

The Warrior Faces Satan's Ally, the World

Sermon Text: John 18:38

“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.”

What is real? We understand what is around us with our five senses. We have learned to know the shape and use of many things. You sat down in the pews (chairs) because you know they are real. We even step onto airplanes that we believe will fly. But there is a limit to what we can know. You came here tonight (today) for another truth you cannot see but you believe. You learn that truth from the Bible—God's Word.

Not everyone believes that. The enemy of Jesus wants you to question that truth. And Satan is not alone. He has an ally in his campaign against Jesus and against his followers. The world around us also challenges us to question what God tells us in the Bible, and it offers lifestyle alternatives as well as a different set of answers to questions Jesus answers. Our warrior, Jesus, faced the world's question about what is real and true. He defended the truth because he knows that you and I depend on it. Jesus faced Satan's ally, the world.

This part of the conflict is important for us because it is crucial that we understand that we live in a world where . . .

1. God's own truth is under attack.

Jesus had been standing in front of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, who had to decide whether to have Jesus crucified as the Jewish leaders wanted or to set him free. Pilate had asked him whether he was a king, which would make Jesus a direct threat to the Romans. Jesus answered, **“You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (John 18:37).**

Did you catch his reference to being “on the side of truth”? He's talking about sides! On one side is the truth; on the other side is the lie. A lie can be an outright, blatant lie and denial of the truth altogether, or it can contain some truth mixed in with fake truths or some other shading of the truth. But on that side is the liar, Satan, and he has an ally, the unbelieving world.

The world around us accepts Satan's lies and challenges anyone who does not agree with it. The lies it trusts pretend to have answers to big questions of life but spout nonsense. John warns us, **“Everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:16).** The enemy, not the Father, stands behind those lies.

The world in which we live is damaged and sinful. Not the earth, or dirt, but the people who parade ungodly ideas as the solutions to all the things that are wrong in the world. We shouldn't be surprised, because the world thinks that Jesus and his Word are just so much foolishness. **“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:14).**

The world wants nothing to do with Jesus. Sometimes I have to admit that I've bitten into and half swallowed some of the lies of our anti-Christian culture. Sometimes I pick up stuff from movies, books, music in my earbuds, and TV shows that portray immoral lifestyles and values

that go against God's Word. Those influences cause me to let down my guard at times. Even the children's programs and movies too often convey that life is based mostly on feelings instead of what's real. "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Our world says that it is whatever you want it to be.

Far too often, I don't catch it or I give in. I haven't done all I could or should have done to make an accurate assessment of all the ways this ungodly world seeks to undermine and even destroy God's truth and my need for Jesus.

You struggle too, don't you?

John went on to write, **"The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17)**. We are designed for something far better and far bigger than just this earth: we are designed to be in an eternal relationship with our Creator, our Savior, our faith-giving God! But Satan and the world want us to concentrate on what passes away and not on the truth about sin, death, and our need for salvation.

Jesus came up against a cloud of rejection by people, religious leaders, and politicians. The whole world was ganging up. Yet every day, he calmly and strongly faced them all. Our warrior is ready. He spoke the truth to power. You just heard him tell Pilate: **"You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37)**.

"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. (Say it skeptically.) Those are the words of a trapped man. He was no more able to see things as they really are than a rhinoceros. Pilate voiced the words of his world and our world as well. Most of his truth was whatever came from the point of the spear. Our truth comes from distorted values and whatever makes us feel good. Trapped in a world of lies, Pilate couldn't even recognize the truth when he was staring it in the face.

2. Our hero is the truth.

The answer to Pilate's question is and has always been: Jesus! He had told his disciples, **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)**.

Jesus is the truth. In other words, he is the only way to understand reality—what is real and true. He's the only way we can possibly make sense of life. Anyone or anything else cannot do that job. From the beginning of time and the human race to the very last day of the earth, he is the only one who will ever be able to help us see straight.

Everybody has questions about reality. What can I know and how can I know it? How can I ever understand suffering and evil? Who am I? Why am I here? What can I hope? The world, of course, has millions of answers to those questions. The world's guesses and wishes and "I thinks" all fail the test of truth.

Jesus never said, "I'm guessing" or "I wish" or "I hope" or "I think" or "possibly" or "maybe." He always spoke with complete authority. He often said, "Verily" or "Truly, I tell you . . ." (Matthew 17:20 and others; adjust to the translation used). He was certain about truth: **"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (John 8:31,32)**.

In other words, God's Word, the Bible, holds everything we need to know for life, to live freely without guilt and death's curse—without the fear of God's punishment—and, especially, to live forever free in eternity. That's because every word in the Bible, in one way or another,

points to Jesus Christ. And that's why it is so important that my eyes see and my ears hear the dynamic Word of God! All other messages come from the Father of lies and flow through the distorted filter of the world around us.

Our world is broken. We all see it and know it. People hate. Nature kills. Storms damage. Death stalks us all. I think, say, and do the evil I know I shouldn't. I fail far too often to do the good I should. Many have tried to come up with something to fix this mess. All have failed.

Except one: Jesus Christ!

One sparkling, pure, perfect, holy, and huge life came into our world. Our triune God loved us so much that he planned to rescue this sin-damaged world. The Son came to tell us the whole truth and to be the truth that would battle sin, death, Satan, and a world that hates him. Throughout his entire life he remained holy so that he could trade his life for ours at the place of God's judgment. This is the sacred truth that we believe, confess, and hold dear because it means the solution for the world's sin and for our own personal sin. Our truth-telling Jesus gives us the certain conviction that he will take all those who trust him to live with him in heaven. This is the only reality there is.

His promise puts everything else into perspective. It gives us a worldview that is bigger than our eyes can see or what we can know. It's an amazing window into eternity! As a child of God through faith in our Savior Jesus, who now lives in us by that same faith, look at this great promise: **"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).**

Jesus came from above with absolute truth from heaven. Here he has battled through all the world-perverted ideas of truth in order to give us the truth he came to share. That truth has changed us. We are on his side, the side of truth. We see reality—eternal reality—in the cross and the love of God for us sinners.

3. He shares the truth through us.

Our warrior Jesus calls us to be his warriors in this world. We don't use swords or guns as Peter tried to do in the Garden of Gethsemane. St. Paul tells us how to wage our battles against Satan and the world: **"Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:3,4).**

The weapon he gives us is his own powerful Word. That has given us a Christian worldview far superior to any other worldview. The Word has changed us. We have a Christ-centered common sense and faith to use that Word well so we can bear witness to the hope and joy we have in Jesus.

Our world goes from experience to experience, seeking some form of happiness before moving on. That is very much like people walking through the woods at night, lighting paper matches to find their way. The match goes out and they light another. But they find no happiness, true joy, or real peace. Just read the news!

So our high privilege is to grow deeply in Christ through his Word, to live with consciences that are bound by that precious, good Word, and then to show and share the beautiful faith he has given us. When you get out of bed in the morning, think, "Jesus." As you choose what to spend your time, energy, and money on, think, "Jesus." Let Jesus and his Word be the GPS for your

entire life!

Sometimes we are tempted to think this world is so bad that we need to just withdraw. Throw out the TVs and computers, forbid anyone in our household to use a smartphone, and just read the Bible all the time at home. But keep in mind that Jesus gives us some direction. He told his disciples in a prayer during Holy Week, **“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:15-18).**

So consider this: After being exposed to a godless worldview—whether through entertainment media, the news, or even a Facebook quote on a friend’s page—turn to your Bible and spend some personal and family time discussing how Christ gives us a far more truthful view of the world and life! Use those opportunities to equip yourself and your family to be confident of the real truth!

Jesus has overcome the world and given you the treasure of his truth. Go out there and live, play, and work in God’s marvelous truth. Be ready to share it. Amen.