

We gather to celebrate the Feast of Christ, the King.

We gather in the midst of the eternal struggle for our souls. Who will rule our hearts, the Spirit of God or the spirit of evil. We see this being lived out in today's Gospel. Let me put the gospel in its setting.

Great Act in Jesus' Passion and Death at the Praetorium. Pontius Pilate is one of the main actors. He is the leader of the Roman government in Jerusalem.

Scene 1: Outside: Jews demand death

Scene 2: Inside: Pilate questions Jesus about kingship (today's gospel passage)

Scene 3: Outside: Pilate finds Jesus not guilty; offers Barabbas instead

Scene 4: Inside: Jesus is scourged

Scene 5: Outside: Jews obtain death penalty

Scene 6: Inside: Pilate speaks about who has the power

Scene 7: Outside: Behold the Man: "Here is your king!"

Jews' response: We have no king but Caesar!

Pilate is being nudged by the Holy Spirit to save Jesus. Choices are being made here. Let's focus on the choice Pilate makes.

The key scene is in Scene II: Jesus has been brought to have Pilate condemn him to death.

Pilate: “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus: “Do you ask me of your own or have others been telling you of me?”

Pilate: “Your own people have handed you over to me. What have you done”

Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world.....

Pilate: “Then you are a king”

Jesus: “The reason I have come into the world is to testify to the truth.”

Yes, Pilate is being nudged by the Spirit to save Jesus. But once he goes out and faces the leadership of the Jewish temple, he loses heart and eventually agrees to Jesus’ death.

Pause:

In one way, Pilate represents all of us, ... every man, every woman, every child who must make a choice for or against Jesus.

Pilate must make a choice. Does he trust the promptings of the Spirit within or, out of fear, act to hold on to his position of power?

One author puts it in these words:

“The truth of Jesus' kingdom does not lie in anything of this world but:

- **in hearts turned to God,**
- **ears attuned to Jesus' voice,**
- **and actions bespeaking faithful following of Jesus.”**

You and I navigate the tension between the way of the world and the way of Jesus' kingdom by living out the truth; by laying down one's life for others. We must continually make choices and trust the nudge of the Holy Spirit.

- **For example, take the life of the businessman rising in the company. How much time does he spend with family, with God, or making good ethical decisions at work.**
- **Or say that a teen who must chose between being popular with all their peers or trust the nudge of the Holy Spirit and stay away from certain people and substances which will harm you.**

Often we try to take the middle position, somewhere between our worldly desires and the will of God.

In today's gospel Pilate tries to take a middle position, but in the end he needs to make a choice. He does not trust the nudge of the Spirit of truth.

Other examples in John's Gospel:

- **Nicodemus coming to Jesus in the middle of the night. He is trying to hold on to his position of influence as a Pharisee or be a friend of Jesus. He does not trust the nudge of the Spirit**
- **Or take Samaritan woman at the well who needs to make a choice and let go of her former life and follow Jesus.**

There are choices in truth we need to make:

Choices of how we spend our time and what we pay attention to;

- **In our jobs**
- **toward our wives and husbands,**
- **to our children and our parents,**
- **Time for God in our lives.**

A good example of someone who trusted the nudge of the Spirit.

Lady whose children came to summer camp.

She came to church a few weeks ago with them.

A week later she returned with a red bag containing food to give to someone at Thanksgiving.

Remember, The truth of Jesus' kingdom does not lie in anything of this world but:

- **in hearts turned to God,**
- **ears attuned to Jesus' voice,**
- **and actions bespeaking faithful following of Jesus**

Let us trust in the nudging of the Spirit, let us be docile the working of the Spirit of God in our lives.

As the preface of today's mass so eloquently states,

Jesus came to establish a universal kingdom,

A kingdom of truth and life,

A kingdom of holiness and grace

A kingdom of just love and peace.

Let us pray each day of our lives. "Lord, Jesus, may your kingdom come, " a kingdom of truth and of life. May we respond to your nudge.