

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on November 21, 2021:**

**"Should Jesus Be Your Co-Pilot in Truth?
(John 18:33-37)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman, at church in the Y, shows us that Jesus is more than just our co-pilot and that truth can be defined as faith and the gospel.]

Introduction:

- Welcome to Grace and happy Thanksgiving!
- How many of us know that today is the last day of the annual church calendar?
- Today is the last day of what we call "ordinary time".
- And we begin a new cycle next Sunday which is the first Day of Advent.
- So, today is called, in the church calendar, "Christ the King Sunday."

- Now, today, we're going to address the subject of "truth."
- In our religious past, truth has been a big deal, perhaps more than it should have been.
- And so, we're going to clarify that today.

- We often ask the question, "How did you become part of the church?"
- Inevitably, what Pastor Craig heard was, "Well, I came to know the truth"
- Today, he wants to challenge that statement.

- Now, in the past, a popular Christian wristband had these letters, "WWJD" which stood for, "What Would Jesus Do?"
- And right along with that, was the statement, "Jesus should be our co-pilot."
- So, the question today for us is, "Should Jesus be your co-pilot?"
- Now, if Jesus is the co-pilot, who's flying the plane?
- The answer would be, "Us!" But, do we want to fly the plane? We'll get to that.

John 18:33 (NRSV), Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34) Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

- Now, this is a little bit of an awkward conversation.
- Now, Jesus was brought before Pilate, who didn't think Jesus did anything that was worthy of his being punished or flogged.
- Now all of these Jewish religious leaders were pressuring Pilate to act.
- So, Pilate was interacting with Jesus, trying to give him a break.
- But, Jesus wasn't necessarily playing into that.

35) Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36) Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

- This poses a challenge for us.
- It's so natural for us to live in our present domain.
- And yet at the same time, we have to acknowledge that as believers and followers of Jesus, this isn't necessarily our kingdom or citizenship.
- And so, there's always a bit of tension there.
- Here we see that Jesus is telling Pilate that, if this were his kingdom, then his followers would be doing something more.

37) Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

- Jesus said that He came into his world "to testify to the truth."
- And so, we should ask ourselves the question, "what is the truth?" What was Jesus testifying to?
- What does truth mean to us? Jesus is always primarily the Truth, with a capital T.
- Most of us didn't grasp that in the past.

37b) Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

- Can you see why we wanted to belong to the truth? We had a focus on the truth, in the past.
- And even today, we want to belong to Jesus.
- Now, what are two words for truth that is more definitive in our current understanding of church teaching? What would they be?
- Now, faith is one of the alternative words concerning truth.
- And the second word is gospel.
- Can we all agree that faith and gospel are more inclusive in orthodox Christianity than using the term, truth?

The GCI Statement of Beliefs:

- (online at gci.org/aboutus/beliefs), which sets forth GCI's official doctrine. We Believe affirms, conforms to and builds upon these beliefs.

Summary of Our Christian Faith – from our denomination's statement of beliefs:

- There is one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God the Father made all things through the Son, sent the Son for our salvation, and gives us the Holy Spirit.
- The Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully human, and is the perfect revelation of the Father and the perfect representative of humanity. He suffered and died on the cross for all human sin, was raised bodily on the third day, and ascended to heaven standing in for all humanity before the Father, Jesus Christ provides the perfect human response to God. Since he died for all, all died in him, and all will be made alive in him.

- The Holy Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith, assures believers of their forgiveness and acceptance as God's dearly loved children, and works in them to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ.
- The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God that testifies to Jesus Christ. The Bible is fully authoritative for all matters of faith and salvation.
- Salvation comes only by God's grace and not by works, and it is experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians respond to the joy of salvation when they gather in regular fellowship and live godly lives in Jesus Christ.
- We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

Summary of Our Christian Faith:

- You could say that this is a package of the truth we now understand.
- Our truth that we believe is centered on Jesus.
- Now, if we are in a conversation with someone who's a not-yet-believer, the words faith and gospel are more understandable than truth.

The Gospel (From GCI Statement of Beliefs):

- The gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God and salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the message that Christ died for our sins and has made us his own before and apart from our believing in him and has bound us to himself by his love in such a way that he will never let us go. [This is so important to understand.] Therefore, he calls on all humans to repent and believe in him as Lord and Savior. (1 Cor. 15:1-5; Col. 2:13; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 5:8, 18-21; John 3:16-17; Luke 24:46-48; Col. 1:19-23; Acts 8:12; Matt. 28:19-20)

Faith in God (From GCI Statement of Beliefs):

- Faith in God is a gift of God, rooted in Jesus Christ and enlightened by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. Through faith, God prepares and enables our minds to participate in Jesus Christ's communion with the Father by the Spirit. Jesus Christ is the Author and Perfecter of our faith. (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 12:3; 10:17; Heb. 11:1; Rom. 5:1-2; 1:17; 3:21-28; 11:6; Eph. 3:12; 1 Cor. 2:5; Heb. 12:2)
 - We need to understand that faith is a gift of God.
 - So, if someone told you that you need to have more faith, it's not true because faith is not something we work up – it's a gift of God.
 - Yes, Jesus Christ is the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

Closing prayer