

**Text: John 18:37**

**Title: “Jesus ... All I Need for Truth”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**ILLUSTRATION** - I think one of the funniest things to see at Christmas is children opening presents which their parents have spent hard-earned money, and countless hours shopping to buy. Then that child proceeds to throw the toy aside and begin to play in the box. Have you seen that? It's really hilarious. Well the same thing can happen for us as believers. We have been given an awesome gift in our Savior Jesus Christ. And the gift of Jesus was packaged in a box of historical events that we're told about in the New Testament ... the manger, the angels, the shepherds, the sheep, the wise men, the star. And then around that box we have our own cultural wrappings of Christmas traditions ... decorations, parties, buying and giving and returning gifts, movies. Then at Christmas we unwrap the box with our cultural celebrations, then we open the box of the biblical details of the birth of Christ, and inside all of that is Christ, God's amazing gift to us. And what do we do? We set Christ aside and play with the box and the wrapping paper.

Well, it's Christmas Day, but it's not too late to get your bearings on Christmas. The best way to do that is to go back to the Word where we encounter Christ. Open your Bibles to John 18:37. During this month we have revisited the *story* of Christmas, but in my preaching this month I've tried to help us revisit the *significance* of Christmas, of the Incarnation. We need to know *what* happened, but we also need to know *why* it happened. Why did God's Son come into the world? Read text.

This is a great Christmas text even though it comes not from the beginning of Christ's life, but from the end ... actually just hours before his death.

Now if you go back to v.36 you see that what is happening here is that Jesus is before Pilate who has the authority to call for Jesus' crucifixion. And two kingdoms are colliding here: a very visible, forceful kingdom of Roman rule, and the invisible, all-powerful Kingdom of God that Jesus came to inaugurate.

Now Pilate is trying to get Jesus to say something that will give Pilate a reason to condemn Jesus to crucifixion. In v.33 Pilate asks Jesus a loaded question: “Are you the King of the Jews.” And Jesus answers in v.36. He says, “Yes, I have a kingdom...”

**John 18:36 - Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”**

And Jesus then goes on to explain why His Kingdom was different. His Kingdom would come not by political or military force, but by truth. He will rule in the minds and hearts of people, by the power of truth.

**John 18:37 - “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”**

Now just look at this amazing statement Jesus made. It says something about ...

## 1. **THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST** (John 18:37)

**John 18:37 - “I was born ... I came into the world...”**

We’ve talked about that a lot this year. This is one of the most important truths for us to remember as we celebrate the Incarnation. He was “born,” which indicates how God became a human being; but He also “came into the world,” which indicates Christ existed before His birth in Bethlehem.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Now for those of us who are parents, this is a little weird. Our children did not exist before they were conceived. There was a moment in time when, in the hiddenness of their mother’s womb, a human being, who did not exist before, suddenly comes into existence. Nine months later they are born and come into the world.

With Christ it’s different. Christ existed as a person before He was conceived and born from Mary, His earthly mother. His birth and His coming into the world was God, for 33 years, taking on a human body, remaining fully God and fully man.

Now why is this doctrine, along with the doctrine of the virgin birth, important for us to know and believe today? Here’s the answer: You and I are surrounded with people who acknowledge that Jesus Christ lived long ago, that He was a wise teacher and a courageous leader who died as a good example for all other human beings. But in the end that’s all He was ... a human being. He was not God, just a good man. He died and after that He was finished.

Now that may be what people want to believe about Jesus, but that is not what Jesus knew was true about Himself. He knew He was God, and He claimed it over and over again. So He was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. And of course, we know He was and is Lord.

So there is something about the preexistence of Christ. But there’s also something about...

## 2. **THE EXISTENCE OF TRUTH** (John 18:37)

**John 18:37 – “In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth...”**

There is truth—truth that everyone should believe. In v.37 it is called “the truth.” This truth comes from outside the world, and it gives direction and meaning to everything in the world. People in this world do not make up truth. It existed before this world or any people existed. It is unchanging and absolute.

Now I know it’s Christmas morning, and you may not be mentally together enough to think about this very seriously.

**ILLUSTRATION** – It may be easier for us to understand this if we can visualize truth as a book, like the Bible I hold in my hand. Now that shouldn’t be too hard for us because that’s exactly what we believe as Christ-followers ... this Bible is “the truth.” Now this book contains everything that is

true ... where the world came from, where we came from, and where everything is going. This book contains the rules by which every culture on the earth should live, as well as the consequences when we violate those rules. This book reveals that basic reality that there is One True God, who created everything and who has the authority to determine how life should be lived, and how we can have a relationship with Him. This book contains it all.

Now throughout history, people have had other ideas about what is true. And so there are all these other “books” out there. One says this about where the world came from and where it is going, and another says that. One says this about how people are supposed to behave, and another says that.

And then there are people who say, “Well, there’s not just one truth. There’s your truth and there’s my truth. All people decide for themselves what is true.”

But there’s a problem with this line of reasoning. If one book claims to be true, then that means that all the others have to be false. If I say to you this carpet is green, and Jeff says this carpet is red, only one of those statements can be true.

So God’s Word is truth; and if it is truth, then every other opinion people may have about what is right and wrong is false.

**APPLICATION:** At Christmas it is great to have so many of our college students home for the holidays. College students, prepare to have your conviction about absolute truth challenged by skeptical professors and fellow-students. People will say you are close-minded because you believe there is a God who determines what is absolutely true. They will challenge you by saying if there is a God, you can’t know Him or what He thinks. So one person’s idea of what God is like is just as valid as any other person’s idea. So be strong in your faith in God and His Word.

Now one of the most important questions in the Bible is asked in v.38:

**John 18:38 - “What is truth?” Pilate asked.**

Now we’re not sure what Pilate’s motive was in asking this question. Maybe he really wanted to know what was true. Maybe he was being skeptical. We don’t know whether Pilate was sighing when he asked this question, or sneering when he asked it. But thank God there is an answer to Pilate’s question. We can know what truth is because there was...

### **3. THE APPEARANCE OF TRUTH (John 18:37)**

We can know the truth because it appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.

**John 18:37 – “In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth...”**

Do you want to know the reason behind Christmas? Here it is ... “for this reason I was born...” God sent His Son into the world so that He could testify to the truth ... so He could reveal what God is like and what God expects.

So Pilate’s question is answered. Actually, he worded his question wrong. The question is “Who is truth?”

- **JESUS IS TRUTH**

The Incarnation was for this purpose.

**John 1:9 - The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**

**John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

May I just give you a personal testimony today? In the last several months as we have been praying and seeking the Lord for revival, God has done a work in my heart. And part of that is that He has allowed me to know Christ better and better, and in that knowledge to see what a glorious Savior He is. I honestly do not remember a time in my life when Christ has been more real to me than in these days. And part of this is to see that in the coming of Christ we see how glorious He is ... the glory of the One and Only. There’s no one like Him. He came from the Father in heaven, full of grace and truth ... filled with it!

And this Jesus is all we need, for life and for love and for truth. If you and I will be consumed with knowing Christ, we will see that He is so much more than this world can ever offer us.

So the coming of Christ into the world was the coming of truth into the world. If there is such a thing as truth, then you cannot know that truth apart from Jesus Christ.

**John 14:6 - Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

- **JESUS SPEAKS TRUTH**

Jesus was not only the truth, but He also testifies to the truth ... He spoke the truth. Scores of times in the Gospel you hear Jesus say, “I tell you the truth...”

**John 8:31-32 - Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Think of absolute truth as the owner’s manual for your car. It tells you everything that is true about your car ... what size engine you have, what kind of gasoline to use, how to change a flat tire, how to set the clock. All those details are true about the car because they were written by the manufacturer, the creator, of your car. Now suppose you decide that the owner’s manual isn’t true and it doesn’t pertain to your car. After all, you own the car and you should be able

to decide what is true about your car. So you decide that instead of using gas in the gas tank, water would be just as good, and a lot cheaper. OK, give it a go; see how far you get. Suppose you decide that since you own the car you can determine that you don't need 32 pounds of air pressure in the tires. Let's just say we need 2 pounds of air pressure in your tires. OK, give it a go. See how far you get. I could go on and on. The point is that you don't get to change what is true about your car and how it operates.

And the same thing is true about life. You may think you own your life and you can do whatever you want with it. The fact is that the Creator of your life has given you an owner's manual. It's called the Bible. And better yet, He has sent His Son who is the personification of that truth to show you how to live your life, and to come and live His life through you.

There's the existence of truth, the appearance of truth, and then there is...

#### **4. THE OBEDIENCE TO TRUTH (John 18:37)**

**John 18:37 - Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."**

"listens to" = to hear and obey. Truth is to be obeyed, not ignored.

The Gospel is called "the word of truth." And the entire Bible is truth. You and I do not have the liberty of seeing and hearing this truth and then just ignoring it or disobeying it. This what people do when they reject Christ, the truth of God.

**Romans 1:18 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,**

**Romans 1:25 - They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.**

**1 John 1:6 - If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.**

So you either are walking in fellowship with Christ, or you aren't. How do you know if you aren't walking in fellowship with Christ? You are not living by the truth. And if you are genuinely walking in fellowship with Christ, you will show it as you live by the truth.

By the way, that is what every parent should desire and pray for their children.

**3 John 4 - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

Now practically speaking how do we get to a place where we are obeying the truth and walking in the truth? It all starts with our exposure to the truth of God's Word.

**John 8:31-32 - Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

The Holy Spirit then helps us to understand the truth of God's Word.

**John 16:13a - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.**

And then there has to be a determination that you are going to walk in the truth in every part of your life ... your thoughts, your marriage, your finances, your job, your entertainment. There has to be a commitment that every part of my life has to square with the truth.

## **CONCLUSION**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Now you may have been wondering all morning why this string with a weight on the end of it is hanging over my head. Can you see it? That is what is called a plumb line. A plumb line is what a builder uses to determine if something is straight. So if he wants to make sure that a wall is straight, he will hang the plumb line down alongside that wall. The plumb line is always true, because of the law of gravity. It's the only way of knowing that everything is straight and in line.

And what happened at the Incarnation was that God lowered a plumb line down into this world. And He did it by sending His perfect Son, Jesus Christ. Everything that is true or false is measured against the Person and the Word of Christ. The only way you can know that your life is straight is to line up alongside Christ.

Now don't misunderstand. God didn't lower the plumb line into this world to show you what is perfect, and expect you to measure up. In fact, He knows you could never straighten up your life on your own. So God's design was for you to put your trust in Christ, admit your life is crooked, and let Him come in and straighten out your life.