

Worship Resources - [Truthful](#)

Pentecost 26, Year B,

21st November, 2021

Revelation 1:4b-8 CEV / Mark 13:1-18 CEV

Intro/Prelude

[*It Is Well With My Soul*](#)

written by Philip Bliss, arr. by Martha Mier,
performed by church musician Annie Center, used
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Welcoming/Call to Worship

We come diffidently weighed down by the excesses and the sorrows of the past.

We come hopefully knowing that the presence of God will not be limited by our human constructs.

We come thankfully discovering abundance born not of possession but of the heart.

Grace to you and peace, from the God who is and who was and who is to come.

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather today, let's reflect on what truth we use to guide our lives, as we listen to the following familiar hymn, Be Thou My Vision.

Reflection Video

[*Be Thou My Vision*](#)

performed by Robin Mark,
posted to YouTube by Chet Valley Churches,
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Invocation

We worship you, O God, with joyful noise - with words of praise and adoration spoken and sung in the name of Jesus who brought your love song to us in person. In harmony with you, he puts new words in our mouths and new intentions in our hearts, especially a new understanding of power. Power shaped by love and righteousness, justice and mercy. We now know that power is not to be used to exploit or dominate, but to serve others as willingly as Jesus did. His life and death demonstrated how the love of power could be transformed by the power of love. We gather here today to celebrate your rule of love in our hearts as we experience it in Jesus and through the enabling gift of your Spirit. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Servant King. Amen

— Copyright © Moira Laidlaw, posted on her Liturgies Online website. Visit that site for other great lectionary-based resources.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our reading from Revelation, we here of the eternal nature of Christ, and our place as his disciples. As we listen to these words, let's reflect on Christ's place in our own lives.

Scripture Reading *Revelation 1:4b-8 CEV*

I pray that you will be blessed with kindness and peace from God, who is and was and is coming. May you receive kindness and peace from the seven spirits before the throne of God.

May kindness and peace be yours from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Jesus was the first to conquer death, and he is the ruler of all earthly kings. Christ loves us, and by his blood he set us free from our sins.

He lets us rule as kings and serve God his Father as priests. To him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds. Everyone will see him, even the ones who stuck a sword through him. All people on earth will weep because of him. Yes, it will happen! Amen.

The Lord God says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the one who is and was and is coming. I am God All-Powerful!"

Scripture Video

[Revelation 1:4b-8](#)

Christ The Ruler Of The Earth

Lectionary bible reading

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concern

Today, let's remember Roger and Kathy Edmark's granddaughter Amber in our prayers, as she continues to struggle. May God grant her strength, healing, and peace.

We also take joy in a good medical report for their daughter Melissa, as well as Kathy's mother's continued improvement.

We are also thankful that Myrna has made it through another COVID issue at her complex, and they are returning back to normal this week.

Let's continue to keep AJ's family and friends in prayer as they continue to navigate their loss and grief. May they feel the comforting presence of God in their lives.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our hearts to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Lord, as You hung on a cross Your first thought was for others. You forgave the ones who ridiculed and tortured You, You accepted the criminal who hung beside You. And it was You who made a mockery of the sign they placed above Your head. For little did they know that they did indeed gaze at a king. We don't need signs and labels to recognise Your power and Your authority, Lord. It is because we have seen the unlikely become reality; in the unexpected, and because we believe in truths honed by a carpenter's son, that we dare to hope, Lord, that Your kingdom has come among us and continues to come, day after day, among the poor and the lonely, the sick and the weary, the angry and the abused, the warmongers and the peace seekers. And so it is for those and others whose lives are touched by grief and greed, injustice and injury, emptiness and endlessness that we pray now, trusting in the goodness and the grace that retrieved lost sheep and wayward sons; that consoled grieving mothers and weeping women at a tomb; that fed aching stomachs and eager minds; that soothed the open wounds of untouchables and the throbbing scars of hatred; that laid open itself to pain, rejection and abandonment so that we might know healing, acceptance and belonging. And if we catch only a glimpse of Your mercy among the hardness of life, if we can sense Your presence only for a fleeting moment in the busyness of life, if we can witness that wholeness happens among the brokenness of life, then we will

know that Your kingdom has come and we pray that Your will be done. This day and always, for Jesus' sake and in his name we pray. Amen.

In our gospel lesson this morning, we hear the exchange between Jesus and Pilate. As listen to these words from John, let's give thought as to who we say Jesus is, and how that impacts our lives.

Gospel Lesson John 18:33-37 CEV

Pilate then went back inside. He called Jesus over and asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own or did someone tell you about me?"

"You know I'm not a Jew!" Pilate said. "Your own people and the chief priests brought you to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom doesn't belong to this world. If it did, my followers would have fought to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. No, my kingdom doesn't belong to this world."

"So you are a king," Pilate replied.

"You are saying that I am a king," Jesus told him. "I was born into this world to tell about the truth. And everyone who belongs to the truth knows my voice."

Scripture Video John 18:33-37

[The Kingdom Of Christ](#)

Lectionary bible reading

Reflection

Truthful

Rev. Glenn Brumbaugh

So what is truth? Is what you see as true the same as what I think. In other words, what you view as moral or ethical may differ from my view, and both views are valid, from our own perspectives. And while that may sound like elevated philosophy on the surface, how well does that play out in reality?

J. P. Moreland, in his book *Apologetic Reasoning and the Christian Mind*, tells of an experience that illustrates the importance of truth: "One afternoon I was sharing the gospel in a student's dorm room at the University of Vermont. The student began to espouse ethical relativism: 'Whatever is true for you is true for you and whatever is true for me is true for me. . . But no one should force his or her views on other people since everything is relative.'" Moreland says, "I knew

that if I allowed him to get away with ethical relativism, there could be for him no such thing as real, objective moral failure, measured against the objective moral precepts of scripture, and thus no need of sacrifice or change. I thanked the student for his time and began to leave his room. On the way out, I picked up his small stereo and started out the door with it. 'Hey, what are you doing?' he shouted. . . 'I am leaving your room with your stereo.' 'You can't do that,' he gushed." But Moreland said, "I happen to think it is permissible to steal stereos if it will help a person's religious devotions, and I myself could use a stereo to listen to Christian music in my morning devotions. Now I would never try to force you to accept my moral beliefs in this regard because, as you said, everything is relative and we shouldn't force our ideas on others. But surely you aren't going to force on me your belief that it is wrong to steal your stereo, are you?"

Moreland looked at him and continued: "You know what I think? I think that you espouse relativism in areas of your life where it's convenient, or in areas about which you do not care, but when it comes to someone stealing your stereo or criticizing your own moral hobby horses, I suspect that you become a moral absolutist pretty quickly, don't you?"

Likewise in our Gospel lesson today, Pilate finds himself in an ethical conundrum. He's presented with Jesus by the High Priest for crucifixion but without a clear charge with which to condemn him. Rome was an empire built on laws. Laws, backed of course by consequences, were how they kept order. Yet here was a man that had not violated any law of Rome, however, for Pilate to not act was to risk an uprising. And his number one job was to keep things under control.

In John's Gospel, the crime Jesus is guilty of, according to the religious authorities, was blasphemy. He is equating himself with God. Yet from a Roman perspective, this is just a religious dispute, not a legal matter. Pilate is trying to determine the truth in order to define his role and decision in this matter. From the beginning of Pilate's examination, the subject of truth is the underlying context. Is Jesus accused, or has he already been condemned? Who has the right to pass the death sentence? Is Jesus the king of the Jews? In a sense, Pilate finds himself on trial by Jesus. Jesus isn't playing his game. He's throwing his questions back at him by asking questions of his own that illustrate the ethical dilemma Pilate is in. Jesus is also illustrating that they are talking about apples and oranges. Jesus is preaching a truth that is the opposite of how truth is commonly defined in this world. Pilate's questions make it clear he is trying to fit Jesus into the truths as his reality defines it. Are you a king? What has he done? Yet there is no good answer to be had, no ethical code to apply.

John's version of this story almost endears Pontious Pilate to us as someone frustrated and trying to do the right thing. However, lest we forget, he's clearly irritated in having to deal with this issue at all. He tried to pawn this problem off on King Herod, only to have it put back in his lap to deal with.

In the scriptural story, he goes back and forth from the outer to the inner courtyard, between the Priests and Jesus, mocking them both. This whole matter is ridiculous and irritating for him. But he doesn't make the right, ethical choice does he? No, he instead symbolically washes his hands of the whole affair and lets the Priests have their way. His only understanding of truth is from the perspective of this world.

Yet the truth that Jesus speaks is of a kin-dom and way of being that has its foundation outside the limitations and expectations of the world we know.

But how often do we, like Pilate, seek our truth in the structures and powers of this world? The followers of Jesus across the centuries have been tempted again and again to desire a kin-dom that is very much from or aligned with this world. Often, Christians try to fuse commitments of worship, faith, and justice with a particular political agenda.

We see it in our American context in the politics of left-wing and right-wing parties, with liberalism and conservatism. The issues differ, but the passions are similar. Unfortunately we forget the statement of Jesus, "My kin-dom is not from this world." For us to say that the kin-dom of God is not from this world is to practice a spiritual discipline of detachment. Our political processes are so intense and so polarized that they can often make a claim for our deepest and most intense engagement. To detach is to step aside and express a more fundamental conviction: that Jesus transcends political partisanship and religious division.

Jesus was an advocate for particular values that cannot easily be connected to any particular political movement. Values such as justice and compassion for the poor, the oppressed, and the prisoners, honoring the lowest among us first, taking the place of the least of these. Those are the truths of the kin-dom Jesus rules.

As disciples of Jesus we are called to detachment, yet detachment is never easy. We all too easily become attached to the principalities and powers of today for good reason: they provide power, security, and identity. The attachments shape us, individually and as a community. It can give us comfort to say that we belong to this or that ethnic group, that we are Washingtonians or Pennsylvanians, or Americans. We often seek safety in the structures of this world that we create, much like the Romans of Jesus' day. We make laws to try to insure justice and security, and cling to those edicts. Yet events such as the Kyle Rittenhouse case illustrate that laws have their limitations and do not always provide the justice and safety we attribute to them.

But how different is that from the temptation that Christ resisted in his 40 days in the desert? The temptations that this world has to offer. To give into temptation is to become attached to the kingdoms and systems of this world; to resist temptation is to seek first the kin-dom of God and God's righteousness.

In our scripture today, Jesus tells Pilate, "I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." How do we listen to the voice of Jesus? We first acknowledge that his voice will almost always be at odds with the prevailing messages of the powers of this world.

Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr describes our roles as serving Christ against culture and serving Christ transforming culture. Some followers of Jesus are called to withdraw from culture, establishing new traditions and alternative habits, and perhaps building new institutions. Throughout history there have always been those who stepped away into intentional communities, separated from mainstream cultural influence.

Our own Brethren tradition has its roots in that model and we can see the institutions that grew out of that such as Brethren Volunteer Service, Heifer International, and others. These are ways of reacting and doing things that run counter to how the powers of this world normally see and handle things. Other disciples are called to be in the world but not of it, living within the culture but working to transform it ever closer to the truth of the kin-dom of God.

I think most of us would find ourselves in this group. These disciples work within the existing power structure to make the systemic changes that result in more justice and compassion in culture and society.

Jesus' solution to showing power in this world was to give up the status of ruler, to empty himself, and take the form of a servant to all. This is the ultimate display of God's truth, of the detachment that should be our goal, the outward and visible sign of a kingdom that is not of this world.

Jesus lived that truth in what he did, said, and sacrificed, in who he supported and in those he criticized. Jesus is guilty of acts of compassion and justice, caring for people, and addressing the socioeconomic causes of their distress. His work was pastoral, but it was also political in the sense that he used his influence in public arenas to share not his truth, but the truth.

The truth that transcends the limitations and boundaries of this world's thinking. Can you handle the truth? Can you let go of the attachment to the truths of this world for the truth that Christ represents? May we all seek to live lives of truth that highlight the kin-dom values we're called to, values not of this world. Amen.

Call to Serve.

Christ our sovereign and servant sets forth a just and compassionate domain in which the needs of the vulnerable and the powerful hang in righteous balance. Let us share what we have as we work toward Christ's reign here on earth.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we listen to the following interlude played by Annie, let's reflect on where we find truth, and how we live out that truth in every hour of every day.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

[Bach Cello Suite No. 3 Sarabande](#)

played by Annie Center

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

In this world: kingdom living. In our mouths: kingdom praises. In our hearts: kingdom goals. In our hands: kingdom gifts. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven! Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

It is not enough to acclaim Jesus Christ
as our Lord and King.

Our mission in life is
to make his kingdom a reality among us
and to bring it to those around us
by our words and deeds.

The way to do this is to live as he lived:
for others, in love and service.

May almighty God bless you for this task:
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
and to give shape to his kingdom. **Thanks be to God!**

(~ from *Liturgies Alive, Models of Celebration.*)

**As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week,
shining God's truth into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.**

Postlude

[Chopin C# minor Nocturne,](#)

played by Annie Center