

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I remember watching a movie fifteen-twenty years ago, it was called "A Few Good Men". I recall one line that stuck with me, I think it came from Jack Nicholson and it went something like this: "You want the truth? You can't handle the truth". I suppose the reason I still remember it is because I've always been looking for truth, plain objective truth. Now I managed in a lot of newspapers for several decades and one of things I always maintained was that news should be written as news, the objective, unvarnished truth. Save opinions for the op-ed pages, they don't belong anywhere else, no matter whose opinion it was.

Over the years I took many classes, participated in countless management and leadership seminars, honing my craft. I attended two different seminaries graduating from both, participated in years and years of council meetings, Bible classes, theological classes with many pastors and professors, and I noticed that many pastors, professors, facilitators, presented, taught, facilitated, all too often promoted some political idea or cause along the way. Always done under the guise of teaching, presenting, facilitating objectively. I started to wonder what education was all about. Now I read that someone is upset about the teaching of evolution, science, whatever, and I notice that those doing the complaining, are upset about someone else's failure to promote the complainant's political agenda. It seems that for some, objective truth depends upon one's point of view.

This isn't anything new of course, it's as old as humanity, from the stories in Genesis through the present, the search for knowledge and truth, the desire for all to agree even if it's through force, has been a powerful factor in human endeavor. People have left family and friends over arguments about truth, people have killed and been killed for their idea of truth. Remember Jesus before Pilate? "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice". And Pilate asks Jesus: "what is truth?"

Jesus prays today "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth." Jesus prays that the disciples, and descended from them, us, be made holy in truth. Jesus who identified himself as truth, prays truth into us. I was overwhelmed sometime ago when I read John 14:6, Jesus saying "I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The wonder of our gospel is that our search for objective truth resides in a person, a person named Jesus. When we look for the truth, we look to Jesus. When we live out truth, it comes from Jesus. When we look for unity with our brothers and sisters, we find it in Jesus.

Sounds wonderful! Sounds so easy! We love Jesus and we know he is the truth. But we also know that it's not all that easy to live in Jesus as the truth. People in the church

since earliest times, have squabbled over what it means that Jesus is the truth. Just look at the book of Acts, and some of Paul's letters. Some leaders in the early church said Jesus is truth but because he was Jewish everyone who seeks truth might want to start with the Jewish part first. Paul said yes, Jesus was Jewish, but it's irrelevant now because God's truth in Jesus is for all people, Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, man and woman alike.

These arguments have gone on for two thousand years and still go on today, leaders in various denominations throughout Christendom still can't agree on exactly how Jesus is the truth and what it means for you in your living day to day. The community of faith often seems splintered over what you must and must not do, none of which have much to do with faith.

But Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith has told us that he is the truth. And because Jesus said it, God has made us holy in that truth, holy in the Word, holy in the Word that is the life and the light of humanity, the Word that is Jesus. I remember coming across something a pastor somewhere prayed along the lines of "form the minds of your people into a single will." Now a single will isn't all having the same opinion, the same idea, the same political persuasion. What he meant was that we were all in Jesus, one in him, living joyfully with the diversity of our brothers and sisters in the faith, celebrating our searches, both individual and together, for living out the truth.

I've heard some pastors over the years who have begun their sermons with the prayer from Jesus' prayer this morning, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." With that prayer at the beginning of our gospel proclamation, we would enter into it with a single will, knowing and hearing the Word that is truth for us. Knowing the love that makes truth human, not just some objective thing to found or learned. We would hear of Jesus, who is God's will for the earth, the way, the truth and the life.

AMEN