joseph also “had been a secret disciple” … he had been following Jesus … listening to His teachings …

Now - they make a choice - they are no longer going to be secret disciples. They are gong to identify with Jesus openly.

How about you? Have you been a secret disciple? How open is your faith? How open is your Christianity?

These men aren’t jamming it down anyone’s throats - they are simply no longer secret. They are openly identifying, without shame, at this point they don’t care who knows that they are identified with Jesus.

Maybe you love the Lord - you have accepted His forgiveness - you follow Him - but you’re not sure how many people you want to know about that.

Maybe - there are some specific people in your life whom you would rather they NOT know that you are a Christian?

People all around the world are dying - unashamed. How long will we fear the opinions of people? How long will we hide our faith?

Is it time for some of you to become more open about your faith?

**Concl:** What is truth?

Here are some simple truths:

* Jesus is Lord
* The Bible is true
* Jesus cares
* Jesus died for you
* You have a choice

**Baptism opportunity.**