

More About Jesus, Week 26: Jesus spoke the truth (John 5:30-44) by Paul Hammons

One of the great themes in the book of John is the idea of “truth.” But John doesn’t describe truth simply as a question of someone being honest. The gospel account speaks to the very nature of what it means for something to be “true.”

When Pilate questioned Jesus in **John 18**, asking Jesus if he is a king, Jesus says,

“You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” - John 18:37–38

In other words, Jesus isn’t just telling the truth, he is showing what IS true - what is real about life in God’s creation. How to have a true understanding of God, of the world, and of our position IN the world. And in John, we see that the very nature of truth is tied up in knowing God as He is, not as how we imagine Him to be.

Pilate’s response to Jesus was *“What is truth?”* In other words, “who can even KNOW what truth is? Who is capable of defining something so seemingly subjective?”

For Pilate, a Jewish king was no king at all - simply another conquest of the Roman empire who might wear a title of “king” but who had no real power or authority behind the claim. In his eyes, Jesus’ version of “truth” was meaningless, because it did not align with his own “truth,” which was that the only true power was Rome. As he told Jesus in **John 19:10**: *“Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”*

Like most people in the world today, Pilate believed that his circumstances and his perspective dictated what was “true.” But Jesus’ response in v. 11 was real truth, because it was rooted in the truth of God’s sovereign power and authority over His creation: *“You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above” (v. 11).*

There is no perspective that changes the truth of Jesus’ statement. It is absolute, unequivocal truth, because it is rooted in the eternal truth of God, and everything he taught, everything he did in this life, everything he continues to do today on the throne of his kingdom, is rooted in that reality.

In **John 5**, Jesus explained why his revelation is the only way to understand the truth of life:

“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.” - John 5:30

In other words, we have an assurance and a certainty in Jesus’ words that we cannot have anywhere else. When Jesus says *“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32)*, he’s promising that not only can we know for sure what God has said, but that insight makes us free from any worldly influence that tries to enslave us and draw us away from God with a “false narrative” about the best way to live.

With Jesus, there is no speculation. No presumption. No “alternate facts,” as we read about in the news today. His very identity is wrapped up in the fact that he is the one true witness, the one who has seen God, and can declare him in a way that no one else ever has or will (**John 1:18**).

And in fact, everything that Jesus showed in his life was the ultimate, true representation of God’s plan for humanity, as well as the true expression of God’s blessings. He is described as “full of grace and truth” (**John 1:14**). He is the true light (**John 1:19**) meaning God’s true and complete revelation to mankind. He is the true bread sent down from heaven (**John 6:32**) - true food and drink to spiritually sustain us as nothing else can (**John 6:55**). He is the “true vine” (**John 15:1**) - the only way that we can be in full fellowship with God and receive the fullness of His spiritual nourishment and thereby bear fruit in His kingdom. And he alone came to render “true judgment” (**John 8:16**).

Jesus’ truth leaves no room for alternative interpretations. He has been given all that God wants us to know about Himself, and he has declared those things to us: who we ought to be, how we ought to live, and what God expects from us in order to be in his grace.

As Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).*

One of the great blessings of living in Christ is that in a world where every “truth” seems uncertain, subjective, and changing with the whims of culture, we can build our lives on the firm foundation that is Jesus’ testimony (**Mat. 7:24**), knowing that his words are spirit and life (**John 6:63**), and that through them we can truly know our purpose and our pathway to fulfillment and eternal life!