

# John 18:28-38

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[ 0 : 00 ] If it's under salvation, sanctification, and just renewal, we pray that you would leave us here changed and that you would be glorified.

! And it's very good that this Friday was ordained by God. The salvation of every believer depends on it, but it's a day filled with evil.

There are major contrasts in this section. Good, the greatest good, what Christ did on the cross for our sins, contrasted with evil. Satan is here. Satan has his hand in this event.

You have justice, injustice, two opposing kingdoms represented by two rulers, Christ and Pilate, as well as two contrasting paradigms of truth.

So this short but vital section in God's long story of redemption is very relevant to us today.

[ 1 : 23 ] But who is Pilate? Who is this man standing in the presence of God incarnate, presuming to judge his creator?

So Pilate was a bit of a dud, as we'll see. I say that just, it's truth.

He was the Roman procurator or governor, judge of Samaria and Judea, where we find Jerusalem, the place where this event takes place.

He was appointed in the year of our Lord 26 by Tiberius Caesar, several years before this fateful day, the crucifixion of Christ. Going back a little further, the Romans conquered Jerusalem, Judea in 63 BC, and by 6 AD, Rome sent a series of governors to bring stability to the region.

And Pilate was in this line of governors, and governed from 26 to 35. So similar to Rome-appointed kings, like the Herods, we see in scripture, these governors had a great deal of control, but had to keep order and obey and enforce Roman law.

[ 2 : 41 ] And if they were found to be unsuitable, they could be removed and even put to death. Judea was a difficult place to govern, because the Israelites had a habit of rioting when their religious laws were violated, and they didn't hail Caesar as God.

By the time Pilate met Jesus, he was already on thin ice with Rome by inciting riots. He incited the Israelites so badly that they sent a delegation to Tiberius Caesar in protest.

Tiberius sent a delegation back to Pilate in support of Israel's grievances, and this left Pilate in a precarious position before the Jews.

Now just a reminder, the apostle John says Jews as a designation for the Jewish leaders. So in this crowd that we have before Pilate, Jesus is arrested.

He's standing with Pilate before this crowd of Jewish leaders, of Jewish people, converts to Judaism, as well as Roman soldiers. And Pilate is in a position that if he blew it one more time, it will likely cost him his job and perhaps even his life.

[ 3 : 59 ] He's continued to show poor judgment, and this is what brings us to this particular account. So our first point, unbelievers are used by God to accomplish his will.

Unbelievers are used by God to accomplish his will. And there's a long history of God using unbelievers to accomplish his purposes in the Bible. I just mentioned the Herods. Herod Antipas is another player in this ridiculous trial of Jesus, which we see in the Gospels.

The Sanhedrin, who had just condemned Jesus to death previous nights into morning, right before we find ourselves here, though they were religiously observant, they were corrupt to the core.

The Sanhedrin was mostly made up of Sadducees who denied the supernatural. Jewish leaders, Jesus called them a brood of vipers. Whitewashed tombs, clean on the outside but dead inside.

So God still uses these worldly powers today, as he used them then. And he commands us in Scripture to submit ourselves to these authorities to the glory of God. It's one of those dichotomies of being a Christian.

[ 5 : 14 ] Submit yourselves to these authorities, to the glory of God. And Jesus models that in John 18. Despite the godless character traits of Pilate, he was used for such incredibly ennobled yet important purposes that the founding church fathers wrote him into the Apostles' Creed.

I'll read the first part of the Apostles' Creed. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate.

So Pilate played a pivotal historical role in the crucifixion of Christ. So God is sovereign over even the most corrupt powers that die like flowers of the field and disappear like smoke.

So we pick up in verse 28. Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. So by the time we reach verse 28, Jesus had been arrested, put through three trials before the Jews.

There was a trial before Annas, Caiaphas, and Sanhedrin. And two of these took place at night, which violated the Jews' own amishnah. Amishnah were laws that were made up by the rabbis, the leaders of the day.

[ 6 : 37 ] It also violated the Mosaic Law, pertaining to how justice should be upheld. So Jesus was condemned to death at night, and at daybreak, he was condemned again before the Sanhedrin to give an appearance of legality.

He was then quickly rushed over to Pilate, who was staying in Jerusalem for the Passover. Pilate was usually stationed in Caesarea by the sea. Pilate was a judge, and his court opened at daybreak.

Continuing on, they did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. Pilate was a judge, and this was at the heart of why Jesus condemned the Jewish leaders so frequently.

He says in Matthew 15, 8, These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They condemned God to death, but wouldn't be ceremonially defiled.

And there's nothing about entering a Gentile house in the Mosaic Law, or not entering a Gentile house in the Mosaic Law. So this also comes out of the Mishnah. So we see in these verses, the Jews violate and keep their own laws to suit themselves.

[ 7 : 48 ] Human created justice. Just as a side note, the Mishnah states that a Gentile home was unclean based on assumptions about Gentile lifestyles. They equated entering a Gentile home with touching a dead body, which was something that made you unclean based on numbers, and they stretched that.

But these and other isolating laws made the problem of ethnicism towards non-Jews worse during the time of the New Testament. The Jewish leaders just is putting up roadblocks for people.

Verse 29, So Pilate went out to them. So he catered to these idiosyncrasies. And he says, What do you bring against this man?

So Pilate's position was that of a judge. He was a peacekeeper. He had some sense of Roman duty. In verse 30, they answered him, If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.

The Jews had already acted as judge and jury. They don't want another judge. They want an executioner. The Jews were afraid of the people who hung on Jesus' teachings.

[ 9 : 00 ] They saw him as a prophet. And just days prior, welcomed him into Jerusalem with palm branches and praises. And that's why they arrested and tried him at night.

So Pilate attempts several tactics to get Jesus off his hands, knowing he's innocent. In the face of Pilate's hesitancy, as we see in the next chapter, the Jews eventually do bring a charge and condemn Jesus for something that was true.

We see that in John 19, verse 7. The Jews answered him, We have a law. And according to that law, he ought to die because he made himself the son of God. So in the grossest perversion of justice conceived by hell itself, God was sentenced to death for declaring that he's God.

Back in verse 31, Pilate said to them, Take him yourself and judge him by your own law. Pilate wants nothing to do with this case. If you can't bring a charge, condemn him yourself.

So Pilate is giving the Jews permission to carry out judgment. And this shows Pilate's cold-hearted nature. He didn't care about truth. He didn't care about justice.

[ 10 : 12 ] Whether or not this man standing before him had done anything deserving condemnation. And he didn't care if the Jews killed him. He had Jesus flogged, even though he was

innocent.

Flogging could have killed Jesus. He could have stopped the vile mockery and abuse that his soldiers hurled at Jesus. He didn't. As it pertained to justice, the Jewish leaders had long since departed from truth.

As we'll see, this theme of truth, as we've been talking about this morning, it saturates this text. Pilate is concerned with self-preservation. Both parties are guided by the preservation of power. The Jews were concerned that Jesus would cause Rome to come and take away their power and their privilege. If we jump back to John 11, verse 48, if we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him.

And the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. Self-preservation. Preservation of power. But again, our point, God uses unbelievers to accomplish his will.

[11:22] All of this self-centered injustice was working to fulfill God's purposes. And the very words that Jesus spoke about the death, about his death, on multiple occasions.

Verse 31, The Jews said to him, It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death. And this was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show what kind of death he was going to die.

The Jews are fulfilling the word of Jesus. Rome technically took away the Jews' right to put a person to death. And Pilate was exempting them from this law.

Pilate could condemn any non-Roman to death for any reason. He had the power over life and death. As well as turning a blind eye when the Jews did kill people.

They stoned Stephen in the book of Acts. They already tried to stone Jesus eight times. But Jesus always slipped away because it wasn't his time.

[12:27] By Mosaic law, stoning is how a blasphemer, which is what they were accusing Jesus of, a blasphemer, was to die. And the accusers had to be the one to throw the first stone. Deuteronomy 17.7 The Jews threw their perpetrators to the ground and stoned them.

Lawbreakers in Israel were caused to lie down and be beaten. Deuteronomy 25.2 Satan is thrown down. Revelation 12 The world's power represented by Babylon is thrown down.

Revelation 18 Jesus wasn't going to be thrown down, but shall be high and lifted up. And shall be exalted. Isaiah 52.13 And he said that in John 3.14 as he spoke to Nicodemus.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Psalm 22.16 For dogs encompass me, a company of evildoers encircle me.

They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them. And from my clothing, for my clothing, they cast lots.

[13:52] It wasn't the Jews. It was the Romans that lifted its victims up and pierced their hands and feet. And Psalm 22. King David prophesied Christ's piercing a thousand years before this day.

And hundreds of years before crucifixion was even invented. God ordained this. Jesus gave himself up unto death. Philippians 2.8 He did the will of his Father.

John 6.38 God gave his only son. John 3.16 But unbelievers are used by God to accomplish his will. Our second point. Unbelievers reject the truth of Christ's kingdom.

Go back to verse 33. So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus answered, Do you say this of 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.

[14:57] If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting that I might not have been delivered to you or be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.

Then 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. And Pilate said to him, What is truth? It takes some reading into context to ascertain Pilate's manner in this question.

What is truth? Some suggest Pilate is an out-of-time, post-modern thinker, questioning the existence of truth. What is truth? Or perhaps he's a curious seeker of truth.

Jesus, what is truth? In this context, considering his character, I believe this was said in more of a cynical tone. Because Pilate believed in a worldly application of truth.

[16:01] That what we see and experience is truth. He acted in this perceived truth. Rome was truth. Soldiers in power were truth.

Caesar was truth. The truth of any spiritual kingdom Jesus is speaking about is of no consequence to him. Pilate's understanding of truth is as old as the fall of man.

And deceitful as the fruit Satan tempted Adam and Eve with. It's the lie that truth can exist apart from God. And that's the best Pilate could do.

He couldn't hear the voice of truth because he wasn't of the truth. As Jesus says, everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.

But Pilate is exactly wrong. Jesus is speaking about eternal truth. Spiritual truth. The true source of power. So awesome.

[17:01] We're commanded don't fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10, 28.

The truth every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2, 10-11. The truth about the kingdom of Christ of God that Jesus preached throughout his entire ministry.

Himself being the center of all truth. John 14, 6. Jesus said, I am the way and the truth the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Psalm 97 that the Lord reigns.

Let the earth rejoice. Let the many coastlands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness are around him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around.

His lightnings light up the world. The earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the God, before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness and all the people see his glory.

[18:12] Colossians 1, 15-17. He's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together. Revelation 1, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.

The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars and from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him I fell at his feet as though dead.

John's vision of Christ in Revelation 1. That is Jesus. That is truth. Who possessed the true power in this encounter?

[19:25] Not Pilate. Pilate's truth, whatever it was, it only matters as it pertains to the infinite glory and power of Jesus Christ.

Truth and justice go hand in hand. There is no truth, there can't be justice. It isn't human responsibility to create justice or equity, fairness.

And that's probably an idea we could ponder for some time. But we can't create those things. But it's our responsibility to keep those things. In the same way we can't create truth, but we must abide in it.

Even so, we often act as creators of truth and justice in our own lives and families. We can raise our children with our standards of justice, holding others to our measure of right and wrong and fairness.

I do that on the road. We weigh all things to our own truth. And that was the unfortunate theme of the book of Judges, that everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

[20:40] Pilate, his ultimate role wasn't to enforce Caesar's justice, but uphold God's. But because he rejected God's truth, he was incapable of being just.

Why are there so many gross injustices in our world today? Because the world rejects God's truth.

Why are there judges and legislators in our country who can't define what a woman is?

Because they rejected God's truth. Romans 1, we suppress truth with our unrighteousness. And then God gives us over to a depraved mind.

We can't even, we can't tell the truth. We can't know anything. And that's why we're commanded to pray for our authorities. Not just criticize them, pray for them. Because godly authorities bring

peace.

But like truth, justice originates from God. And it's all throughout Scripture. It's just a couple of them. Psalm 99, you, God, have established equity. You have executed justice and righteousness.

[ 21 : 49 ] Psalm 98, God will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. Like Pilate, if we ignore or are ignorant of God's perfect truth, we become violators of justice.

If I raise my children by my own standards of right and wrong, I will end up violating justice. Parents are commanded not to incite their children to wrath.

Injustice incites wrath. The Lord's just discipline instructs. It brings blessing, rest, and hope.

We must all measure our lives to God's standard of truth and justice, not our own. back in April, April 23rd of this year, George Barna with the Cultural Research Center, he's a Christian researcher, they released a study that found only 6% of professing evangelical Christians hold a biblical worldview, meaning you view the world through a biblical lens.

And just to put that in context, according to Pew Research, 24% of Americans identify as evangelical Christians. So it's not too surprising a statistic.

[ 23 : 07 ] And I'm not suggesting that this represents 6% of healthy churches or 6% of shoreline, but it is a significant statistic to consider. The Cultural Research Center defines a biblical worldview as a means of experiencing, interpreting, and responding to reality in light of biblical perspectives.

I'll read that again. A biblical worldview is a means of experiencing, interpreting, and responding to reality in light of biblical perspectives. Now, we go to 1 John chapter 2 and verse 3, and by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.

Or if we keep his commandments. Whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word in him truly the love of God is perfected.

By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way which he walked. So we must know, trust in, and walk in scripture, in truth.

And that's the indicator of saving faith. It doesn't save you. Jesus Christ saved you. But as we're saved, that's the indicator of that saving faith.

[ 24 : 32 ] We walk as he walked. And what that statistic indicates to me is there's a very small percent of people who think they're Christian and actually possess a saving faith.

even professing believers in God like the Jews. They professed God. They professed they were children of God. But they can tune out the voice of truth.

And in doing so they reject Christ's kingdom. So unbelievers reject the truth of Christ's kingdom. And final application point. Let's not suppress truth like Pilate.

So how could the Jews, the crowd, and Pilate do these terrible things to Jesus? Why do humans treat one another with this hateful cruelty?

Romans chapter 8 verses 7 and 8. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, his truth, nor can it do so.

[ 25 : 36 ] Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. When we're hostile towards God, we treat one another with hostility. Psalm 94 verses 20 to 21.

Can wicked rulers be allied with you? Those who fashion injustice by statute? They band together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death.

I admit I've marveled at how these people in Scripture could be so hard-hearted, obstinate, blind.

Even people today, how can we be so obstinate, hard-hearted, and blind? But the more I've grown in my understanding of my own heart through the lens of Scripture, the more I see myself in these people.

Consider the lyrics to How Deep the Father's Love for Us. Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders.

[ 26 : 44 ] Ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. Standing there in the crowd saying, crucify him, crucify him.

It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.

And that's a conviction as I even think about that. You know, God, something that God hates are haughty eyes. Eyes that look down on anyone. Like when I consider this, I can't look down on anyone, even Pilate.

even if it wasn't done. This is humbling. This is truly telling of my heart.

But praise God, I'm saved by the Lord Jesus. My punishment's been paid for. My sin was born on Christ 2,000 years ago. And this is a pivotal difference between me and Pilate, between many of us in this room and Pilate.

[ 27 : 49 ] But the tendencies of my heart are just as wretched as his. It's easy to say that what was done to Jesus was unjust. It was terrible. It was. But I've never met anyone personally who would have said that Jesus deserved this punishment and death.

Because most people think that Jesus was a pretty good guy. A good teacher. A moral teacher. A prophet. Maybe somebody even sent by God. Because that's what all of the major world religions believe.

about Jesus. But if we reject the truth of Jesus as Lord, if we reject salvation, we are disobedient to God.

We're commanded to be obedient to God. We're commanded into salvation. If we reject that, we choose sin, withhold the glory due Jesus.

Just as all the major world religions do. Apart from Jesus Christ. Apart from Christianity. outside of Christ's redeeming work in our lives.

[ 28 : 51 ] Redeeming work. He purchased us out of the slave market of sin. He's redeemed us. And outside of his redeeming work in our lives, we all stand with Pilate and the Jewish leaders opposing Jesus.

Jesus says, he who is not with me is against me. Jesus at some point declared himself to each of these people as king. The son of God. God.

And they rejected his claim. And didn't just withhold the glory he was due, but publicly disgraced him. They sought to strip him of glory. That's why in the Ten Commandments it says, do not use the Lord's name in vain.

What does that do? It strips his name of glory. When you say Jesus Christ, you better say it praising our God and Savior. Or we strip him of his glory and his powerful name.

So those today who reject Christ's lordship in their lives stand in hostile opposition to him. And they're no different than the Jewish leaders, than Pilate, than the soldiers, and all who shouted crucify him.

[ 30 : 01 ] And all of us need to be confronted with this truth. The whole world needs to be confronted with this truth. Just as Peter confronted the crowd in Acts chapter 2, 50 days later.

Peter, who had just denied Christ, 50 days later, confronted the crowd, Pentecost. And it says he was addressing a crowd of devout men from every nation under heaven.

Devout people. Religious people. People that traveled to be there. And he said, you crucified him. You crucified him. And it cut them to their hearts. And they said, what must we do to be saved? Believe and be baptized. It's truth. It's powerful. But recognizing our natural hostility toward God builds a lens to see how much we need Christ.

We can't let people in our lives not know how much they need Christ. And for those of us who come to believe, even as we once stood in the place of Pilate, enemies of God, rejecting Jesus with our rebellious, hardened hearts, Jesus drew us to himself, carried our sin to the cross, and cleansed us.

[ 31 : 16 ] While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5.8. History gives us no indication that Pilate was ever brought to repentance. He was eventually fired from his position for excessive bloodshed, and he was sent to Rome for trial.

Tiberius Caesar died before he got there, so legend has it that he escaped execution, was banished to the city of Vienne in Gaul, which is modern-day France, and he died by suicide.

Have you accepted Jesus as king, as Lord, as truth? I pray so. And if so, as we walk in new life, let's continue in truth and not suppress it like Pilate.

At the end of verse 38, Jesus states, everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. He's the good shepherd, and his sheep hear his voice. We can hear it.

We can hear him calling. Throughout church history, the Holy Spirit has continued to guide Christians to truth, as Satan has tirelessly sought to pollute the church with lies.

[ 32 : 28 ] stands, he accuses us, lies, lies. He brings lies in that pollutes. The Protestant Reformation back in the 1500s was pivotal.

It was a pivotal return to God's word. And the Reformation established five solas to distinguish the reformers from the Catholic church, which rejected salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

So sola means alone. So sola scriptura means scripture alone. It's also Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, to the glory of God alone.

Five solas. So scripture alone means that scripture is sufficient for everything we need for salvation and godly living.

I've read a lot of church statements of faith. not for fun. I was helping to plant a church and I was reading through a lot of statements of faith. And these statements of faith, they have a very common statement in all of the church statements of faith that I've read through, is that scripture is inerrant.

[ 33 : 41 ] It is without error. And that is true. But I believe the church in the West has taken hold of that truth in one hand and let go of the truth of sola scriptura from the other.

It's easy to see. We add worldly things to our lives, our church, our children, in addition to scripture, because scripture alone, God's truth alone doesn't seem to be enough.

We habitually fill our minds with worldly things, things that counsel our thinking in lives, promising satisfaction and fulfillment. entertainment. We look at worldly patterns, patterns of organization, worldly entertainment, and we build our churches with them.

As he was considering what kind of kingdom he would reign over, King David wrote in Psalm 101, he says that, I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.

I hate the works of those who fall away. It shall not cling to me. We must do more than accept truth. We must allow it to counsel everything we do.

[ 35 : 00 ] We must distinguish the voice of truth from the voice of lies, as David sets out to do in Psalm 101. And as Jesus declares to Pilate here in John 18, as people of truth, the voice of truth, Jesus, the word of God that became flesh, must be the voice that directs us in absolutely everything.

Psalm 119. This psalmist just loves the word of God. I want to be a Psalm 119 guy. Just loves the word of God. But he says in verse 105, your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And I love the imagery of this verse. If you've ever been camping and you have to walk down an unfamiliar path on a moonlit night, which I've done many times, almost always needing to use the bathroom, a flashlight is essential to illuminate your path.

It gives you just the light you need to keep your feet from stumbling off the path. Scripture is essential in our lives, just as a lamp is on a dark night.

Light drives out darkness, John 1.5. Another part of this metaphor that we can extract from Psalm 101 is that we identify darkness for what it is.

[ 36 : 28 ] It's something to be rejected and driven out. not clinging to us because we're children of light. 1 Thessalonians 5. We must walk in the light as he is in the light.

1 John 1.7. So can scripture really direct us in everything? I know it's common for me to seek guidance in big decisions, big decisions in our lives.

Do we send our kids to public school? Do we send our kids to home school? Do I take that promotion? Do I keep my more steady hours for my family? But what about day-to-day decisions? Do I buy takeout again or just cook the food that I have at home? How we spend our money? Do I watch Netflix or maybe I need to devote some time to prayer? Does the voice of truth counsel us in every choice?

Is it the light and path? Is this metaphor the light and path still relevant in areas of permissibility and freedom of choice? And I would say yes, absolutely. Scripture is sufficient for everything we need for salvation and godly living.

[ 37 : 39 ] If we're in the habit of being counseled by voices other than God's, we will begin a slippery path of suppressing truth in all areas of our lives. In the little things and the big things.

We see this throughout scripture. Many examples, including here in John 18 and unfortunately in King David's life himself. And I have seen this in my own life.

And it catches up to you. What am I doing? How quickly we can suppress truth when we allow other counselors to counsel our minds. So two verses that have helped me weigh the voice of truth in these permissible decisions.

Because obviously sin is sin. You don't do it. But what about the permissible things? What about the things that are the gray areas in life? Romans 14.23 is a great verse to think about when you're making decisions.

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. And just to define faith, faith is the assurance of things hoped for. It's the convictions of things not seen. It comes out of Hebrews 11.

[ 38 : 40 ] But is the choice I'm making done in faith? We can have faith in lots of stuff. And we can make choices in faith. But specifically it needs to be faith in Christ alone. Is there a Christ kingdom focused in my decision?

Or am I just doing what I want? Or avoiding something I don't? Second verse, 1 Corinthians 10.23-24. All things are lawful or permissible, but not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Is the decision I'm making building up?

Is it edifying? Am I considering how my decision benefits others in the kingdom focused way? Is it for the glory of God alone? So this week, pray.

Pray with your spouse. Pray with your children. Find a friend to pray with. Pray yourself alone. But ask the Lord to reveal, have I allowed the voice of the world to counsel me in addition to scripture?

[ 39 : 48 ] God's truth plus the world's truth. Do I live with a scripture plus mentality? Scripture plus what I see, what I want.

Scripture plus comfort. Scripture plus pleasure. Scripture plus my stuff. Which is actually all minus scripture. It's minus truth.

Adding to is actually stripping scripture of its authority and glory, in God his glory. And as you prayerfully wait on the Lord to reveal these things, consider how you spend your time.

In particular, your leisure time. What entertains us? Where do we spend our talents, our money?

Are we zealously consumed with building God's kingdom more than our own?

Because that was Pilate. May we be a church where scripture, the voice of truth, is enough and let's not suppress truth like Pilate. Heavenly Father, this is a hard character to look at.

[ 40 : 57 ] Particularly, Lord, as I've delved into this scripture and just seen myself over and over again. And this scripture, it exhorts me to turn to you and you alone, to fix my eyes on you, to set my hope fully on the grace to be given in that day of your return.

Lord, just search us and know us, test our anxious thoughts, see if there's anything unrighteous in us and lead us to the way everlasting.

Lord, as we depart, may we be bearers of truth, speakers of truth, lovers of truth. And Lord, just counsel every one of our thoughts that we hold captive and make obedient to you.

Lord, we thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross for our sins. We thank you that you've made this all possible and that you rose again and you've given the Holy Spirit that counsels us, that guides us, and direct us.

May we listen to the voice of truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please stand, church.

Let's pray that the Lord would speak his truth to us as we leave today.

[ 42 : 23 ] Speak, oh, Lord. Speak, oh, Lord, as we come to you to receive the fruit of your holy word.

Take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness.

That the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, oh, Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us. Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.

[ 43 : 42 ] Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radius of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority.

words of power that can never fail. Let their truth prevail over our faith.

Speak, oh, Lord, and renew our minds. Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

Truth's unchanged from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity.

[ 45 : 02 ] And by grace we'll stand on your promises. And by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, oh, Lord, till your church is built and the earth is filled with your glory.

Oh, the depth of riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. Go in peace. To him. Thank you.