

Palm Sunday
Isaiah 50:4-7
Philippians 2:6-11
Luke 23:1-49

It was the Greek dramatist Aeschylus (525-456 BC) who said that "In war, truth is the first casualty." We are living in the throes of both real and culture wars in which powerful groups and influencers are declaring that their truth is the only and absolute truth. This is the very view that the force of evil has tried to convince humanity ever since Adam and Eve walked in the garden of Eden. The war against evil was won on a cross just outside Jerusalem on Good Friday. Jesus' sacrifice sealed evil's fate, but His faithful followers are still struggling to win the peace.

In St Luke's account of the Passion and death of Jesus there are numerous examples of the fluidity of the truth. Jesus was first tried in the court of the Jewish Sanhedrin where bribed false witnesses were lined up against Him. Pontius Pilate was told that Jesus had not only encouraged the evasion of Roman taxes, He also claimed to be a king. Pilate was more interested in avoiding the truth than discovering it, so he sent Jesus to Herod, whom he disliked, in order to shift responsibility sideways. Herod was very flexible with the truth; he was renowned for generating his own truth.

Truth was irrelevant to the Roman and Jewish soldiers. They were paid to *obey* orders, not question the morality of them. The protesting crowds generated their own narrative which they declared to be the truth. The women of Jerusalem wept for Jesus, but their compassion blinded them to the truth that while the judgement of the worldly authorities was falling on Jesus, as Hosea had prophesied (Hos 10:8), God's judgement would fall on Jerusalem and those who rebelled against and distanced themselves from God.

The crowds at Calvary were mockers urging Jesus to float down from the Cross as Satan had tempted Him to float down from the Temple parapet during His time in the wilderness. Their truth numbed them from seeing the truth that it was Jesus' obedient love for His Father, not the nails, that kept Him on the cross reconciling the world to God. It was when the Roman centurion declared Jesus to be an innocent man that the crowds recognised the truth and went home beating their breasts. Too little, too late.

Jesus had said, "The Truth shall set you free" (Jn 8:32). Yet Pilate asked, "What is Truth?" Is truth fluid or absolute? Jesus never said that the Truth would bring us political freedom, but it would bring us spiritual freedom, the freedom from not being controlled by the evil of self-centred chaos. God's Truth comes to be known by believing in Jesus, His agent. Involvement with Jesus is the Way to God. It is not knowledge *of* Jesus that brings us freedom. We can have knowledge without involvement. It is knowing Him in our hearts and recognising His Truth and living it in our lives that brings us salvation.

This week, as we accompany Jesus to the Cross we must ask ourselves:

- 1 - What is the truth of the One who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the royal beast, on Palm Sunday?
- 2 - What is the truth of the One who cleansed the Temple and decried empty religious

practice that keeps the rules but doesn't change lives?

3 - What is the truth of the One who taught the people in the Temple about God's judgement?

4 - What is the truth of the One who broke bread and offered wine during supper saying, "This is my Body, this is my Blood."

5 - What is the truth of the One crucified on Good Friday?

6 - What is the truth of the One who was raised on Easter Day?

Will your answers be your truth, or the truth of those faithful disciples who witnessed these things and has been believed by the faithful remnant of believers ever since?

This week, let us not just talk the talk, but walk the Way of the Cross once more with the one who *is* the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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