

## *Truth*

Christ the King  
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Saturday and Sunday, November 21 and 22, 2009  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14; Psalm 93;  
Revelation 1:4b–8; John 18:33–37

On a crisp and cool autumn afternoon, a boy was leaving school at the end of his day. He was heading home with the bounce in his step. That spring in the step signaled that it was Friday and that the weekend promise of freedom waited.

On the way through the playground the twelve year old overheard another. The one talking loudly was angry at someone. That boy's language was offensive and escalating. Our young boy heading home was not going to be included in this verbal abuse. He could walk by unnoticed. That is until he heard that they were talking about one of his friends. The boy could not resist coming to the defense of his absent friend.

"You better not be so sure that fighting Richie would be easy!" he said. To this the other replied, "I'll do anything I want!" Now our hero was beginning to size the other up. The opponent was shorter and all mouth. Being sure that his friend Richie would be victor in a playground fight with this loud mouth, he said, "Richie will beat you up!" To this the instigator laughed, with obvious indifference.

Now there is often a moment when tension and anger can be alleviated. A time when a change of tone or the act of turning to walk away from an opponent can happen, but the hero of this story leaped into the anger, forgetting all about the freedom and promise of the weekend ahead. He declared that he was sure Richie would pound this loud mouth. "And what about you?" the tyrant challenged. Then, caught up in it all, our hero proclaims he will do the same and now the two boys are face to face in the school yard.

This story about confrontation and playground fights illustrates the Gospel this day. These two boys are searching for truth the best way they know how. One is seeking truth in popularity among his friends. He heated language is used to boost his own ego. The other child, the one we call our hero, is trying to find truth by standing up for his friend. Even though his friend is absent and neither are faced with danger. He chooses to get himself tangled into a fist fight that could have been easily avoided.

The toe to toe confrontation is similar to Pilate and Jesus. Pilate is trying to find the truth. Pilate asks Jesus, "What have you done?" The dialogue account we have in the Bible is fairly short. Most likely there were much more words spoken between Jesus and Pilate. Pilate was questioning Jesus and Pilate seems to remain open to the fact that Jesus stands before him an innocent man. And Pilate himself mentions a few verses later that he has the power to release and crucify. Pilate seeks truth with political power and judicial intelligence.

We ask ourselves today. What do we do to find the truth? Many of us look to the news to find truth. There is a quote from Mark Twain, ““If you do not read the newspaper you are uninformed, and if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed.” Is the truth we seek there filtered through someone else’s politics? You and I might decide truth lies in doing whatever is the safest. It could be that truth lies in doing what makes the most people happy.

The point is that there are three groups or sets of people searching for truth, children on the playground, Pilate, and us. And each of us is coming up with bad or potentially bad decisions.

The children on the playground search and the result is a fist fight. Of course this response is not subject to children alone. We see it in adult behavior. Road rage, town hall meetings, suicide gun men, prison torture, the list can go on. Children and adults search for truth by fighting and killing in order to get their truth spoken. This is a bad answer to what truth is.

Pilate, in his search for truth, questions Jesus while pointing to his power. Don’t you know I have power to grant freedom or deliver death? Pilate is judge, being that he is the most powerful man in Jerusalem at the moment. But notice he cannot come up with any reason to condemn Jesus. Yet he cannot make the right decision in this case because he is so concerned with making people happy. Folks, often times the truth does not make us happy. Pilate gives the crowd the chance to free Jesus, “NO,” they shout, “Free Barabbas!” In order to make them happy, Pilate orders Jesus to be beaten and whipped. He hopes that they will find sympathy seeing Jesus whipped just short of death. Do you see the slippery slope Pilate has headed down in order to make the most people happy? His attempt for empathy upon Jesus fails, he hands Jesus over to be crucified in order to keep the crowd happy.

And for us today, what do we do to try to figure out what truth is? Many go out and get an education. That is good, that is a great start. But what do we do with that education? Many land into a career they feel trapped in. Dreading each day of the work week focused on Friday at five o’ clock. Many find the need to buy things in order to feel important. Many people are so trapped in their search for truth that they find the answer only in drugs, alcohol, and other addictions. Each of these persons, in search of truth, are loved and called by God to stop. Some of us have tried these other paths and find ourselves here today in church. Asking ourselves, asking our pastors, and asking God. “What is truth?”

Do you remember the story of the Velveteen Rabbit? The stuffed bunny is given to the Boy at Christmas in his stocking. He sees the Rabbit right away and spends the next couple hours playing with him, cuddling him, carrying him everywhere. The Rabbit is very happy and alive from the Boy’s love. Eventually the Boy begins to open other presents and finds more modern toys. Ones with gizmos and gadgets. These modern toys lure him away with their sounds, lights, and shine. The Bunny is forgotten for a long time. He is thrown into the closet where the other toys make fun of him.

Jesus may be like that for you. Waiting for you to turn to Him and make him King of your life. Christ is unlike any king this world has ever known. “Everyone who belongs to the Truth listens to my voice,” Jesus said. The deliverer of the Truth matters and we receive the Truth from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then sends us with that Truth to proclaim to the world through our

actions. Children fight, take parents for granted and believe that they will never die. Pilate asked Jesus, “What is Truth?” Even though he was face to face with God’s Truth, he could not see it. What is our decision? Our solution?

Let us pray. Holy Spirit, crack open our hearts to hear the Truth. Aid us in recognizing the ways that your Truth works in the world. Grant us the power we need to do something, even a small thing that displays God’s realness to our neighbor. AMEN.