

Week of May 6-12

## **WHAT IS TRUTH?**

**Scripture Reading:** Read John chapter 18

In the early 1970's, many educators were influenced by the book, *Values Clarification: A Handbook for Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students* by Simon, Howe & Kirschenbaum. Values clarification techniques stressed the importance of students depending upon their own feelings and becoming aware of their own beliefs as a way of determining and, then, choosing for themselves what was right and wrong. Values clarification too often led to the acceptance and use of moral relativism by many teachers during that time; the idea that truth was not absolute and that what was right for you is not necessarily right for me. The tragic result of moral relativism is all around us decades later. Just pick up a newspaper or turn on the television.

In our chapter reading today, Pilate asks a question that would have fit right in with our social studies curriculum in the '70's. **What is truth?** The question came in response to Jesus' declaration that he had come into the world "to testify to the truth." It's hard to know what Pilate had in mind when he asked about truth. Was the question sincere, a heartfelt question from someone seeking truth? From what we know of Pilate...probably not. Was it sarcastic, the response of one who had no time for such abstract philosophical reasoning? Given the very practical and pragmatic Roman mind, it's possible. Perhaps it was simply a throwaway line, a shrugging of the shoulders from someone who felt truth was unrecognizable by anyone. The problem is we don't really know since the text doesn't elaborate. What is ironic, though, is that the One who claimed to be "**the truth**" (John 14:6) was standing right before Pilate. Pilate actually asked the wrong question. He should have asked "who" instead of "what" because Jesus is the embodiment of truth.

This is a point worth considering for a moment. Josh McDowell, noted author and speaker, led a campaign a number of years ago called "Truth Matters." One aspect of the campaign was to challenge believers to develop a biblical world view regarding truth. Often parents will teach their children that honesty is good and dishonesty is bad because the Bible says we should be truthful, or that purity is good and immorality is bad because the Bible says we should be pure. But what if someone doesn't believe the Bible or what if the Bible had not been written? Would honesty and purity still be good and would dishonesty and immorality still be bad? The answer, of course, is yes. Why? In a nutshell, contrary to the values clarification experts, because absolute truth does exist in the person of God. Since he is honest and pure, honesty and purity are right and dishonesty and immorality are wrong regardless of whether someone might "feel" or think otherwise. Truth, then, lines up with whatever reflects the character and nature of God and since Jesus, as God's Son, fully reflects his Father, he can rightly be called "truth" (John 1:14, 17, 18; 14:6, 19). Additionally, since the Scripture reveals the nature and character of God by way of principles, precepts and persons (Exodus 33:13) it too can be called truth (John 17:17).

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Look over the above Scriptures in light of today's devotional. Prayerfully consider how Jesus is the embodiment of truth according to John.

**Take-away:** *It's not "what" but "who" that defines truth...& the "who" is Jesus!*