

## Midweek Lenten Worship & Sermon, 4.1.20

### Series: The Son of God Goes Forth to War

Theme:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus. In our world right now there is so much uncertainty. As Christians, through faith in Jesus, there are things we know for sure. There is truth. Jesus our King said that he came into this world to testify to the truth. There is truth. Jesus battled the World and all those who would try to pervert the truth. He did it for us and now he gives us that truth, he wants us to follow that truth to eternal life. God strengthen your faith in him who the way, the truth, the life!

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M: In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden. Amen.

C: **O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy, and in your faithfulness, come to my relief. Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.**



*Silence for private confession.*

M: Jesus says to his people: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.” His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world. Do you believe this?

M: Believing the promise of our Savior Jesus, I forgive you all your sins. Be assured that you are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life.

Prayer: Lord God, you anointed your Son to be King for the sake of your church. Help us, as members of his kingdom, to serve you faithfully and to come to the full knowledge of his grace and glory, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: Take the World, But Give Me Jesus

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The Sermon Text: John 18:38

The Sermon Theme: The Warrior (Jesus) Faces Satan’s Ally, the World

**“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.”**

If there is a word to describe the times we are living in it is “Uncertain.” We don’t like uncertainty. We want to have something sure and certain. A lot of the information that is coming at us reporting on the virus is uncertain. Media outlets might show statistics that things are far worse here than around the world. They often don’t show the whole truth. For instance, while deaths in the U.S. caused by Coronavirus have surpassed that of other countries like Italy, Italy has a much smaller population than we do. In fact, if you go by “per capita” our death rates are much lower than some of these other countries like Italy and Spain and Iran. Sometimes people distort the truth or close their eyes to truth and what is real – in this case I think it is to sensationalize the news story.

The great enemy of truth, Satan, would like to convince you to question truth. And Satan doesn’t go at it alone. He enlists his ally against us to distort the truth and try to get us to close our eyes to truth. The world around us is going to challenge us to question God’s Word. The world will offer you a life, lifestyles, that will conflict with God’s truth. We say to ourselves, “Help me, help me against the world’s lies and deceit that would lead me away from the truth.” The best answer in our battle against the world’s lies is to look to our Warrior Savior Jesus. He faced the world’s questions about truth and he defended the truth to the point of death, all for you and me.

On one dark day in human history, Jesus stood before a Roman ruler who closed his eyes to the truth that stood before him. Pontius Pilate, driven by his own political plans, was in the process of giving approval to Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate asked Jesus if he was king. Jesus answered, **"You say that I am a king, In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (Jn 18:37).**

Did you catch what Jesus said? There are sides! On one side is truth, on the other side is the lie. A lie can be a blatant denial of truth or it can contain some truth mixed with fake truths. On that side, the side is Satan and his ally, the world.

The world around us accepts Satan's lies and challenges anyone who does not agree with it. The lies of the world pretend to have answers to life's biggest questions, but they spout nonsense. John warns us, **"Everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father, but from the world" (I Jn 2:16).** The enemy of your soul is the one behind the lies. The lies that you live for yourself, life is too short to follow God's ways, you'll be fine in the next life because of the good you have done. These are lies that destroy the soul.

The Devil and the world want nothing to do with Jesus. I have to admit, you have to admit – we've bitten off and chewed on some of their lies. We've consumed some of these anti-Christian lies in movies, books, music and earbuds, tv shows that portray immoral lifestyles and values that are clearly against God's Word. We let down our guard and the world will find its way in. Even children's programs often convey truths that can go against God's Word and what is real and truth. "What is truth?" Pilate asked. The world says it can be whatever you want it to be.

Far too often we've gone along not assessing what the ungodly world is doing to us, trying to undermine and destroy our connection to the truth.

John goes on to write, **"The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (I John 2:17).** God's will and God's ways lead to an eternal relationship with God. The world's ways want to focus on things that pass away. They want us to close our eyes to the truth about sin and death and the need for salvation.

Look at God's will in what Jesus did. As Satan and the world tried to oppose Jesus and question Jesus, God's truth to the world, he spoke truth, "I am a king," Jesus said to Pilate. "I was born into this world to testify to the truth, to God's truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. Those are the words of trapped man. He wasn't able to see things as they really are, he had closed his eyes to truth for the sake of himself, keeping power and appeasing the people. His truth, the truths he wanted, was often enforced with end of a spear. Trapped in a world of lies Pilate couldn't recognize the truth when it was staring him in the face. Truth that the world pushes on us is often based on whatever we feel.

We still want the answer to Pilate's question today, "What is truth?" Again, the answer is and always will be Jesus! Jesus told his disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Jesus is the truth. In other words he is the only way to understand reality. He is the only way we can possibly make sense of life. Anyone else, including ourselves, will not do the job.

Everyone has questions about reality? How can I understand suffering and evil? Who am I? Why am I here? What can I hope for? All the answers that start, "I think" fail the test. "I think" most often leads us back to ourselves and the reality is we cannot save ourselves when we meet our Creator.

Jesus never said, "I think" or "I'm guessing" or "possibly" or "maybe." He always spoke the truth, "I tell you the truth" he'd say. "I am...the way, the truth, the life." He'd say, **"If you hold to my teachings you are really my disciples and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:31,32).**

In other words, God's Word, the Bible, holds everything you need to know for life, to live without guilt and death's curse, without fear of God's punishment. Every word in the Bible is meant to point us to Jesus Christ. That is why it is important that our eyes and ears be open to the Word of God! All other messages are from our enemy Satan and flow through the distorted filter of the world. But Jesus, Jesus life was pure and perfect. And he traded in his holy and perfect life for our broken life at the place of God's judgement. God's judgement came down on him instead of us. This is the

sacred truth we confess and hold onto because it is the solution to our personal problem of sin, to the worlds problem of sin.

Jesus came into this world with truth from above. He battled all that the world could use to try and pervert that truth, he did it all to give you that truth. We are on the side of truth now, that truth changes us.

This puts everything into perspective for us. Our Christian worldview is that we see past the sin and death in this world and we have a window into eternity – through Jesus! Through faith in Jesus you possess this promise: **“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (I Jn 4:4).**

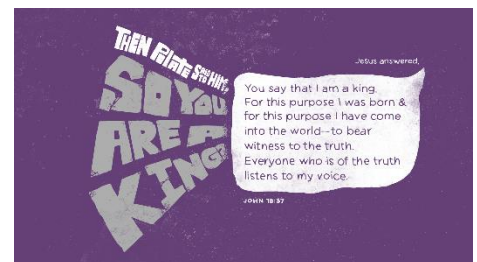
We are now soldiers on Jesus side of truth. We don’t use weapons of the world: **Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (II Cor. 10:3,4).**

God gives us the powerful weapon of his Word. It changes our worldview. Remember, we said his Word is about Jesus and Jesus’s work leads us to have hope and joy and light, to bear witness to Jesus’ hope and joy and light.

I heard an illustration that I liked recently. The world goes through life from one experience to another, seeking some form of happiness and then they move on to the next experience seeking the same. That is similar to going through the woods at night, lighting paper matches to try and find your way. The match goes out and they light another. In the end, they run out. They find no lasting happiness, joy or hope or peace.

Our high privilege is to grow deeply into the word of Christ where there is eternal, lasting hope and joy. We are to show and share and shine with that beautiful faith given us by God. From the time you get out of bed in the morning, to the spending choices you make, to the things you spend your energy on, think Jesus. Let Jesus be your GPS for your entire life.

Sometimes we can think this world is so bad, we just need to withdraw. We need to throw away the TVs, the computers and smartphones. Consider what Jesus prayed when he prayed for you the night before he died, **“My prayer is not that you take them out of this world, but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. AS you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” John 17:15-18.**



What we need is not to withdraw from the world. What we need is to turn to our Bibles on the smartphone or on the coffee table and fill our lives, our views with God’s truths. Your habits may have changed with the recent stay at home orders, but use these opportunities to equip you and your family with the real truth! Jesus has given you the gift of his truth, know that the world is attacking it, our help is in only and always with Jesus, the way the truth and the life, we have the high privilege of witnessing to the truth that the hope and joy and peace Jesus gives is for all. Amen.

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Offering: The ministry of Peace Lutheran and the proclamation of Jesus continues – He is the Way, the Truth, the Life! Please give your thank offerings via: **Snail Mail to 3030 Starkey Blvd (ste 227), Trinity, FL 34655 OR Website – go to “Donate to Peace” at the bottom of [peacelutherantrinity.com](http://peacelutherantrinity.com) OR Text a gift to 888-314-2975. Example: \$40.**

Closing Prayer<sup>1</sup>:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Abide with Me, (v. 1,2)

Further Reading:

- Read the Passion History: Matthew 27:27-66

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<sup>1</sup> *Luther's Evening Prayer*