

Today the Church celebrates Christ the King Sunday. This last Sunday in our liturgical year provides us an opportunity to acknowledge Christ as King of our lives, and to see our King in all his glory. This brings hope that no matter what suffering we face, no matter how hopeless our situation, God is still in control, watching over us and guiding our feet into the way of peace. These words call us to face our life boldly, as we place our trust and our very lives into the hands of the one who controls past, present, and future.

In our Gospel reading Pilate asks Jesus two important questions, What have you done? What is truth?

Jesus has been handed over by the High Priest and other Jewish leaders to Pilate. Their intention is to have Pilate execute Jesus because Jesus has attacked the unjust temple system and is growing in popularity. They have found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, claiming to be God. However, this charge means nothing to the Romans. In order to execute Jesus, Pilate must find Jesus guilty of a capital punishment offense, such as treason and insurrection.

In verse 35, Pilate asks Jesus, What have you done? He wants to listen to something that Jesus is interested in leading a rebellion against Rome. Jesus answers, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.”

The image of the kingdom is unfamiliar in our society because we do not live in the social system of monarchy. The United States government has the responsibility to protect us. This idea is completely opposite to that of those who

lived during the time of the Christ, during the time of the Roman Empire. The idea of a king was someone with power and authority to do what the king wanted. A worldly king has power and authority and is able to enforce obedience using human strength and human weapons.

However, Jesus, the King of kings has power and authority, which is not derived from the world but from God. This power and authority is not to be exercised in the way that the world exercises power. It is exercised by loving and caring for people the way Jesus did. Jesus healed many who were sick, cast out demons and performed many miracles to show that he is the long awaited Messiah. He exercised His power by serving others, by forgiving others, by healing others, by giving to others and by sacrificing Himself for others. His power is the power of truth, the power of faith, the power of hope, the power of love and the power of life itself.

What Jesus has done is to show us what God's heart is about caring for all people equally and loving this world.

Pilate's second question is, "What is Truth?" This question has been a hotly debated question. Moreover, today many people have come to question the reality of absolute truth. Relative truth is currently popular, "What is true for you is not necessarily true for me, and what is true for me may not be true for you." But the truth is the truth whether we believe it or not. At the same time people have inconvenient truths, which have been labeled "fake news" by a few.

Discovering the truth is important for us as individuals. We have a desire to live authentic lives; not to live a lie, but to live truthfully. As followers of Jesus, it is important for us to determine what is true.

In verse 37 Jesus says, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

In the beginning of John’s gospel the author writes, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is to communicate the truth.

Jesus’ ministry show us that the truth is that God is a God of love and that God loves you and me, and the truth is that God loves us with a steadfast love, forgives us unconditionally and acts with overwhelming grace in our lives.

This world convinces us that we are unlovable and that God can’t forgive someone who has done what we have done. We convince ourselves and that we have to be good people to earn God’s love. Believing that the truth is too good to be true, we live in the lie. Life hurts so much that we are shackled by fears, hatred, selfishness and envy. The lies we hear from the world drowned out the truth that Jesus speaks to us.

I read how Circuses train baby elephants. Baby elephants have been taught that when the trainer puts around their leg a chain attached to a peg in the ground, they have no power to do anything. The peg and chain would keep them confined. Later, when they had reached their full stature, they could easily pull the peg out of

the ground. However, as years of growing up with the confining chain and peg, they would never try to break their chain. They were still confined.

In John 8:32 Jesus says that we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. Jesus comes and removes our chains. He speaks to our hearts and we hear his voice. We are people of the truth and not people of lies.

In John 18:37 Jesus challenges us, “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” We can listen to Jesus’ simple voice in John 13:34, “I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. “

In the book, *No Bad Dogs*, by British dog trainer Barbara Woodhouse, she says dogs understand love better than we do. She writes, in a dog’s mind, a master or a mistress to love, honor, and obey is an absolute necessity. The love is dormant in the dog until brought into full bloom by an understanding owner. Thousands of dogs appear to love their owners, they welcome them home with enthusiastic wagging of the tail and jumping up, they follow them about their houses happily and, to the normal person seeing the dog, the affection is true and deep. But to the experienced dog trainer this outward show is not enough. The true test of love takes place when the dog has got the opportunity to go out on its own as soon as the door is left open by mistake and it goes off and often doesn’t return home for hours. That dog loves only its home comforts and the attention it gets from its family; it doesn’t truly love the master or mistress as they fondly think. True love in dogs is apparent when a door is left open and the dog still stays happily within earshot of its owner. For the owner must be the be-all and end-all of a dog’s life.

The real test of our walk of Faith is that when we have an opportunity to wander away, to disobey, to leave His presence, we choose instead to listen to the voice of Jesus Our King.

We are free to live in God's love, grace, forgiveness and in the power of the resurrection. We are free to love, free to serve, free to live in God's kingdom because Jesus really is not only the truth, but the King of kings and the Lord of lords.