

What Is Truth? (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] John 18, beginning in verse 28 and reading through verse 38, if you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning.

They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, what accusation do you bring against this man?

They answered him, if this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you. Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. The Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, are you the king of the Jews?

[1 : 13] Jesus answered, do you say this on your own accord or did others say it to you about me? Pilate answered, am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me.

What have you done? Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

But my kingdom is not of this world. And Pilate said to him, so you are a king? Jesus answered, you say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. Pilate said to him, what is truth? May God add a blessing to the reading of his word.

Would you please be seated? The sermon is really the first of two parts.

[2 : 17] Today we'll focus on Jesus' time with the Jewish leaders and Pilate. And the next week we'll look at when Jesus is actually taken into Pilate's house where there he is interrogated.

What is truth? It's a question Pilate asks. It's a question that Jesus has the answer to. But it's something that a lot of people are struggling to figure out in our world.

What is truth? In 2018, Oprah Winfrey received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Golden Globes. And in her acceptance speech, she said, What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we have.

The most powerful tool we have, she said. Your truth. Speaking your truth.

Believing your truth. Living your truth. Your truth has become the motto of our culture. It sounds good.

[3 : 26] But few recognize the nightmare that results from it. For example, your truth has led to the destruction of many families.

Mom or dad suddenly falls in love with somebody else. And they're going to go follow their truth. Leaving broken relationships in their wake.

And are those abandoned spouses and those abandoned children just supposed to say, Well, they're just following their truth. And I'm happy for them. Like Oprah said, your truth is a powerful tool.

But often its power is wielded in destructive ways. Your truth is a philosophy that will ultimately destroy a society. Because one person's truth will invariably come in conflict with another person's truth.

And when that's the case, how do we determine whose truth is the truth? Well, I think the one way or the most obvious way, the way that we see whenever truths are in conflict, is that the one whose

truth prevails is the one who is in the greatest position of power.

[4 : 48] For example, you may have heard about the five Major League Baseball players who refused to wear a patch on their jersey to celebrate Pride Month.

One of those players said this in response to his refusal to wear the patch. He said, So it's a hard decision. Because ultimately we all said what we want is them, speaking of the LGBT community, to know that all are welcome and loved here.

But when we put it on our bodies, I think a lot of guys decided that it's just a lifestyle that maybe, not that they look down on anybody or think differently, it's just that maybe we don't want to encourage it if we believe in Jesus, who's encouraged us to live a lifestyle that would abstain from that behavior.

Just like Jesus encourages me as a heterosexual male to abstain from sex outside of the confines of marriage, it's no difference. But those players who took a stand for what they believed to be true were unpopular with popular culture.

Articles were written about them. News segments were broadcast calling them uneducated bigots, hateful, homophobic, and intolerant. Intolerant. They didn't choose to sit out the game.

[6 : 09] They didn't refuse to play or perform for the crowd that would gather that day who came out to celebrate Pride Month at the baseball stadium. They just didn't want to wear a patch on their jersey that contradicted their faith, which conflicted with their truth.

And so what we see happening is you can live your truth, but only if your truth is their truth, in which case your truth really isn't your truth at all.

Does that make sense to anybody else? We live in an age that no longer has a grasp of truth. But Jesus did.

He spoke a lot about truth. And as you read the words of Jesus, as you read Scripture, what you'll find is that he never instructed anyone to follow their hearts or trust in their feelings or come up with their own definition of the truth.

He said the opposite. John 8, 31 through 32. Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, if you abide in my words, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth.

[7 : 23] And the truth will set you free. John 14, 6. Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

And then in John 18, 37, a Scripture that we've just read recently, for this purpose, Jesus says, I was born. I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.

He couldn't have said it any clearer, could he have? Those who know the truth are those who know him. Those who have truth are those who listen not to their heart, but to the voice of Jesus Christ recorded in his word.

Our passage for today portrays a clash of personalities whose definition of truth came into conflict with the one who personifies truth.

And what we see in this text is the depths to which people will lower themselves to not only deny the truth, to deny Jesus, but accuse him of things that he was innocent of doing.

[8 : 34] But as they descend into the depths of depravity in pursuit of their truth, Jesus, who is the truth incarnate, ascends and shines forth as righteous, holy, pure, glorious, good, and true.

In this text, the Holy Spirit reveals to us once more this idea, the main idea of this sermon. You cannot deny Jesus and know the truth. You cannot deny Jesus and know the truth.

Now, this doesn't mean that people who don't know Jesus are incapable of doing simple addition problems like two and two, or other similar truths like that.

What it does mean, and what the Bible clearly says, is that there is an absolute truth that no one can know outside of knowing Jesus. It's the eternal truth about sin and salvation.

Truth about the cross and forgiveness, meaning and purpose in life. These are the truths that only Jesus has to answer. They are the truths that are recorded in our Bibles.

[9 : 46] Truths that you are not only saved by him to understand, but commanded to share with others who don't understand it yet. And so these verses contain five lies that the people who denied Jesus believed.

They are lies that people continue to believe today. They are lies that you might be tempted to believe right now.

But if you know Jesus Christ, if he has drawn you to the truth, they are lies that you are commanded by him to expose in the hopes that he will use you to draw others to the same truth that he has revealed to you and caused you to believe.

And so today we'll look at the first three of those five lies. And the first one is this. Lie number one, I can honor God by dishonoring Jesus, his son. I can honor God by dishonoring Jesus, his son.

Look again at verse 28. Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

[11:06] And so around 30 AD, just a little before these events, the Romans made a law which stripped conquered peoples of their ability to carry out capital punishment.

These men had been after Jesus for a long time. They tried to kill him in Nazareth. They tried to push him off a cliff.

They wanted to stone him, but each time Jesus escaped because his hour had not yet come. But now with this new Roman law in effect, they had to get Rome's approval in order to perform an execution or to get somebody killed.

So around 6 a.m., when Roman governors would begin their duties for the day, the Jewish leaders made sure Jesus was first in line and they presented him to Pilate for his stamp of approval to execute him.

And in this, we see this first lie begin to take shape. When the Jewish leaders arrived at the place where Pilate was staying, verse 28 says, they refused to enter so that they would not be defiled and unable to carry out their celebration of Passover.

[12:33] But the Old Testament does not record such a law. This was a law of their own making. In fact, it was a law they made which contradicted God's law.

It was a manufactured truth that contradicted God's revealed truth. The Jews, if you recall, were commanded by God to be a light to the Gentiles.

But this law that they made pushed the Gentiles away from them. Now, it may have been that they refused to enter Pilate's house according to their belief that Gentiles would throw their aborted babies down the drain.

And so, if that was their line of thinking, then entering a Gentile household would put them in their minds in contact with a dead body, which Numbers 19 forbids.

But again, this man-made law contradicted God's will for his people. How could they be a light to the Gentiles but refuse to enter into the places where they lived?

[13:44] Do you see the hypocrisy? Do you see how pursuing their truth put them in conflict with the truth that God had revealed to them? They took precautions to avoid ritual contamination in order to eat the Passover while simultaneously manipulating the judicial system to secure the death of Jesus, the Passover lamb.

This is crazy. They thought they were honoring God by observing their law, by keeping their religion, which saw them seeking the death of God's only son.

Jesus had warned against this lie that people exchanged for the truth, believing that you can honor God by dishonoring him.

In John 16, 2-4, Jesus said to his disciples, they will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering a service to God.

And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me, but I have said these things to you that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you.

[14:58] Now we know in many Muslim nations, Christians are persecuted and executed by people who think that doing so honors God. But the Bible says it's impossible to honor God without honoring who his son truly is because Jesus Christ is truly, fully God.

He is divine. He is the second person of the Trinity, co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father. John makes that very clear at the beginning of this gospel.

Long ago when we were in chapter one, verse one, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and that life, the life was the light of men. Now, there are many religious people who claim to know Jesus, but they've twisted this verse by adding one word, one letter, a one letter word, a.

They have twisted God's word. They have added that letter to say this of Jesus. The word was a God. You see how one little letter completely changes the meaning of an entire passage, the understanding of who Jesus truly is.

[16 : 39] Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses claim to know Jesus, but the Jesus they claim to know is not the Jesus who truly is.

They are devoted. They, especially the Mormons, are people of moral standards and great character.

they appear to be good people, but they've perverted the gospel. As good as they may appear to be on the outside, inwardly, they are trusting in a lie.

And that is a lie that dishonors Jesus by denying who he truly is and the salvation that comes through him, not by works as they believe, but by grace through faith in him alone.

alone. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 says, for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing. It's the gift of God, not a result of work so that no one may boast.

[17 : 47] If you deny the truth that salvation is by faith in Jesus alone, then you dishonor the saving work that he accomplished on the cross.

You cannot honor God by dishonoring his son and live to see eternal life. It doesn't matter how religious you are. If your religion is based on a lie, it isn't the truth.

R.C. Sproul said of this passage in regards to a religion like this, he said, God sometimes hates religion. When does he hate it?

When it is offered from hearts that are faithless. these Jews went through all the motions, maintained all the rituals and kept themselves clean while they crucified the Son of God.

Of course, we can look back from that vantage point in the 21st century and say what hypocrites these people were but we need to look at ourselves because we crucify the Son of God afresh every time we honor him with our lips while our hearts are far from him.

[18 : 55] Instead of looking disdainfully at these people who betrayed Jesus, we have to see ourselves in that crowd because that is what fallen humanity is like. That is what fallen humanity does.

Religion without faith is death. You cannot be deceived into thinking that people of other religions are right.

They need you to expose the lie that they've believed. To do so gently, to do so lovingly.

But if we stand back and have the idea that well, you know, they are they're really sincere about what they believe. And you know what?

They're they seem to be pretty good people. Those are lies that Satan will use to discourage you from doing what God has commanded you to do.

[20 : 09] Expose the lie with the truth of who Jesus Christ is. You cannot honor God and dishonor his Son. Lie number two. I can discern what is good and evil.

I can discern what is good and evil. Look again at verses 29 and 30. So Pilate went outside to them and said, what accusation do you bring against this man?

And they answered him, if this man were not doing evil, we would not have brought him over to you. It's helpful for us to understand Pilate's relationship to the Jews at this point, to these men whom he's conversing with.

When Pilate first came to Jerusalem to serve as Rome's governor of that province, he incensed the people by bringing Roman standards into the holy city.

A Roman standard is a big pole with a flag and an image on the top, and the image on top often was the head of whoever the emperor was.

[21 : 18] And so Josephus, a Jewish historian, tells us that the Jews responded to Pilate's coming into their city in this way by staging a sit-down strike.

And Pilate threatened to chop off the heads of those who were striking. But the Jews did not relent. And so Pilate, they called his bluff. And he relented, but he was humiliated and he didn't forget.

Later on, Pilate would, in wanting to construct an aqueduct, rob the temple treasury to pay for it. That incensed the Jews and once again they went on strike.

But this time, Pilate had enough. And he sent some of his soldiers into the crowd to club many of them to death. And so they did not have a good relationship.

[22 : 21] And a lot of the things that Pilate had done got back to Rome and so he was on very thin ice at this point in his life. And he knew it.

But that didn't stop him here from playing some games with the Jews who brought Jesus to him. He knows why they've come to him.

So he forces them here to acknowledge his position of power. You want him dead? You've given me a hard time. But you know who's really in power?

It's me. And I'm going to force you to acknowledge that. But it's what the Jews say about Jesus here that exposes this second lie that people who deny Jesus believe.

They accused Jesus, the sinless, spotless son of God, of being evil. What evil did Jesus ever do? [23 : 28] this is the evil that they accused him, I think, of doing. They thought he was evil because he exposed how evil they truly were.

They called him evil for it. Doesn't that sound familiar to you today? You expose evil and you're called evil for exposing it.

have people called you evil? Have people treated you similarly for exposing the lies that they believe? This past week in California, Evan, Jack, and I were in an Uber to the Angels game and we told our driver that we were in town for the Southern Baptist Convention and he asked where we were from and we told him that we were from Oklahoma and so he was familiar with the recent shooting, unfortunately, the tragedy we had down in Tulsa and he said, guns, we've got to do something about gun control and so I saw that as an opportunity to, well, let's talk about sin and so I took it back further, you know, well, hey, we're Christians and the Bible says that we're all born sinful and just as I got into talking about it, all of a sudden our ride was over.

He pulled us over to the side, now maybe he thought we were close enough to the stadium and it wasn't what I had to say or maybe it was because Evan was wearing a Red Sox hat, I don't know, but what I do know and what I'm sure you know as well is that when you start talking about sin and when you start talking about people's sin, they get really uncomfortable with that.

Jesus made the Jewish leaders uncomfortable because he was exposing their sinfulness. They couldn't find fault in him but they acted as if they could.

[25 : 38] They believed that they were able to discern good and evil, that they, not Jesus, were the final authority on what is right and what is true and what is wrong and what is false.

The lie that you on your own, apart from God and his word, can discern what is good and evil is the oldest lie that has ever been told.

It's the first lie that the truth was ever exchanged for. In the beginning, God made Adam and Eve. They were created in his image.

He gave them dominion over all of his creation. And he told them that they could eat of any tree, of any plant, except for one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Then one day Satan comes to Eve and he entices her with the lie that she can be like God, that there is a truth that God is holding back from her and Adam.

[26 : 44] Let's go back to Genesis 3 and read that encounter. He, speaking of Satan, said to the woman, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open, you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and she took of its fruit and she ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate, then the eyes of both were opened.

And they knew that they were naked. And they sowed fig leaves and made themselves loincloths. So here's what Satan says in effect to Eve.

[27 : 52] Well Eve, God said he's given you this garden to delight in. But how can you truly delight in it when there are constraints?

That doesn't sound like someone who is good to me. can you trust someone who holds something back from you? Don't suppress your feelings.

You know you want to eat it. Follow your heart. Don't let him use this fear of death to suppress what you want.

Someone who would do that to you doesn't sound good or kind to me. And you know what? Eve, I have something to tell you that God won't.

If you eat that fruit, you'll be like God. You can be your own God, discerning your own truth, judging what is right and wrong for yourself.

[29 : 04] you won't die. You'll start living your best life now. At that point, either Adam and Eve were going to trust God's word or they were going to trust their feelings and themselves.

We know what choice they made and we are experiencing the results of that choice, aren't we? Like Adam and Eve, when God questioned them for what they'd done, they point the finger and deflect the blame to everybody else, just like we do.

Adam blames Eve. It was the woman and in a way he blames God, right? And you gave her to me. if she wasn't here, I'd be fine.

God, I think it's her fault and it's kind of your fault too. And what does Eve do? She blames the serpent. It was the serpent who deceived me.

If not for this serpent, this wouldn't have happened. And then as Scripture continues, it's not long before Adam and Eve's children, Cain murders Abel.

[30 : 26] The world is destroyed in a flood. Sodom and Gomorrah are obliterated for practicing the sin of homosexuality.

People begin creating their own systems of religion. They begin worshiping gods created in their own image, eventually replacing those gods with the worship of themselves.

those who think they can discern their own truth will face the judgment of God for it. I want to read Romans 1, 18 through 32 to you.

And as I read through these verses, ask yourself if we are not seeing this in our country right now. verse 1, verse 1,

Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature. And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

[32 : 26] Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them.

And it's not just here. I read yesterday the story of a 66-year-old Scottish man who had donated blood for years and was turned away from that blood bank whom he had donated over 125 pints of blood to because he refused to answer if he was or had recently been pregnant.

Are you kidding me? A 66-year-old man could not give blood because he refused to answer an obvious question of whether or not he had been pregnant recently or was pregnant.

[34 : 00] There's a lot of obvious things there, is there not? First of all, he's a man. Second of all, he's 66. This is the wisdom of the age.

This is progress. People think it's wise to reassign gender. They give drugs to teens to suppress the natural functions of the body.

They eliminate scripture from the classroom, but many, many schools we see are inviting drag queens in to read stories to kids. They think they have the power to define what is good and evil.

Can this lie infiltrate the church of Jesus Christ? God bless. It does. It does. When we allow our feelings to twist up what God's word says, when we think that the answer to our empty pews and the best way to make disciples is to take the edge off of God's word, let's not talk about sin, let's call it mistakes.

It's not forgiveness. Whenever we have a word or a term or an office that is clearly defined in scripture, but we feel like we need to put together a committee to determine if that's what it really means.

[35 : 36] When we twist God's word, when we question what it clearly says, we open up a crack in the door that Satan will soon kick in.

Liberalism kills churches. There are churches in our city that have closed down because long ago, someone opened that crack and it was kicked in.

And may that never be the case for our church. But it could. It could.

If ever we begin to question God's word, I don't think that's what it says. I don't think that's what it means. That part hurts my feelings. I don't like it. Let's take it out.

In John 17, 17, Jesus prayed, sanctify them in the truth. And he tells us, in his prayer to God, your word is truth. See, Jesus communicates two important facts about discerning truth in that verse.

[36 : 52] First of all, he says that God's word is truth. God's word equals truth. And it is by that truth that he sanctifies us or sets us apart for holy service to him.

If your truth contradicts the truth of God revealed in his word, then I say this to you lovingly, but I warn you that your truth is a lie.

Despite how close to the truth you might feel like you are. Charles Spurgeon talking about discernment said, discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong, rather it is telling the difference between right and almost right.

The Jewish leaders thought they were honoring God by dishonoring Christ, his son, they thought they could discern good and evil based upon their own systems of belief, and they were terribly, dreadfully wrong.

If your truth is not God's truth, it doesn't matter how right you think you are, or how close to the truth you think you might be. If you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, if you haven't trusted in him, and if you don't continually trust in him, and allow his word to define what is true for you, you are lost, and Jesus says to you that you are in the pathway that leads to destruction.

[38 : 25] Come to him. Know his truth. That's the second lie. The third lie is this. I can destroy those who disagree with me by whatever means necessary.

I can destroy those who disagree with me by whatever means necessary. Verse 31, Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. The Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

The Jewish leaders knew that they couldn't lawfully kill Jesus without facing some kind of repercussions from the Romans. But that didn't stop them.

They weren't going to let up the pressure that they were putting on Pilate to cave to their demands to cancel Jesus. And even though he knew that Jesus was innocent of the charges they brought against him, Pilate did cave for fear that if he didn't cancel Jesus, he would be canceled.

He gave in to popular opinion. You know, it's amazing how intolerant those who preach tolerance are, isn't it? The pursuit of their truth has emboldened them to seek the destruction of those who disagree with them.

[39 : 42] The Supreme Court justices who hopefully have voted to overturn Roe versus Wade have had their addresses to their houses shared by people in the media and it's the media's job, like the doctors, I believe, to try to do as little harm as possible to your patients or to the culture.

But they posted those things. Why? With the encouragement that go and give them a hard time, force them, work on them to change their minds.

We live in a society that is getting crazier and crazier. it's scary as a father for me to think about what it will be like when my kids are my age and my grandchildren are their age.

It's heartbreaking. And I don't mean to sound angry, I mean to sound heartbroken. And we can see these things and we can read these things and it breaks our heart.

And it can cause us to ask this question, what hope is there? And so I love verse 32 of this passage. In the midst of this madness, in the midst of this chaos, in the midst of these lies and deceptions, John gives us this encouraging word in verse 32.

[41 : 11] This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show what kind of death he was going to die. the sinful scheming of the Jewish leaders, the cowardly collusion of Pilate and the Jewish leaders merely fulfilled the truth that Jesus had already spoken.

And John reminds us in the midst of this, of God's sovereignty, that God is in control, that all things will work together for the good that he has providentially determined to take place.

Jesus will die, but he will die according to God's will. And he will rise again according to God's will, that those who believe in him, who trust in him for their salvation, Christ and Christ alone, the work he did on the cross, his death, his resurrection will be saved from their sins, peace, have peace with God and eternal life, and know and have the truth that sets free.

God's in control. And so it's still the case today. You have an option, you have a choice. You see these lies that people have been deceived into believing and you could do one thing, is to get angry about it and isolate yourself from it and be bitter and hateful or you could be like Jesus.

You can stand in the midst of it unwavering, exposing the lies, declaring the truth and trusting in God's sovereign will.

[43 : 07] What will you do? The choice is yours. but know the choice that God wants you to make is always to be like Jesus.

Stand, brother. Stand, sister. Stand, children and teenagers. this world needs you to be a light, to expose the lies, to live the truth and declare it that others would believe.

Main point of application, everyone who is of the truth is drawn to it by Jesus and of course we know that our job is to share the truth, declare the truth, expose the lie, but the results are his.

Everyone who is of the truth is drawn to it by Jesus and we'll see more how that applies next week when we get into the second part of this passage.

But two questions of application that I leave for you to think about today and this week. Number one, have you exchanged the truth of God for any of these lies?

[44 : 30] Satan is deceptive and I encourage you just to stop and to think and to pray and to see if there are any of these lies that you have been tempted to believe.

And then question number two, how committed will you be to exposing these lies with the truth of Jesus Christ? How committed will you be to exposing these lies with the truth of Jesus Christ?

Are you committed to making disciples? Are you committed to bearing witness to the truth like he's commanded and called you to? Think about that and I hope that afterward as you've thought about it, your determination will be to expose lies like you haven't before with the truth and grace of Jesus Christ?

Let's pray. Lord, every single one of us here is tempted to exchange what we know to be true with lies that are enticing and they sound good and they make things more comfortable for us.

Lord, forgive us that so often we are fickle instead of faithful. Lord, thank you for the example we have of your son who in the midst of lies being told about him, in the midst of truth that was exchanged for error, he stood gloriously, righteously, above it all, trusting in your will and your plan, not backing down, not seeking to please men, but to obey your will and knowing that doing so would result in the salvation of his people.

[46 : 26] God, I pray that you would open our eyes to see those around us who have exchanged the truth that you've revealed to us for one of these lies.

God, I pray for me, I pray for our church that you would break our hearts for them, that instead of hating them and treating them as enemies who we want nothing to do with, that Lord, instead we would seek all the more to be used by you to expose that lie and to share the truth that you've drawn us to know in the hopes that they too will be saved.

And God, in the midst of all that is going on, all the craziness in our world, Lord, remind us of John 18:32, your sovereignty and your plan and the hope that we always have in Jesus Christ, that hope that spurs us onward to be the kind of people, the kind of church that you've called us to be.

And may we do so, and may you be glorified by what results. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.