



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

February 7, 2016

Jump Start # 1527

John 18:28 *"Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'"*

Our verse today comes from Jesus' trial by the Roman governor, Pilate. The King of kings was being questioned by a corrupt governor. The innocent and pure Jesus stood before the sinful Pilate. Jesus had been arrested and quickly found guilty in the Jewish courts. He was hurried on to Pilate so an execution could take place. Pilate saw nothing worthy of death in Jesus. This was an internal Jewish squabble and Pilate didn't want to get drawn into it. He was ready to release Jesus but the Jews would have no part of that. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, hoping that Herod would deal with this problem. Herod sent Jesus back. The Roman governor then offered a choice of prisoners to be released, a murderous, rebellious criminal, or the innocent Jesus. The crowd chose the criminal. When asked what to do with Jesus, the crowd shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him."

As Pilate questions Jesus, the Lord tells Pilate that He was born to bear witness to the truth. "Everyone who is of the truth," Jesus said, "hears My voice." It is here that Pilate, from our verse today, says, "What is truth?"

That's a great question! Many are living under the fog that truth changes and is based upon each person's perspective and experiences. So, what might be true for one, may not be for another. A poll taken a few years ago revealed that 70% of American's do not believe that there is an absolute truth. What that means is that a person cannot say that something is wrong and always wrong. It depends. Wrong could be right and right could be wrong. You may think that all of this sounds fuzzy and it's making you dizzy, just try talking to someone who accepts these postmodern theories. It is from this that people say that same-sex marriages can not be absolutely wrong. It might not be right for you, but for someone else, it may be. From this thinking comes reasons to justify aborting the unborn. The time may not be right for a baby. You can't say that all abortion is wrong for all people. This is the thinking of many, many people today.

So, when Pilate asks Jesus, "what is truth?" these modern thinkers would say, 'Who knows?' "It all depends." So kids grow up learning that if lying and cheating can get them ahead, then they need to lie and cheat. When truth doesn't matter, it's easy to make a decision. Just do what you feel like. Just do what makes you happy. When truth doesn't matter, self becomes the foundation of all decisions. When truth doesn't matter, no one can ever say what you are doing is wrong. Toss truth out the window, and life becomes very comfortable.

(OVER)

There are two remarkable things about Pilate's question to Jesus.

First, the truth was standing right in front of him. Remember, "I am the way, THE TRUTH, and the life." Jesus is truth. In Jesus there was no sin. Jesus told the disciples that "you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). Truth is recognizable and understandable. You can know truth. By its very nature truth is singular, exclusive and intolerant. The child learns, one plus one equals two. There are not other choices. The answer cannot be three. The answer cannot be one and a half. Singular, exclusive and intolerant-that's the nature of truth. The Ephesians were told that there is "one faith," "one God," "one body." That means Jehovah and Allah both cannot be the one true God. One faith destroys the idea that you can believe whatever you want as long as you love the Lord. One faith. That same passage says that there is "one baptism." That's interesting because in the Bible we read about baptisms of fire, John the Baptist, Holy Spirit and water. Now some contend that a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit and later is baptized in water. One and one don't make one. Truth is singular, exclusive and intolerant. It can't be all of those baptisms. It can't be pick the one you like. One baptism.

Second, Pilate didn't stick around to find out the answer to his question. He asked Jesus, "What is truth?" and then he leaves. Pilate has done what many do today. They ask questions but they don't want to hear the answers. Had Pilate allowed Jesus to answer the question, he would have learned that God and His word are truth. He would have learned that following truth honors God. Having the truth leads to making the right decisions.

When a person blindly accepts that there is no absolute truth, then naturally, he believes that no one person has the right to tell another person that something is wrong. Wrong depends upon the circumstances. Wrong could be right. This thinking has spilled over into the modern church. Rock Star preachers like Joel Osteen, with his smiling grin, proudly admits that he never uses the word "sin." God does. God uses other words just like sin. Words like abomination, transgression and iniquity are found throughout the Bible. Osteen can't use the word sin because he doesn't believe in sin. If there is no wrong, then why did Jesus come to earth? Luke states that he came to seek and to save what was lost. Modern thinkers would never say that someone is lost. They may be a bit confused, but certainly not lost. God does.

What is truth? That's a great question. God can answer that. Truth is His word. Truth is where God stands. Because there is a truth, that means some things are wrong. Sin is a violation of God's will. It is parting from truth to follow a lie.

Many of our state universities are preaching there are no absolutes to young minds who are believing these things without asking any questions. A generation is now here that uses feelings as the sole basis of making decisions. If it feels good or makes one happy, then it cannot be wrong. If it is uncomfortable, then it has to be wrong. So they abandon the churches of their parents because they don't want to be told that some behavior is wrong. "We shouldn't judge others," has become the theme of the new generation. You don't judge because nothing is ever really wrong. The spirit of tolerance has flung the door wide open. There is no stopping it as long as there is no absolute truth. Marrying two people at the same time will be next. Then, marrying a cow. Then marrying your sister. Then marrying your mother. Then marrying yourself. Ridiculous? No. It can't be, if there is no truth.

Without truth, we become our own gods. Without truth we are hopelessly lost. Without truth, we are sunk.

What is truth? Can you answer that? Do you know? Do you care?

Roger Shouse