

John 18:28-19:16

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[0 : 00] If you watched the movie A Few Good Men, you would remember an interesting episode there.

! The movie has Tom Cruise acting as a defense lawyer for two young Marines who were standing trial for administering Cod Red on a fellow Marine of the United States.

And you would remember that the other main character in that movie, or you would find out the other main character is Colonel Joseph who was acted by Jack Nicholson.

And at the height of that movie, Colonel Joseph asked Tom Cruise, do you want answers?

Because Tom Cruise kept persisting. He wanted to know why these young men went ahead to kill a colleague of theirs, a fellow Marine. He said, do you want answers? And Lieutenant Huffey, Tom Cruise now said, I'm entitled to one.

[1 : 17] He repeated, do you want answers? And Tom Cruise said, I want the truth. After that, the Colonel asked, told him, you can't handle the truth.

The challenge before us is the challenge of handling the truth. And we live in a generation, we live in times when people find difficulties in handling the truth.

Not many can confront the truth. And so many choose the easy way out. In the face of truth, they would rather run away or take other several steps that will take them far from the truth.

Last week, our brother Rob raised for us an important question. Who is in church? Because in the verses we saw before this point, we saw that it was a matter of determining who was really in church.

Was it Jesus that was in church? Or was it the priests and the religious Jews who thought they were placing Jesus under trial? Today, we read in the passage where Jesus was now brought to Pilate.

[2 : 33] And the Jews presented him with the expectation that he would be judged, he would be condemned, a decision would be taken upon him that would agree with what they had decided.

But we see the issue of the truth, the challenge to the truth, coming up again. They had concluded that Jesus was guilty.

And so when Pilate asked them to give a reason, because they did not agree that their decision to pronounce him guilty was not good enough, they couldn't even present their sentence.

And to understand that we need to look back a little at the episode that happened in Matthew 26 from verse 59 to 65, where Jesus was tried in the house of Caiaphas.

A trial that was not genuine. In verse 63, after having presented other reasons for finding Jesus guilty, because they said, you said you could destroy the temple and build it in three days.

[3 : 46] And Jesus didn't answer that. And you would expect that they would pursue that course of action. But no, they then changed. If he would not answer that, let us ask a more serious question.

The priest then said, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Now this priest presents the fact that their choice of presenting the matter of destroying the temple was just a coma.

They had a bigger issue. The issue they were struggling with was whether Jesus was the son of God. That was the truth that was getting to them. That was the truth that was breaking them up.

And Jesus responded to that. While he would not respond to the other arguments, other accusations, he responded to the one that required he would answer whether he was the son of God.

And Jesus said to them, you have said so, but I tell you, from now on, you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

[4 : 57] And I think it's interesting that Jesus did not attempt to deny that important issue. When they could ask him other questions and he would not consider it worthy of defense.

But when it came to the truth of his identity, Jesus did not shy. He did not refuse to answer. He told them, you will see me in my full splendor. We are in days where the matter that many people are contesting with and contending with is the issue of the sonship of Jesus.

Being the son of God. People are happy to accept Jesus as a good teacher. He is a good man. He has taught very good lessons. Many are happy to accept him as a miracle worker.

Many would even call upon him in the time of need. On Sunday, we were picked to touch by a taxi driver who said, I saw the rosary and I asked him if I was a Christian.

He said he was not a Christian, but he believed in the Lord's. I said, which one? The Lord's in Paris? He said yes. He said, why do you believe in that? He said, because many appeared there and they go there to pray and they receive answers.

[6 : 12] People are willing to hold on to several things that are a resemblance of truth, but not the truth. But then, the Jews having found Jesus not guilty, decided that his admission of being the son of God was worthy of death.

And the high priest tore his dress and on the strength of that condemned Jesus to death. Then they brought him to Pilate to rob a stampede. And Pilate asks them, why have you brought this man? What is the accusation that you have against him? And they wouldn't present the accusation. If he wasn't guilty, would we bring him before you?

If he hadn't done evil things, would we bring him before you? And in the encounter between Jesus and Pilate, therefore, we come to a high point in really this narrative.

Pilate then turns to Jesus and asks him why he had been brought. And he asked him, are you then the king?

[7 : 36] Are you a king? To which Jesus again answered. Like he answered to confirm his sonship, he again answered to confirm the question of Pilate.

He said, you say that I am a king. And Jesus answered him, I have come for this same very reason to respond to this truth.

And in the response of Jesus, Jesus reveals several things. Number one, he says, I know who I am. He shows Pilate, I know who I am. I am a king.

I know where my kingdom is. It is not from this world. I know my life's purpose. My purpose is to bear witness to the truth. And I know those who will listen to me.

Only those who are on the side of truth will listen to me. And this is the same issue that many of us are familiar with. Many of us cannot speak with the confidence that Jesus spoke here.

[8 : 38] We are not sure of who we are. We are not sure of the purpose of our existence. And when he asked that, when he responded in this manner, his response jarred Pilate.

Because Pilate could not say as Jesus said, I know who I am. Yes, he may be a ruler, but was he really in authority? Was he really a man of authority?

He was a man of authority. He was a man of authority. And instead of asking Jesus to explain, so that in the explanation, he would find greater understanding, he chose to do the thing many of us do, many of us do, when we are not sure of what we are confronted with.

He turned and ran away. Because in the response of Jesus, it raised for Pilate the question, Who am I? Where am I from?

What is my life's purpose? And on whose side am I really? And because Pilate did not have the answer to these, he felt the easiest thing was to ask a question, What is truth?

[9 : 53] And he left. What is the truth? I am sure if Pilate had just been patient to wait, he would have heard an answer from Jesus.

He would have received an answer that would change his life. He would have received the answer that would change his eternity. If he had waited to hear, what is the truth? If he had waited for the answer, he would have known that Jesus was going to present him with a truth that will help him in the issues that he was struggling with.

The Bible tells us of some of the answers that Jesus would have given him. Jesus would have told him, This is the truth.

I am the bread of life. And he who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst. But Pilate didn't wait to know that here is the truth that would satisfy the greatest hunger of his life.

If he had waited, he would have heard Jesus say, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

[11 : 05] He would have had an answer for the darkness of his life. And his story would have changed. If Pilate would have waited, he would have heard Jesus say, I am the door.

And if anyone enters by me, he will be saved. He will go in and come out and find pasture. But because he did not wait to hear the answer to what the truth is, he lost the door that would grant him access unto eternal life.

If Pilate had waited to hear the answer to what is the truth, he would have heard Jesus say, I am the good shepherd. And if you would come to me, I would shepherd your life unto a bliss that you do not know.

I would shepherd your life unto eternal life. And I am the shepherd that gives my life for the sheep. And he would have invited him into the life where he would have the assurance of eternity.

Because Jesus would have given his life happily for him. If Pilate had just been patient, he would have heard Jesus say to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

[12 : 19] He who comes, no one comes to me, no one comes to the Father except through me. And if only he wanted an end to his search for the truth, he would have found that truth is not just an idea.

Truth is not just some relative assumption. Truth is Jesus. Jesus is the truth. And whoever would walk with him, would walk in the truth, would have found the truth that will stand for all of eternity. The truth that will establish us in our walk for all of eternity. And this is the truth that the Pharisees tried to place on trial.

This is the truth that they did not want to reject. This is the truth that made them feel uncomfortable because it displaced them from the position of authority that they had.

This is the truth that the religious institution of his time was not willing to confront. And this is also the truth that many of us today do not want to confront.

[13 : 33] We can handle a closer, we can't handle a closer study of the truth. But we would rather deal with the truth that is temporal. And that is why we are a generation that would rather give in to our desires rather than stand by the truth that God wants.

We are a generation that has the post constantly changing. What is true today does not seem to be the same thing that is true tomorrow. And our priorities keep changing.

Our values keep changing. Because we do not want to listen to the truth. Because we do not want to hold on to Jesus, the truth. And we behave like Pilate.

Many of us in the face of truth, because we lack the response to it, choose to walk away. Even as Pilate walked away. And I have encountered such experiences even among Christians in the course of evangelism.

Many of us Christians also do not even take time to know the truth of our faith. Therefore, in the face of questions, we run away.

[14 : 47] We do not have a faith that we are willing to defend. We do not come to Jesus to have the deep understanding of the faith that is worthy of defense.

But we easily just turn and run away. Unfortunately, Pilate lost that opportunity.

And he turned and went to the Pharisees and the Jews. And told them, I have not found this man guilty of any sin. I find no reason for condemnation.

And one would expect that if you are a good judge and you found that there is no reason to judge someone, you would then declare him free. But there was something else he was contesting with. The truth of his earthly position, which he preferred to hold on to. The truth of what he knew and held as true and precious, which he would rather hold on to.

[15 : 48] And so he was willing to mortgage the truth that would stand for all eternity. Instead of standing for the truth that would save him, he was willing to give that up in favor of the truth that would give him temporary suffer.

I just wonder if Pilate had stood for the truth and defended the fact that I find this man not guilty. And if he had turned to him and said, Jesus, I accept you as the king whose kingdom is beyond here.

I accept you as the person who can save me and help me. I am sure the story of Pilate would have been different today. But he preferred the temporal instead of the eternal.

And that's the mistake many make today. Instead of coming to Jesus, who can guarantee us a life that lasts for all of eternity, we prefer to hold on to the temporary comforts we have, the temporary things we have, the temporary popularity we have, and whatever access to earthly wealth and

possession we have.

No wonder many of us leave this earth and we have no hope of meeting with the Lord.

[17 : 08] So Pilate, now went back to Jesus, when he told them, sorry, he went back to the Jews and told them, I find no guilt in him. I find, I found, I find in him nothing worthy of condemnation and judgment.

But they were not willing to accept that. Instead, they would shout, crucify him. crucify him. Pilate then asked, should I crucify your king?

They would not accept him as king. Crucify him. They rejected him. But then, on challenging his authority, on presenting to him the threat that if you would not condemn this man, you are no friend of Caesar's, he was scared and he went back to try to exert his authority and hold on to that temporary authority, so called authority that he had.

And he went back to Jesus and asked, having heard that Jesus' claim, which the Pharisees didn't like, was the fact that he was the son of God, he went back to ask, are you then the son of God? Who are you? Who are you? And Jesus answered, are you asking this for your sake or are you asking it for the sake of others?

[18 : 34] Why would Jesus say that? Because he had revealed to him, as a king, his authority comes from outside of this world. But he did not accept him then. He fled away from his presence.

Why is he coming back? For whose sake are you asking? But then, Pilate could not hold onto that truth that he was seeking to get from his response to Jesus.

And so, he told Jesus, I am not a Jew, I am not the one that has brought you for condemnation.

Why should you be asking me that?

It is your people that have brought you to me, so that I will judge you. But Jesus would not be disturbed by that.

And, he stood to face the sentence. Pilate, who did not have a reason to judge him and condemn him, was willing to sit in the seat of judgment and offer him to be crucified.

[19 : 45] And, Jesus had told him, it is not you that I see in authority. It is not you that has the final authority to condemn me.

It is the one who handed me over to you that is guilty. And, in that statement of Jesus, I find myself included in the judgment of Jesus.

I find myself included, and I find all of us included in the condemnation that came upon Jesus. And, that is taught for me most effectively in the words of St. Thompson in his song, How Deep the Father's Love.

Because, in the second stanza, he said, Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders. I ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there, until it was accomplished.

His dying breath has brought me alive. I know that it is finished. This agrees with the truth that Jesus came, not because Pilate, Jesus was willing to face them.

[20 : 56] Not because Pilate had condemned him, but because the Father so loved us, he already sent him to come and die. So, his death was in response to the love of the Father, for all of us who were sinners.

The death of Jesus was the punishment that he was taking upon himself, because of the sins of the whole world. The sin committed right from the beginning.

And, a sin that God felt needed to be removed. And, therefore, in Christ Jesus, and in the journey to Easter, and in his death, we see a revelation of the great love of God.

And, we see a revelation of a truth that stands beyond our greatest imagination. And, this is the truth that God loves us desperately. And, he has made everything available.

He has made every provision for our salvation. He has made every necessary arrangement for our eternity with him. If only we would be willing to face up to the truth that he loves us and he desires we come to eternal life.

[22 : 09] How are you handling the truth? In the face of the death of Jesus, here on the road to Easter, as we hear again and again, the story of the agony and the suffering of Jesus, that reveals the truth of the love of God for our salvation.

How are you handling it? Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.

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