

“Truth”

Sermon for Good Friday

April 2, 2010 – The Rev. Torrence Harman

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

*“For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice. Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’”*

Today is Good Friday. Jesus is on trial. So are we.

Today we confront and are confronted by the Truth.

“What is truth?” Pilate asks. Jesus doesn’t answer him. The cameras simply roll. The action unfolds to reveal the truth. Jesus did not answer Pilate’s question with words. He answered in how he lived the rest of that fateful day.

Jesus will speak only four more times in this long narrative, on this, the longest day of our faith narrative.

He will speak of power, telling Pilate, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.”

He will speak (in John’s narrative) three times from the cross: as he hands the care of his mother to the beloved disciple; as he speaks to fulfill the Hebrew Scriptures, saying, “I am thirsty;” as he finishes this day and his mortal life, saying “It is finished.”

“What is truth?” Pilate’s question is ours. We ask the question, too. And not just once, but over and over again throughout our lives.

Pilate doesn’t really seem to care if Jesus answers or not.

We do.

Or we wouldn’t be here, today. We wouldn’t spend our time coming to church, most Sundays, or even just a few. We wouldn’t pick up the Bible from time to time and study it. We wouldn’t sing hymns. We wouldn’t pray. We wouldn’t come to this table to share a meal together. We wouldn’t come onto hallowed and consecrated ground to be married, to baptize our children, to celebrate the rituals of our lives, to remember our history, to give thanksgiving in times of relief or joy, to grieve losses, to be buried.

We come, all we who like sheep have gone astray, not only with questions, but with hope. We come with questions about how to live life day by day and how to live into with hope that the truth lies with following the one who said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

“Listen to my voice, listen to my life. I am the truth.” This is what Jesus tries to tell us over and over again. Throughout the entire Gospel of John, Jesus is showing us the truth of love, the truth of Divine Love as the way to life. Over and over again, he says “I AM!” I am bread, good shepherd, gate, resurrection, true vine, light, life, truth. These are images of nourishment,

care, love, connection. He is both the guide and the path. He is both the light and the one who brings us into light. He is the truth that leads to our resurrection, renewal and new life.

It is not easy to buy into the belief that Jesus is who he says he is. That he is the way, the truth and the light.

There are so many parts to play in this narrative. So many characters to choose from. If we are honest with ourselves, we play any of them from time to time. We are as human as they are. Judas, who sells Jesus out; Peter, who repeatedly denies knowing him; police and soldiers carrying out other's orders; priests and Pharisees who think they know what's best; Annas and Caiaphas who try to avoid dealing with him; Pilate who can find no case against Jesus, but hands him over to those wanting him dead anyway; Barabbas, whose life is saved by the substitution of Jesus' life for his; the crowd who wants him crucified, Mary, his mother, Mary, his aunt, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple who stand by helpless to intercede in events beyond their control; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who secretly do what little they can.

What is the truth? It is not dead and sealed in a tomb. It is available to us, always. Hanging on the cross, with his last breath, Jesus says, "It is finished." But Easter morning is prologue to the reality, that though his mortal life is over, Christ is never finished with us. He lives. And so, we too, may live in the truth of unending love from the One who created us, redeems us and sustains us. This is the Truth. Let any stone that seals you off from it be rolled away. So that you may see the light. So that you may live in the light and, though human, flourish with divine life.