Pilate said to him, “What is truth?” Of all the characters in the Bible, Pilate is the one that I think we can all relate to today. He is the representation of our modern world. Trying to determine what the truth really is. And Jesus is saying one truth, and the crowds are yelling another truth. And Herod has his truth, and each group or person is totally convinced that they have the truth. And he’s the one who is supposed to figure out what the truth really is. Right. Good luck.

I can’t think of a better description of where we live today in regards to the truth. Foxnews says they will bring you truth. But CNN has a very different version of the truth. This economist says this is the truth, another economist says that. We can watch live videos now of people shooting each other in the street. And people will completely disagree about what they see as true. What is truth? Who can you trust is telling you the truth? Religion isn’t much better. This pastor says this, that pastor says that, this book says this, that book says that and each camp says they have the truth. Our entire election process is rigged. Is that true? How do you know? Universally I here people saying all the time, “Who can you believe?” has the truth? Or is telling you the truth? You look at the ad on Amazon and you go, well, it this a true representation? Is this product really as advertised? I don’t see how anyone can’t relate to Pontius Pilate today after Jesus says, “I bear witness to truth”. We should all be able to relate to Pilate just rolling his eyes. Oh brother. Another person claiming to have the truth. To know what the truth is. Wow. It’s hard to think of a word that means less today than the word truth. Pilates statement truly represents the reality of our broken world. What is truth?

And yet as confused as it can be, I think each of us deep down knows quite a bit about the truth. Because let’s say this morning I had with me a vile of truth serum. A little bit of liquid that if I gave it to you it would suddenly cause you to be completely transparent and truthful. About your thoughts, about what you are living for. About what you really think and feel. A little liquid that would cause you to reveal the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about you. Would anyone take it today? Would you take it this morning and then go to coffee? I would be a little hesitant. I asked a few a people this week that question and they were a little hesitant too. Because we know maybe more than we think about the truth.

It's like a little scary isn’t it? Yeah it’s like I don’t really want to go there. And more than that, suddenly I realize that maybe something about me might come out that I didn’t even know was true. And then it gets even more strange. Because what is the one thing that we all probably teach our children. Always tell the truth. Take the truth serum. I think we almost instinctively realize that there might be something about the truth that is a little uncomfortable, and a little painful. We know a lot more about the truth than maybe we let on.

And perhaps this explains our situation today. Why truth can be so meaningless. Because deep down, we really don’t want to take that truth serum. It’s much easier isn’t it to think that you have the truth instead, or believe the truth. That’s our problem isn’t it, everyone has the truth, churches included. But people will believe anything. Yeah, but we have the truth. See, is this not true? That it is much easier to believe the truth, or to claim that you have the truth…..than it is to tell the truth? Isn’t that interesting. Seems like believing that you have the truth might be the best way yet invented to avoid having to tell the truth. To have the courage to take that truth serum and see what happens.

So let’s take this problem seriously, I’ll mention 3 things that easily become obstacles to truth and truth telling. The first as we have just noted has to do with believing. Here is the relationship between believing and truth. No one has ever made anything true by believing it. I think that would really help us today. Somebody says I believe whatever. Ok, that doesn’t make it true. People throughout history have fervently believed in much that is not true. Truth does not make room for belief. Truth is truth, whether you believe it or not. So we cannot rest on our believing. Or that someone sounds convincing so it must be true. Nope. A strong conviction does not make something true. No one has ever made anything true by believing it.

The second thing about truth is the real obstacle and that is the way that we turn truth into our possession. We walk around like we have the truth. That’s the big reason why truth is in such trouble today I think. It’s the biggest ego trip there is. My church is the right church. My beliefs are the right beliefs. It’s using the truth to boast and brag. God is on my side because I have the truth. See this is just ego. I have the truth. No you don’t. See we’re all a little hesitant about that truth serum. Because we know we won’t be able to walk around now like we have the truth. I think we know that. In our lesson today, Jesus says, “Everyone on the side of truth, listens to me”. Well if you already have it, you don’t need to listen for it do you? And that’s our problem today isn’t it? People aren’t listening. Beware, because there are many Christians out there walking around like they have the truth. Muslims are doing it too. So are the Republicans and Democrats. Like the truth is their possession. Just be careful. Truth telling isn’t an ego trip.

The third thing about truth that can get in the way is an uncritical notion that truth is fact. That in order for something to be true it has to be fact. This is of course is the view of modern science, but many church people have adopted this scientific view of truth. For example, Is the creation story in Genesis chapter 1 true? For some people that means, is it factual? And if you question that as fact, as many do, they will say “you don’t believe the bible”. This is something we need to work on. Because there are many stories out there that are not factual that speak the truth. Healthy doeses of truth serum. I’ve read Dr. Suess books that tell the truth even though they aren’t fact. And I can share facts that don’t get at the truth at all. I weigh 140 pds, give or take. My hair is grey. I graduated from Shoreline High School with about a 2.0 GPA. Last year I put about 12.000 miles on my car. Didn’t eat breakfast this morning. Is that what it means for me to tell the truth about me? Is that the truth serum? Just because it isn’t provable doesn’t mean its not true. And somethings can be facts and not the truth at all.

So how can we help Pilate today understand the truth? How might we help our confused world today where people can believe anything and claim they have the truth. A world of facts and alternative facts. How can we speak of the truth in such a way that truth becomes meaningful once again. Where the weight of truth hits home. How do we get to that truth serum that we rightly are hesitant about and maybe fear. You know, that truth that is the truth whether you like it or not. It’s much easier to talk like you have the truth because you have a few facts and believe it.

Well, throughout John, the writer lets us know what the truth is. It’s represented by the Holy Spirit. And I would offer today that the Holy Spirit is God’s version of the truth serum. That truth we’re a little hesitant about. John 16:3 says, When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. That’s what God’s Spirit is about. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Not having the truth. Or believing the truth. But telling the truth. That truth we ask our children to tell. The truth about us. That straight talk.

It's interesting, because in our children’s sermons we’ve been learning about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, and self control. Those are the fruits of the Spirit. And we are promised we can have that kind of life.

But how do you get to that fruit? What is that fruit the result of? You don’t get fruit by expecting it to fall from the sky right? You might go to God and say, God I need to be more loving, or more patient. I would like more of these fruits of your Spirit. The big one is peace. God I just need some peace. Ok, but how do you think that is going to be answered? God is like a grocery store where you just walk in and grab the fruit you want?

We all know that’s not how it works. Fruits are the result of something else. A seed that is planted and cared for and watered. It take effort and lots of time. It’s something that grows slowly. That’s how you get the fruits of the Spirit. Not by asking for the fruits of the Spirit, but by asking for that seed. That something that you work at, over a long period of time. That’s how love, joy, peace, patience, and rest come to be.

And what is the seed? Yup, I think it’s truth. Telling the truth. What you ask God for if you want that fruits of the spirit is for God to show you the truth. To trust God enough to take that truth serum. That we’re all a little hesitant about. We need help to be sure. We need to trust God enough to start on the path. But Telling the truth is how you start to heal, and grow. It’s not safe or secure. You can’t walk around you have it, that you’ve got in the bag. Not this truth. But learning to tell the truth is how grow in the spiritual life. If we’re not being truthful, we’re not going to get very far with Peace, or patience.

Think that would help Pilate today? Would it bring some Peace to our World where truth has become so meaningless? To be able to take that truth serum that is the Holy Spiirt….and see what happens. Truth is very powerful. It’s life. Lord, help us take the truth serum that is your Spirit. Amen.

Well, Jesus has a lot to say about the truth in the Gospel of John. But I would like to just focus on a short passage from John chapter 8, beginning at verse 31. Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him. If you continue in my Word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. The key word here that I want to focus on is the word know. Truth of course is always related to knowledge isn’t it? If you have knowledge it’s usually about truth right? Sure. And here is the key to getting at truth that cuts through it all. Knowledge in the Bible, in the Word is never head knowledge.

That’s why in the world around us, truth is so meaningless. Because the knowledge of this truth is not about knowing facts, or information out of a book. It’s not the knowledge that the school gives you a test for. Knowledge in God’s Word is always interpersonal relationship. To know the truth is to encounter a person and the truth of who they are, the best and the worst. That’s why Jesus never said, “I have truth”. He said I am the truth. That’s why today he says, everyone on the side truth listens to me. Because the truth is a person. To know the truth is to encounter a person. To connect. And the truth that Jesus was about is this truth. An encounter between two people or groups of people where knowledge is gained about who they are. The truth is the encounter. You can’t have that or keep it. It’s not simply a fact. It’s an event. Between people and people. And between God and his people. And between God and you. When God shows up in your life, the light begins to shine on who you are. Yeah it’s like that truth serum.

With Jesus the moment of truth happened when he layed down his life. That’s the cross. He’s laying down who he is there for you to see, and meeting who you are there. Isn’t that the truth our world needs, rather than this big fight about who “has” the truth or right beliefs? It’s so simple, and yet we seem to find so many way to avoid it.