

Friday 10th April: What is Truth?

The very last assembly I took in schools before lockdown was the biblical story of the first lie.... The first nail in the coffin for humanity's relationship with God. It all started when the snake (the most cunning of God's creatures) whispers "Did God really say that? He didn't mean that you would die... You will just become like him." I asked the children what it felt like to be lied to? Can we trust someone who has lied to us? Have you ever noticed that there is only one letter difference between TRUTH and TRUST? We can only build our lives around truth we can trust. That was the message of Jesus' little parable; "The wiseman built his house upon the rock". In John's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate – this is nub of the conversation

Read John 18:28-40

'You are a King then!' said Pilate.

Yes, but Jesus' Kingdom is not derived by political agency or maintained by violence... his Kingship is defined by his mission – to witness to the TRUTH. His Kingdom is one **of truth** and that truth is that God **desires a personal relationship with each human being; a relationship which sets us free from fear, anxiety and guilt**. He desires to walk with us and work with us to steward Creation – care for our planet and one another, as he walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening before they listened to the lies of the snake.

Much earlier in his Gospel, in Chapter 8, John records a conversation with the Jews who had believed in him. Jesus says, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

In a world subject to unreality and illusion, it is easy to respond in the same way that Pilate did "*What is truth?*" Was this a cynical comment? ... or the wistful remark of a politician used to the daily compromises and economies of truth in the corridors of power. Two thousand years later, we are still asking the same question, more so in the sudden insecurity of our COVID-19 world. What can be relied upon, built upon, lived and died for?

Science does not give all the answers; it is sometimes powerless before the forces of nature. Consumerism does not give security; all our earthly wealth can be lost overnight. Success does not secure peace. People are asking.... *What is truth?* Is there indeed a right way to live and are we out-of-balance with the way we were created to be?

Jesus claimed we were made for relationship with God, the God of LOVE. He came to restore that relationship.... He lived and died that TRUTH; his words were matched by his actions – all the way to the cross where he prayed "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Aah, Rev. Becky, I hear you say.... What if it is all a lie, a crutch, a prop which helps people get through life and deal with death. Do you think I haven't doubted this myself, especially when I have the responsibility of accompanying people on that final journey through death. What if I am misleading vulnerable people in their last days? Three times God has reassured

me that the lamp I hold out is indeed the light of his TRUTH. The last one I share with you today with the family's permission.

Last Easter I was supporting a friend's mother dying with lung Cancer. My last visit to the hospital was Easter Saturday and we read the story of the resurrection from John 20 where Jesus meets Mary in the Garden. We chatted and I said – he will call your name as he did to Mary. The next day, Easter day, my friend texted me.... Her Mum had died and the last words she said were 'That man is here' and finally 'I am free!'

"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free!"