

## **A King Who Speaks Truth to Power**

John 18:33–37

Suppose you had an audience with the president. What would you say? Love him or hate him, it would be a big deal. What would you say in a moment like that? What would you do?

How do we learn to "speak truth to power" as an expression of our faith?

We read about it happening in many places in the Bible. One of those happenings was when Nathan confronted David about his adultery with Bathsheba; another was when Mordecai pleaded with Esther to help the Jews; another was this week's Gospel lesson from John 18, when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate. And yet Jesus does not seem to be intimidated in the presence of Pilate, Governor of Judea. It almost seems to be the other way around, as if Pilate were intimidated by him.

How can we learn from Jesus' example shown in this way of confrontation that opens others up rather than shutting them down? A way which helps those being confronted to consider new possibilities and imagine different outcomes.

This text may seem out of place because it is right before Jesus' crucifixion and we think it should be read during Holy Week. But this Sunday we are to consider Pilate's question "Are you the King of the Jews?" What does it mean Jesus is king? What kind of king do we worship?

The gospel of John says Jesus is not a king that the world would ever recognize. This is a king who speaks to the lowly and the rejected. This is a king who serves rather than seek to be served. This is a king who enters the holy city, not triumphantly on a horse, but seated on a donkey (John 12:14).

He is a king unlike any other king, and his kingdom is unlike any other, for it is "not of this world." What is this kingdom, this reign, like? That is the important question for us as we reflect upon Christ as our king.

This kingship is something new. It is a long way from the model of the contemptuous tyrant Pilate. As we've seen this year throughout the Gospel of Mark, this is a "kingdom" of humility and cooperation. And as we see in this week's passage it is a "kingdom" without a king, not an empire but rather a community of witnesses, testifying with words and deeds to the truth of God's love.

Do we live in the reign of God following the servant king? Do we live lives that reflect that service? Do we reach out to the least and the lost? Do we seek to serve rather than be served? Do we testify to the truth of God? It is the truth that Jesus came to the world to bring love and forgiveness. Are we citizens of that kingdom?

Think about it – Pray about it – live it

Bob