

Sermon on **John 18:33-37** for Christ the King Sunday – 11.19.21  
St. Paul's Lutheran – New Ulm, MN – Pastor N. Scharf

There was a television show called "Undercover Boss". The CEO of a company would step out of their jet or limousine and change their clothing, their hairstyle and even their manner of talking and then enter one of the stores of their company and rub shoulders with the employees. The employees thought the camera crews and interviews were about the training of new employees. Many of them thought the person they were training was a regular joe or jill off the street looking for work and never would dream that it was the President or Boss of the whole company!

Some employees went above and beyond to teach the new employee (undercover boss) how to make coffee, restock shelves, and make their time quotas. Some didn't. But it would not be revealed until the end just who they oversaw for those few days – their boss! The shock and surprise on their faces when they found out was emotional and raw.

Today we see the King of Kings, the one through whom all things were created, humbled not from CEO to minimum wage joe, but the Holy Son of God veiled in flesh – true God but also true Man, put on trial and convicted on false charges by the Jewish leaders, the sinless Son of Man before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, standing trial. Look closely, dear brothers and sisters, look closely at Jesus and

**Behold Your King!**  
**He brings salvation.**  
**He brings truth.**

Good Friday Morning Jesus went from the high priest's house after a brief trial and conviction to the palace of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, where Pilate listened to the charges against Jesus. *"Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'Is that your own idea,' Jesus asked, 'or did others talk to you about me?' 'Am I a Jew?' Pilate replied. 'Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?' Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.' 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate. 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.'*

Pilate spoke to the King of kings, but he doesn't believe him. He won't believe him. Jesus asks him *"Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about me?"* Jesus asked his own disciples who others thought Jesus was, but then he asked them, *"Who do you say I am?"* Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus said to him, *"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven"* (Matthew 16:13-17). Pilate does not respond in words of faith, but in words of rejection and accusation. *"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"*

*"What is it you have done?"* Pilate tried to distance himself from Jesus, who was probing his very soul, and like with all others, seeks to draw Pilate to himself. But Pilate will not. Jesus' own people didn't want him. Pilate accuses him, *"What is it you have done?"* If only Pilate knew. Jesus is clearly trying, but Pilate rejects. What had Pilate done? History reports his transgressions, his reputation in how he ruled ruthlessly. Yet, Pilate's greatest transgression was this that he rejected Jesus, the Son of God, the King of Kings who spoke to him on Good Friday.

*"What is it you have done?"* To ask this of Jesus is to only find truth and grace – He came to seek and to save the lost. To ask this of us is a whole different story. Who could fill in the blank on this question

– our parents who know our rebellious attitude against God’s good commands whether brazenly in defiance or manipulative and exhausting. Could our buddies who know all too well about the good times that went too far, or the downright sinful words and actions we took part in. Could our browser histories, or our messages sent and received fill in the blank for us on what we are really like or where we’ve failed. We would rightly stand before Pilate and see we deserved death, eternal death not at the hands of Pilate, but at the hands of Almighty God whom we offend day in and day out by our careless and sinful words, thoughts, and actions. What is it you have done? We know all too well our sin and shame.

What is it Jesus has done? He spoke the truth to Pilate as he had done to all. He loved. He gave the perfect answer to those who questioned him whether it was slow-hearted Nicodemus, doubting Thomas, self-righteous Pharisee, the poor paralytic, the sassy pants Samaritan woman, or angry and confused disciples, and here to Pompous Pontius Pilate. Jesus lived every single moment of his life perfectly. That’s what he did. And he gave it up for us all. He humbled himself not just from CEO to minimum wage Joe, but from the glories of heaven where he rules over all to the tortuous cross where God forsook God, and Jesus suffered the pangs of hell for Pilate’s sin, the disciples’ sin, your sin, and mine. That’s what he has done. He suffered and died for you so that you are forgiven in him. He rose from the grave so you can live now and eternally in heaven. This is Jesus. This is what he has done. **Behold Your King! He brings salvation. He brings truth.**

Jesus said, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”* *“You are a king, then!”* said Pilate. 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.”* Our risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ does not need an earthly kingdom, or a plot of land to call his own. His rule is in human hearts where he rules them by faith. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens through the gospel message about Jesus delivered to us in Word and Sacrament. This is the kingdom he cares about. You are his kingdom. The truth cuts through the enemies of God – the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. The Law cuts us to the heart and opens the infected decaying wound and the Gospel cleanses us, heals us, and gives us a new heart, a new life that looks in faith to our Savior King who wore a crown of thorns for us, and lives again glorious, never to suffer, but to take us home to be with him for all eternity.

*“Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”* Listen to God’s Word. Let your sin be exposed. Let the Gospel cleanse you and free you. Let the Gospel give you strength to fight against sin and temptation and live, truly live, in the peace and joy Jesus gives. Make God’s Word your companion. Read it, study it, learn it and take it to heart because this is the power God uses to rule in your hearts. Jesus Christ is your King. He is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. He will come again in glory, power, and majesty. Why? Because he comes to take us home to be with him forever in eternity. And that even now we might be his own and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

When the CEO let his identity be known, there was shock, even joy, and he would bestow gifts – sometimes monetary help to those down on their luck, or a program for climbing the corporate chain. When Jesus returns and lets his identity be known in this sin-laden world, he will bestow his gifts – life eternal for those who believe in him. Unending joy and peace for those who walk in truth. Joining with all the saints on earth and all those who have gone before and we’ll see again on the last day, to praise his name, *“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen”* (Revelation 1:5b-6). **Behold Your King! He brings salvation. He brings truth. Amen.**