

# Series: Great Questions – week 11

CDOBC – beginning on 10/18/09

Title: “What is truth?”

*John 18:35 ~ January 24, 2010*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help us understand

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Offering envelopes for 2010
- Walk Thru the N.T. – Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>
- Quarterly Business meeting – Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> after 2<sup>nd</sup> service – 2009 financial report – new Deacons Please sign up today for the Youth Fundraiser Hot Dog Lunch in the courtyard between services (lunch is next Sunday after the Quarterly Business Meeting raising money for the Latvia Missions Trip in July) - 2009 Finance Reports available (I need them from you to copy for Sunday☺)
- Haiti Relief update – \$2,412.00 given last Sunday
- New / Updated CDOBC Picture Directory
- Do you want to say anything about the Service Planning Session—2:00 p.m. next Sunday the 31<sup>st</sup>?

## Opening Prayer

Read **John 18:38a**

“What is truth?” Pilate asked.”

Never has this question been so appropriate – never has this question been more current than in our culture today.

**Illus. Reality TV** – very little ‘reality’ in it at all. The producer’s influence and the director’s editing and control add new rules into the games and they create plot shifts and twists that allow them to have significant influence on the show.

**In our twenty-four hour news cycle**, one would think that we the viewing public, would have a greater grasp on the issues – specifically, you would think the nation would have a better grasp of the truth concerning the various issues at hand – at least greater than we did in the 1970’s and early 80’s and before. Back then, we only had 1 ½ hours of news each day. Our ability to understand the full scope of the issues was limited by the length of newscasts available on 3

channels. Now there is no arguing that we have more information available to us than we did forty years ago, but it seems that most of the time, we simply hear more perversions and twisting of the truth – more ways that a politician or celebrity can creatively re-state their point – and we’re left with more elaborate discussions, but the truth seems to be safely hid from public view.

**Revisionist history** – where a group tries to rewrite history according to their agenda or ideology, instead of relaying the facts of what happened. They relay only the convenient facts that agree with their position.

**Sports records and steroids**...are the records set true records, or are they damaged and impure due to the influence of performance enhancing drugs – are they unfit for public recognition.

Pilate’s question about the truth is difficult to interpret and know what he really meant. If we could hear his tone of voice and read his body language, that would help us – but we can’t. Was he being “...facetious, scornful, impatient, despairing, or sincere?”

(Expositor’s Bible Commentary) It is clear He didn’t want Jesus’ opinion or answer to his question – since he walked outside to discuss Jesus’ fate with the Jewish leaders.

It’s alarming when you take his question – and hold it up to the context in the passage and the issues that were at play. “*What is truth?*” – Pilate knew a very important truth – that Jesus was innocent of the charges his accusers had raised. In fact, Pilate affirmed Jesus’ innocence three different times in this situation.

Pilate’s 3 affirmations of Jesus’ innocence:

**18:38b** “I find no basis for a charge against him.”

**19:4** “...I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.”

**19:6b** But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

### **5 responses to truth:**

1. Search for it – seek it
2. Don't care about it – it might get in the way of my life.
3. Define your own truth – truth is whatever you want it to be.  
(Relativism)
4. Avoid it – too much pain associated with the truth.
5. Selective – they pick and choose what truth they cling to.

Pilate knew that truth was important – after all, his primary job was as a judge, and as a judge, he listened to opposing parties trying to find the truth so he could make a fair judgment. You know you're in trouble when a judge who carries the power of the state – a judge who carries the power of prison – a judge who carries the power of capital punishment...the power of the cross in his hands – and he is asking, “What is truth?”!

What would you think if you were unjustly accused of a crime – and you walked into court, and as the procedures began, you heard the judge say, “What is truth?” in a way that communicated his lack of care about truth or his lack of concern for discovering the truth? Of course, you would be panicked. You would firmly grab your attorney by the arm whisper strongly in their ear – find another judge! Find a judge who cares about the truth!

### **“What is truth?” - Philosophical discussions about truth...**

Absolute truth...Is there such a thing as something that is always true all the time? Yes, there is. For example, *“Something cannot bring itself into existence.”* This is an absolutely true statement. In order for something to bring itself into existence, it would have to exist in order to be able to perform an action. But if it already existed, then it isn't possible to bring itself into existence since it already exists. Likewise, if it does not exist then it has no ability to perform any creative action since it didn't exist in the first place.

Therefore, “*Something cannot bring itself into existence*” is an absolute truth.

But truth to others can consist of believing there is no God, to believe God came from another planet (Mormonism), to God being an eternal divine essence emanating in the universe (New Age), to whatever other position that the human mind can conjure up. The problem is that they cannot all be true since truth does not contradict itself. God cannot be a man from another planet and NOT a man from another planet. We cannot have God exist and not exist.

Truth heals – it also divides.

Truth gives clarity.

Truth can hurt.

Truth gives guidance, shining light on a dark path.

Truth reveals sin.

Truth can bring conflict as some fight against the truth.

Truth uncovers goodness and kindness that are overshadowed by evil.

Truth gives life...Jesus promised it would.

Truth can lessen fear, and it sometimes causes fear as it doesn't ignore reality.

Truth gives freedom – freedom from sin, from lies, from fantasy.

Truth is the most difficult path to walk, because so many refuse to walk with you.

Creeds and confessions of the Christian church are important because they communicate and teach the truth about God and about Christ.

### **The Apostle's Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
the third day he rose from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty.  
From thence he will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

### **The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

This is important...different kinds of truth (it's true that I love my wife)

**Context:** (Jesus said He "...came into the world to testify to the truth.") Pilate is discovering the truth or falsehood of the accusations against Jesus. So, what was the truth before Pilate?

Truth – Jesus was innocent

Truth – Pilate knew Jesus was innocent

How did Pilate respond to the truth he knew?

He failed. Pilate didn't fail to know the truth about Jesus; he failed to act according to it. He failed to respond correctly to the truth. In spite of the truth he testified to at least three times, he refused to live according to the truth. Pilate ignored the truth – he became passive at best – and allowed a lie to rule the day. Murder occurred, because the truth that Pilate knew was set aside for his own comfort.

Pilate asked “What is truth?” – while Truth was standing right in front of him!

Jesus was killed because of the truth. He spoke the truth. He was the truth. His enemies despised the truth...they hated the truth because the truth exposed their sin and their wickedness.

What are some other truths we know about Jesus. There are many truths in life, but the most important truths have to do with the person of Jesus – who He was – what He did – what He taught – what He promised.

Truth – Jesus is *God*.

He claimed this was true (John 8:24, 56-59; 10:30-33). He proved it was true by His miracles. He proved it was true by living a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 1:9, 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

Truth – Jesus *taught* truth.

The fact that Jesus was sinless also testifies to his truthfulness – His honesty – to His veracity. For God to speak falsely – for God to lie would be a sin – and since Jesus was God – since Jesus was sinless – we can confidently trust everything He said to be true, for it’s impossible for God to lie. If he lied, He would not be God!

(See John 8:31-32, 14:6)

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and *truth* came through Jesus Christ.” **John 1:17**

“I am the way, and *the truth*, and the life...” **John 14:6**

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” **John 17:17**

**Hebrews 4:12**

“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

**Eph. 4:21** “Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.”

28x in John, Jesus prefaces His teaching with the phrase “I tell you the truth”!

If you ignore the teachings of Jesus, by your actions you are either saying He is a liar or He is ignorant of the truth – or you are saying you don't care about the truth – that the truth is not vital for your life and your thoughts.

Truth – Only *Jesus* can *forgive* sins.

Many passages in Scripture speak to this truth.

**Eph. 2:4-9**

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ--it is by grace you have been saved...in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Forgiveness is found only through God's grace – not by any of our efforts at living right. Jesus testified that He came to speak truth – and He came to become a ransom for many – to be the payment our sins demanded.

**John 1:29**

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” His sacrifice – because He is God – is unlimited in its value. This is why the sacrifice of the One – of Jesus – can pay for the sins of the many – of the entire human

race. The only ‘work’ we can do in this process is the ‘work’ of belief (**John 6:29**).

**John 3:16-17**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

Faith in Jesus’ death on your behalf, His burial, and resurrection, is the entry point of faith – the entry point of becoming a child of God – of being in the family of God – of becoming a Christian.

## **Application**

Let God’s truth direct your decisions.

Stand for truth, not comfort or safety.

Pilate ignored the truth he knew – the truth he even testified to repeatedly, because he valued his own comfort – his own status-quo. Truth calls us to a higher standard. Truth demands that we stand alone if necessary. Truth doesn’t bow to social pressures or social norms...it’s not ignorant of these things, but it doesn’t change in light of them, and its not silent in their presence.

“Grace and truth” must be applied together.

Jesus was the perfect balance of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14) – and since He is our model – the author and perfecter of our faith – we need to follow His example. We always need to operate with grace and truth functioning. Too much truth is like too much medicine.

Put your faith in Jesus and His truth.