

Communion

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- [0 : 00] Christ told Pilate that the reason he came to earth was to bear witness to the truth. Let's take a look at that passage, if we may please.
- Come to the Gospel of John, if you will. John's Gospel, chapter 18. I'm going to have an abbreviated message this morning.
- It will not be a standard-length message so that we may give the majority of our time focusing upon the Lord's table. This is perhaps the most poignant conversation that has ever taken place in the annals of human history as regards the subject of truth that came from our Lord himself.
- We begin reading with verse 28 of John's Gospel, chapter 18.
- Pilate therefore said to them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said to him, We are not permitted to put anyone to death, that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying by what kind of death he was about to die.
- [1 : 48] Pilate therefore entered again into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, You are the king of the Jews. Jesus answered, Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about me?
- Pilate answered and said, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you up to me. What have you done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.
- If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm.
- Pilate therefore said to him, So you are a king? Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king.
- For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.
- [3 : 02] Pilate said to him, What is truth? You can almost detect the contempt in his voice, and the idea that he perhaps would not expect any kind of a reasonable answer, because truth to many people is how you perceive it, what you want it to be.
- That is a far cry from what the truth is. Unfortunately, Pilate didn't pursue an answer.
- The question asked 2,000 years ago, and the answers often provided today are no better than those of Pilate today. Truth is the what-is-ness of life.
- Truth is an exact correspondence to reality. That's what truth is. Truth is dealing with what is real.
- There is objective truth and subjective truth. Objective truth is concerned only with the facts, and it is not altered by who believes or who does not believe.
- [4 : 22] Subjective truth may embrace objective truth. In other words, someone may believe something subjectively because they see it as objective truth.

And when you embrace objective truth subjectively, you personalize it. You take it to yourself. Christians look at the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as being something that is objectively true.

That is, it is factually true, which has nothing to do with who believes it and who doesn't. It has only to do with whether or not it really did occur in time and space.

If you see that as an objective truth, and you embrace it as such, when you do that, that objective truth also becomes your truth subjectively, because you take it unto yourself.

So, subjectivity can embrace objectivity. Subjectivity is linked to personal beliefs, personal opinions, personal ideas, all of which may vary.

[5 : 39] When you talk about things that people hold in a subjective way, they are all over the map. Your favorite color, and your opinion of it, is a subjective truth as far as you are concerned.

You say blue, or green, or whatever, is my favorite color. Well, that's your personal preference. But that has nothing to do with facts, because there isn't any way that we can say it is an established fact that your personal color is objectively the best color.

Because that, like many things, is in the eye of the beholder. It's entirely up to you, because people differ with those things. They have different preferences, different tastes, different ideas, different concepts.

But subjective truth does not change the reality of objective truth. And what that means is, you can't have your own truth. You can't contrive your own truth.

You can't make something be true because you want it to be true. It is true, or it is not true. Truth is truth, no matter who believes it, or who disbelieves it.

[6 : 55] This is a real struggle that the world is having today. And it is absolutely amazing, in fact, when you consider that the human race should have come a little further than what it has in being able to recognize the validity of truth.

It is almost as if humanity is in some kind of regression. It's an amazing thing. And you know, this is the basis, what we are dealing with right now.

This is the basis for political correctness. This is what it has stemmed from. If everything is determined by the individual, and all truth is up for grabs, do you realize what the beauty of that is?

The beauty of it is, nobody has to be wrong. Isn't that great? Everybody's right. What do you do about religion in this case?

Well, all religions are equally valid, just like Vince was saying. All truth claims are equally valid. One's religious belief is just as valid as another's religious belief, and it doesn't make any difference that they may be completely contradictory one to the other, so that you might think one of them is wrong, and the other is right.

[8 : 27] No, no, no, no, no. You missed the whole point. They're both right. What are we going to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Well, when you subject it, there it is, when you subject it to the individual, the only question for some, and the way they view it, is this.

Do you believe that Jesus was really raised from the dead, bodily, physically, literally? Yes, I do. Okay? Then, for you, he was.

He was. Do you believe that Jesus was bodily, physically, resurrected from the grave? Well, no, I don't believe that stuff.

I believe that, I believe that the spirit of Jesus is alive today. That's the resurrection. But physically, literally, no, no, that's impossible.

Okay? Then for you, he didn't. Case closed. Nobody's wrong. Everybody's right. And that's one sure way of making certain that you're not going to hurt anybody's feelings or offend anyone because you don't have to make anyone wrong.

[9 : 43] Now, where does this put Christianity and the cause of missions? It puts it out of commission.

There is no valid basis for missionary activity. The reason there isn't is, what is the Christian mission all about, historically, anyway?

What is this thing that we're trying to do? Why did the Apostle Paul make the missionary journeys that he did? Why do we send missionaries to foreign countries?

Is it not for the express purpose of introducing them to the claims of Jesus Christ, how that he became the human sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that because he was the Son of God, very God of very God, deity incarnated in human flesh, that he was able to make such a payment?

Is that not our message? Indeed it is. But you see, you are taking that message to people who already have some belief of their own that is just as valid as yours.

[10 : 58] So why would you seek to disturb these people with a nasty thing called conversion? they're just as right with where they are and what they believe as you are with your Christianity.

You are actually insulting them by telling them that they need to believe what the Bible says they need to believe. And that hurts people's feelings.

It may even anger them. So, dummy up. You don't have a message. You just accept the fact that, hey, if you buy into this Christianity thing, that's fine.

That's okay. But you don't have the right to say that's what everybody else should believe. You act like this thing is objectively true. Well, it is.

No, no, you're wrong again. There is no objective truth. Truth is up for grabs. Truth is whatever you want to make it. No one has the right to say, this is the truth.

[12 : 04] And that's the thinking out in our culture today. That's the thinking that is all over the media and the internet and published in articles and in the newspaper.

This is what so much is all about that is going on in our culture today that makes people say, has the whole world gone nuts or what is this? Anyway, this is what it is.

This is what's going on. This is what's taking place. And this is why everything is so up in the air, why there is so much controversy about so many things.

So, this is where we are. We have a message that we believe is objectively true. And we do what we can, albeit sometimes poorly, to communicate it to others.

And the idea that Christ and Christ alone in his death, burial, and resurrection is the only way to God is not our idea. We didn't think this up.

[13 : 11] The God of heaven has set it forth. This is his idea. He provided his own son, and he didn't provide plan B.

There's just one plan. Jesus Christ came into this world to pay the penalty for lost sinners. And there is no other way.

You see, we cannot create our own truth. Wishing doesn't make it so. Believing it doesn't make it so.

If it is so, it is so, whether you believe it or not, this seems to be something that is so difficult for this present day culture to grab. And people are adrift.

The political correctness thing has our culture by the throat and strangling the life out of it. And I do not know to what extent this new administration is going to be able to address that or offer any correctives to it.

[14 : 18] There's a great deal that needs to be done along this line. And I'm not talking about politics. I'm talking about morality and truth. So, this is where we are.

Pilate never waited for an answer. And, unfortunately, many people today are not much more open to answers than what Pilate was.

people have to keep plugging away and insisting that there are answers. And sometimes when people come to grips with their own weakness or their own inability or their own loneliness or their own dissatisfaction, they may be prompted to look elsewhere for solutions.

And what we are saying is the God of heaven has those solutions and they are offered to you freely and fully through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what church is all about.

This is what the Bible is all about. It's God and man connecting. I've often said over the years that I've been here that God is so committed to connecting with people that he sent his son down to this earth to accomplish that very purpose.

[15 : 37] To reestablish a broken connection between himself as the creator and man as the creature. So God is in the business of calling people who are willing to acknowledge their lostness, willing to acknowledge their sin, willing to say, I'm just like everybody else.

I am a weak, flawed human being. It's not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, oh Lord. standing in the need of prayer.

It's an amazing thing that happens when we come to this issue of repentance. And the Bible uses this word throughout, and it's a wonderful concept, and it simply means change your mind.

Change your mind. The word metanoia means literally, through the mind. Christianity is a thinking faith.

It requires the intellect, because with the intellect, the will is connected. And God has given us a will. He has given us a volition, and that volition allows us to make moral choices.

[17 : 01] It gives us the ability to say yes or no. God gave that ability to Adam and Eve. He created them as free moral agents.

They were not pre-programmed to obey him. They were pre-programmed for neutrality of their will. They could choose to obey him or disobey him.

And they made their choice. They disobeyed him. And the connection was broken. The relationship was severed.

And because guilt set in, fear accompanied guilt. And whereas they would go out to meet God and fellowship with God back in Genesis 3, not doing that now.

Now they're hiding from him. Why would they hide? Because they were afraid. They were afraid of the consequences. You see, once they disobeyed God, they experienced something they'd never experienced before.

[18 : 10] And that was guilt. Guilt. Guilt is the pricking of the conscience when you are aware that you have broken a moral law.

Guilt sets in you see yourself as guilty. And then the logical consequence of that is fear because we are afraid we will be discovered for what we have done or we will be punished for what we did.

So we try to avoid punishment by hiding. And that's exactly what Adam and Eve did. And you see, before they disobeyed God, God was their focus.

He was their whole world. And apparently they were quite happy with that. Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, just one tree you can't eat from.

And that brought the dynamic of volition into play. Just just one tree. And they disobeyed. And when they did, their focus shifted from God being their focus to themselves being their focus.

[19 : 33] This is the root of human selfishness. And I've never gotten over the fact, because I'm very much a part of it, just like you are, that the most central consequence of disobeying God, the most single consequence of our sin, is our self-centeredness.

If you understand that, you are well on your way toward addressing any broken relationship that may exist, whether it's in your marriage, or in your neighborhood, or in the workplace.

we are all infected with this disease called self-centeredness. It ruins and breaks marriages, and families, and relationships, because we're all hung up on this thing.

We all tend to become the center of our own universe. That's selfishness. and it is systemic.

Someone who says, you're not talking about me, brother. I don't have a selfish bone in my body. Well, you are not only self-centered, you are also self-deceived.

[20 : 58] You are as selfish as anybody else. You just haven't come to grips with it. And you know, even that is not all bad, really. Even in our self-centeredness, there is something good.

And the first thing that comes to my mind is the instinct for self-preservation and self-defense. It stems from that self-centeredness.

We have a drive to remain alive, and we will do what we can to affect that. So, all of these things put together, you know what they're all connected with?

Bottom line is, all connected with truth that God has been pleased to reveal to us. And we are so glad that he has, that he does.

We are going to celebrate the Lord's table this morning, and before we do, I want to have a word of prayer, and give anyone who may be here struggling with some of these issues, maybe you've never seen things in this light before, maybe, and just maybe, you've connected a few dots this morning.

[22 : 11] Maybe something has begun to make sense to you that didn't make sense before. If so, that's a wonderful thing because it is the entrance of God's word that gives light, and nothing works like the word works.

So, would you pray with me, please? Father, we recognize that in a truth we are certainly devoid and fall far short of all of the truth that we would like.

We know there is so much that escapes us, there is so much that we don't know, there is so much that we don't understand, but how grateful we are that we are able to understand the bare necessities of what life is really all about, as you've explained it and expressed it through the revelation of your word and in the person of Jesus Christ.

We do know what we need to know, and that's all we really need to know, and we are grateful. Thank you, Father, that it doesn't take much understanding to become a believer.

It just takes an open heart and an open mind and a willingness to be responsive to that voice inside that tells us we are lacking and we need something that we cannot provide.

[23 : 28] Help us now, we pray, in this hour, to be really honest with ourselves as well as honest with you. And for anyone who may be here this morning, perhaps exposed to some of these things for the first time, God wants you to know that he has an incredible love for you beyond anything you can imagine.

And he made provision for you because of that love. God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And we confess, we cannot appreciate nor fully understand at all that kind of love, but we're so grateful to be recipients of it. Our prayer for this morning is for anyone who may be here struggling with these issues, wondering, worrying, questioning.

May they simply see Jesus Christ as who the Bible portrays him to be and say with an act of their will, Lord Jesus, I recognize, I acknowledge my sin that makes me just like everybody else.

And I know it is because of that that you were willing to come into this world and do for me what I couldn't do for myself. And I don't understand everything about Calvary and the sacrifice, but I do understand that this is what the Bible teaches, and I choose to believe it.

[24 : 59] I, with an act of my will, want to embrace Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. He bought me and paid for me, and I want to deliver the goods to him.

Here is my life. Thank you for receiving it. And dear friend, may I assure you Jesus himself says, he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

Would you make that confession and that your prayer this morning? And I can promise you that if you do, God will hear, God will cleanse and pardon and forgive, and he will receive you unto himself, all on the basis of his grace and what Jesus did for you.

This is the gospel message. This is what this communion table is all about. It represents the blood that Jesus Christ shed for us, and the bread represents his body.

And we are to partake of these elements in remembrance of him, who he was, what he did, and why it matters so much. Thank you for the privilege that we have as believers of entering into this time of memorial.

[26 : 17] Trust that you will use it to deepen and heighten our experience and our profession and our confession of love for the Lord Jesus, who alone is worthy.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Okay, would you open your hymnal, please, to number 312, Calvary covers it all.

And I'll ask the elders who are going to be serving communion this morning, if you will come forward on the last stanza, and we'll prepare for the communion table. Number 312.

Would you stand, please, as we sing this hymn? of Jesus' Spirit.

How dearer than all that the world can invite, was a message that came to my heart.

[27 : 32] Having chief sorrow alone, for my sin did our song, and Calvary covers it all.

Calvary covers it all. My past within sin and shame, my guilt and despair, Jesus showed on him there, and Calvary covers it all.

The stripes that he bore, and the points that he wore, told his mercy and love evermore.

And my heart fell in shame, as I called on his name, and Calvary Calvary covers it all.

Calvary covers it all. My past within sin and shame, my guilt and despair, Jesus showed on him there, and Calvary recovered it all.

[28 : 58] And I recovered it all. How much that was that grace, when I looked on the face, of his chief as my crucified Lord.

My attention comes me, I am held at his feet, and now Calvary recovered it all.

How recovered it all. How recovered it all. My past within sin and pain, my guilt and despair, Jesus took on him there, and Calvary covers it all.

how blessed of God, that my soul by him bought, shall be his in the glory on high.

Where in gladness and song, I'll be one of the wrong, and Calvary covers it all.

[30 : 16] Calvary recovers it all. My past with sin and pain, my guilt and despair, Jesus took on him there, and Calvary covered it all.

You may be seated. we refer to this as the Lord's table, and being his table, those who belong to him are invited and encouraged to participate of it.

This does not change anybody's destiny. You do not become a Christian by partaking of these elements. It does not change your status before God at all.

what does change your status before God is being in Christ. And if you are in him, that means God views you as being crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, and ascended with Christ.

You are inseparably connected to him, all on the basis of grace. This is called justification by faith, or justification simply on the basis of believing.

[31 : 48] God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him, that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

This is an amazing thing. It is called the gospel of the grace of God, and it is so wonderful. As I've often said, a song was written about it called Amazing Grace, and we love it and we sing it.

These elements are merely elements. They do not become anything mystical or magical. The cup that we are going to drink from is grape juice, and the bread that we are going to eat is physical bread.

They do not become anything other than what they are, but they are mementos. They are reminders. They are symbols of the blood of Christ and of the body of Christ.

If you have a personal relationship to the Lord Jesus, and you know him as your Savior, you are welcome and invited to come to his table. Whether or not you are a member of Grace Bible Church is immaterial, you are a member of the body of Christ if you are in him, and that makes you available to this table.

[33 : 08] So, you are welcome to join with us if you know. The bread that Jesus took was a common loaf, much like a thick pancake, and he broke off a piece of it, and then passed the loaf to the disciples, and each of them broke off a piece of the bread.

And then holding it up, he said, this bread is my body which is given for you. can you take your handle, please, and open it to number 305, Jesus paid it all.

We'll say the first two stanzas, Jesus paid it all. more. He ■■■■ God bless you.

Lord, thou and me and mine, thy power and thine love, can't change the better spots and tell the heart of stones.

Jesus be you, God, all of whom I know. Sing and let the rules of I sing, you be that clear thy bester.

[35 : 35] And in the same manner, he took the cup. Our Lord said, as often as you eat this bread and drink of this cup, you just show forth the Lord's death until he comes.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Anytime you would like to make a contribution to the benevolent fund, you can just indicate such on the slip of paper or envelope and drop it in the offering box and we'll see that it's channeled to that particular fund.

And occasionally there are needs that arise that are brought to our attention that we can help someone in financial distress or difficulty. Very often, in fact, most of the time, it's to help someone who is not a member of our congregation.

[37 : 25] But we want to share what we can in generosity in that way as well. So thank you all for making it possible. And we'll wait for you for an offering.

As I said, if you're not prepared to give now, next week or any other time would be fine. If you want to make out a check, make it payable to Grace Bible Church. Otherwise, cash is still acceptable.

Right. Let's sing verse three, if you may. Number 305. Just Simon James.

Hold me the milkman's wine. Once in the end of the night, where thy night is separate, I'll watch my eyes display in the cloud at everywhere.

peace of am cleanse the Lord sin sin the Church Hisopia us O nor did he, Xi Jinping hell no sin and ever hid, all Father, Holy Ghost, Thank you all.