**John 18:33-37 33Pilate went back into the Praetorium and summoned Jesus. He asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” 35Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?” 36Jesus replied, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here.” 37“You are a king then?” Pilate asked. Jesus answered, “I am, as you say, a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”**

The King Speaks about His Kingdom

It can be difficult to be put on the spot. When your words are being carefully examined and when each of your actions are being dissected. Everything you do is being picked at and yet they keep going. No wonder so many people lose it when they are courtrooms and they break down into anger, rage, tears, or just have what you wouldn’t expect come out of their mouths when the attention turns to them. There’s no room for hemming and hawing. You just have to answer no matter what. Then it will be left of to others to decide what you really meant or intended.

Today, we find Jesus before Pilate. Pilate puts him on the spot. He wants to know why Jesus has gotten the Jews all worked up. He point-blank asks Jesus, **Are you the King of the Jews?** Jesus didn’t just give a yes or no. He explained to Pilate what kind of king he actually was and what kind of kingdom he has. These clarify who Jesus is and what he came to do. Jesus is the king who speaks about his kingdom.

Pilate asked because he was trying to get to the bottom of a sticky situation. The Jews appeared to be about to riot. So, Pilate wanted to find out what would happen if he sentenced Jesus. Would he face attack from Jesus’ kingdom? How powerful was this one who stood before him? Jesus didn’t appear to be leading a rebellion. All he was doing was standing there and listening to people accuse him of all kinds of things. Everyone spouted off their opinion. It wasn’t like the Jews overly concerned about maintaining Roman peace in Judea. There had to be more to Jesus then they were saying. Pilate wanted to find out what it was. That’s why he asked, **Are you the King of the Jews?**

The answer came but it was a baffling surprise. **My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here.** Oh wow. That’s a shock. Jesus said his kingdom wasn’t of the earth. It isn’t within the sphere of what we live by. Jesus was actually saying that to consider his kingdom you have to thing bigger than the world.

You have to think outside the physical. It is grander. There are times where Jesus displayed his power in our world. Times when his messengers led men to safety. As Daniel stood before King Belshazzar, the hand of God penetrated every soldier and wall that was built in defense of the king and appeared on the wall. He turned many from being arrogant and powerful to blubbering cowards pleading for help. That was the kingdom Christ was talking about. He rules the angels from another kingdom far grander.

Christ’s kingdom has never been focused on the flashy displays. The first impressive structure of that kingdom wasn’t what you would call impressive at all: a tree in the middle of a garden. Often God’s own prophets lived without houses and homes, destitute and lacking many physical goods. Elijah lived by the Kerith Ravine and was fed by ravens. Even the temple built for God’s kingdom was only temporary. But God wasn’t contained in that building. The whole purpose of having reason he led any earthly nation was to have the promise of the Savior fulfilled. Jesus wasn’t concerned about the things of this earth because his kingdom didn’t have to do with swords and governments, armies, houses and riches. It was spiritual, not physical.

The strongest temptations of life are to look at this world and our lives in it. The temptation is to think that the kingdom of God will revolve around what happens in this world.

What about the way you view life? How often do you get depressed and wonder whether God really loves you because…Because you got sick? You lost a job? You aren’t popular? You wonder if God really exists because bad things happen in this world. You are only looking at it from this world’s point of view. That’s all physical stuff. It has nothing to do with the spiritual. We constantly hold of this measuring stick that has nothing to do God’s kingdom. We try to measure his kingdom with numbers and figures. We constantly plan our lives around the physical. If only were would realize what the kingdom of Christ is all about.

It is interesting that the King speaks about his kingdom in our world. In fact, Jesus had to come into our world. He didn’t come to take over the world or even a certain part of it. That’s what Pilate was worried about. He was checking to see if Jesus had plans against himself and the Romans.

Jesus plans were much larger. He in his right mind chose to go to a cross. Jesus endures the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God. Jesus didn’t come to this world to just take a tour. He came to reclaim his place as our King once again. He came to rule over you, me, and every other creature in this world so each and every one of us would bow our knees before him and call him LORD. Even Pilate was able to see the king. **You are a king then?” Pilate asked.**

**Jesus answered, “I am, as you say, a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”** It was likely at that point that Pilate realized Jesus was not a threat. Truth! Really? That’s what Jesus was pulling out to defend himself. Pilate scoffed at truth. Pilate wasn’t worried about that. He was worried about his position as governor. Jesus was just a talker in Pilate’s eyes.

Pilate underestimated the power of Jesus’ weapon. It was the truth - Jesus’ confession of what He was - that ultimately put Him to the cross to conquer Satan and sin, death and hell. The truth - God’s Word - even though it seems so weak and harmless - has produced great armies. It tells people, “You aren’t as good as you think you are. You’re a sinner - and you’re works aren’t getting you any closer to a holy God! You need a substitute! That substitute is Christ! He lived a perfect life for you! He died an innocent death in your place!” Then the truth gently says, “believe in Christ, that He is the way to heaven - that He is your righteousness - that He is your salvation - and you will be saved. That’s why Christ came into the world - to live and die in your place.”

It’s this seemingly powerless truth that has changed lives - turning people from filthy rebels into holy saints. It reaches the poor and the rich in all kingdoms and countries. It took us out of the kingdom of this world, and made us see through the eyes of faith that we have angels looking over us. It’s made us see that because of this God and man who lived 2,000 years ago, we will be living 2,000 years from now and forever in heaven. It gets us to see that just as Jesus crossed over into our world and lived in our sin - even taking on our guilt, so we will cross over into His world and live in his holiness - even taking on His righteousness.

Jesus said that the Truth is what sets us free. Knowing the Truth - that God loves us and forgives us in Jesus Christ - is what sets us free from the paralyzing fear of guilt. It’s what enables us to say, “I can serve this holy God, because He forgives me and loves me in Christ!” The truth of God’s Word is what motivates us not just to say, “I love you,” but to act upon it. It crosses over from the spiritual to the physical. It frees us up and enables us to use the physical things that God has given us - our bodies, our possessions, and even our lives - to the spreading of the truth. It the truth of salvation in Christ that also makes us willing to sacrifice all that we have for a greater kingdom - the spiritual one. It’s what motivates you to give your best offerings in the plate on Sunday. It’s what makes us shape our ministries and activities around one common purpose - spreading the Truth. Even though the kingdom isn’t physical, we still use the physical - our mouths, eyes, ears and abilities - to help bring about the spiritual through the Truth. The King speaks of his Kingdom. Amen.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Define: Christ’s Kingdom.
* List three ways you scoff at the truth like Pilate.
* Come up dangers that correspond to each of those ways.
* List two ways understanding Christ’s Kingdom leads you to praise God.