

Lenten Midweek 3 – 2026

The Crucifixion of Christ in the Life of Man

(The Crucifixion of Christ and the Essence of Truth)

1 John 1:1-2:6

John 18:28-40

My beloved brother, Dr. Robert William Smith, is a retired chemistry professor. He taught for years at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He's brilliant, wise, and true. He was a no-nonsense professor, blending a keen desire to pass on genuine knowledge with having a rather low regard for academic fads. The contemporary university scene, for the most part, is infatuated with political fads that often run contrary to reality – gender ideology is just one example. Chromosomes aren't all that interested in ideology. Truth is not malleable. The 'y' chromosome is not malleable. The 'y' chromosome determines sex. If it's present, then the sex is male. If it's absent, then the sex is female. My whip-smart brother wasn't all that afraid of upsetting the contemporary sensibilities of his students in order to convey the nature of truth. He would illustrate truth this way: all males have a 'y' chromosome; Caitlyn Jenner has a 'y' chromosome; therefore, Caitlyn Jenner is... confused. He was an effective teacher, an effective communicator. He would begin the semester by informing his students that truth is universal, eternal, objective, and exterior to ourselves. Truth does not consult our wants or our prejudices. What do you think of that? What is implied is that one can either align oneself to the truth or not. It should be obvious that by treating the truth as a thing to be manipulated or making believe that one can alter the truth to suit one's own predilections is to act in a counterproductive way. To live in opposition to the truth hurts not only the individual but also those who may be influenced by that individual.

Pontius Pilate either didn't know what truth was or didn't care. Perhaps Pilate had other concerns. His career, his political neck, his oversight of Jerusalem – Pilate had no room for anything deeper. But Truth stood in his path. The Lord Christ stood in his path. The religious rulers in Jerusalem, the Jews, were on the warpath for Jesus' blood. Pilate would be the instrument for the Pharisees to crucify the Lord. But Pilate is a crafty statesman. Pilate is not a rube from some backwater village. Pilate *knows* that he's being used. But Pilate has no allegiance to the truth. Do you know people like this? Are you aware that there *are* people like this?

The Jews were whispering to Pilate that Jesus was a threat to Caesar. They slander Jesus in Pilate's courtroom. False witness is hurled against the Truth. "We found this man misleading the nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar" (Luke 23:1). Pilate knows that Jesus is no threat to Rome, no threat to civic order. The Lord's appearance is physically unimpressive, so Pilate asks sardonically, *You* are the king of the Jews? (John 18:33). Ultimately, Pilate asks a broad but pivotal question: "What have you done?" (John 18:35). What *had* Jesus done? He had revealed the Father (John 14:9). He had taught with authority (Matthew 7:29). He had healed the sick, cleansed the leprous, given sight to the blind, made the lame to walk, and raised the dead. The Truth had been unleashed. Jesus was a light shining the darkness and the darkness hated it. Lies hate the truth. Hell hates heaven. The demonic hates what is holy. But truth doesn't change. Holiness is not under the authority of the demonic. Heaven is unaffected by hell's hatred.

Deceit: I suspect that most of y'all have been deceived. I also suspect that most of y'all have misled others. Which hurts more in your memory? Is love for the truth an acquired taste? They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Does that sentiment hold true when beauty is replaced by truth? I was taught that the first deception is self-deception. Self-deception is a man who shuts himself into a dark room and convinces himself that the sun is not shining outside and then teaches others to do the same. St. John tells us that those who profess to be Christians and yet walk in the darkness do not "practice" the truth – which is an interesting phrase (1 John 1:6). Do you believe that truth is a *lived* reality? Where does *that* start? What does a life lived in "practice of the truth" look like? Do you fasten the belt of truth around your waist every day? Against the lies of Satan, what is your defense?

The Bible speaks about the armor of God (Ephesians 6). Amor is defensive. The belt of truth is a critical piece. The belt is the location where the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is placed (the sword of the Spirit is *offensive*). There is a spiritual battle that is taking place – in real time – in this earthly domain. The logical weapon to be wielded against the devil who schemes with his lies is the truth. The truth rallies people. The truth is recognizable. The truth is worth defending. The truth leads to a better life. To align oneself with the truth is to align oneself to Christ crucified. The sun is the source of heat and light. Truth has a source. Truth has an origin. We are formed by the truth and not the other way around. This is the question that has been building and has now arrived: Where will you stand? How long are you prepared to stand there? Is Christ's revelation on the Holy Cross the source of truth? Will you stand on Him, stand on the truth, even though everything else should crumble? What is your level of commitment? Are you prepared to give up your life for the truth? While it isn't likely that you should be in that position, are you, nonetheless, prepared?

Pilate seemed to have no use for the truth. Jesus declared the nature of His kingdom, the kingdom that you are a part of. "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 from the world" (John 18:36). While the Lord's kingdom is not *of* this world, but it certainly comes crashing *into* this world. It is a kingdom of truth, a kingdom of grace and forgiveness, and love. It is a kingdom of death and resurrection. The Lord gave Pilate a glimpse of His kingdom: "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" (John 18:37). The truth: the truest thing that you will ever know is that the Lord Christ rendered up His life on a cross and rose again on the third day. He is the truth. Jesus Christ is truth incarnate (John 14:6). He was crucified for the sins of humanity. That is truth. He demonstrated His love by bearing your sin and taking it away into His death. That is the truth. Stand there, with me, with the whole church on earth. Stand *firm* there, where the church has stood for two thousand years. Stand there and be an ally to the truth. That is your calling. That is the place that God has carved out for you in this life. We preach the Truth. We preach Christ crucified. We defy the lies of the evil one. We will not be taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ (Colossians 2:8).

We love the truth. We love the Truth because the One who is the Truth loved us first (1 John 4:19). He gives us His strength to stand. Our lives are in His hands. We are His agents, His ambassadors, His emissaries. We carry the truth in very being (Galatians 2:20). That is a glorious reality. We carry the crucified Christ in our being (2 Corinthians 4:10). We are of the truth.