



Sermon Discussion Questions
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Series: Fake News

Week 1: What is truth?

1. ICE BREAKER: Throughout this series, we are diving into the idea of fake news and truth. Share about a time that you were tricked or deceived, whether it was as a child or an adult, a funny or serious example.
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 18:28-40:

²⁸Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." ³¹Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. ³²This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" ³⁴"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" ³⁵"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." ³⁷"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

³⁸"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" ⁴⁰They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

What stands out to you in this passage as you read it? How do you see truth treated in this narrative? What questions arise as you read this?

3. In response to the *Time* magazine's "Is Truth dead?" article, Dallas Morning News columnist Jacquielynn Floyd wrote: "Truth isn't dead. You can't kill gravity, you can't kill science. Objective reality exists, whether you choose to believe it or not. The cold universe of facts doesn't care.... But truth is taking an awful beating. It's staggering and gasping for breath; its brow is furrowed with dismay that it has turned out to be so easily ignored."

React to this quote. Do you agree or disagree? Why? How do you see the truth as 'taking an awful beating'? Give some real-world examples.

4. The question we will use across this series is Pilate's question to Jesus in John 18:38, "What is truth?"

How do you define truth? Why is truth important? What impact does truth have on our life? What is at risk if we do not pursue truth?

5. This series gives us a chance to examine what we believe and think. Reread John 18:33-34. When Pilate asks Jesus if He is the King of the Jews, Jesus asks, "Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about me?" All of us absorb ideas from others, from culture, from what we read and watch - that's just a normal

part of being human. However, we have to be aware if we've simply accepted something on someone else's word.

Talk about this idea. What is the difference between forming your own idea and simply listening to what others say? In your own life, how do you examine what you believe and think? Why is it important to examine our ideas?

6. Reread John 18:37. In the Revised Standard Version, this verse reads, *"Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."* This Lenten season is a chance for us to examine the voice of truth, which is Jesus.

Do you feel like you can hear the voice of Jesus in your life? Why or why not? If you do, how are some ways that you prepare yourself to hear from Him? How would you explain the relationship between the voice of Jesus and the voice of truth?

7. Pastor Trevor said that sometimes people claim to be the voice of truth for their own benefit - to gain power, to make money, or to win an argument. Jesus, however, says He is the voice of truth and gains nothing from it. Instead, later the same day, He sacrifices His sinless life on the cross for us.

Have you ever known someone who claims to be telling the truth, and you later find out they were lying? Share what that experience was like. How is Jesus' truth claim in Scripture different from the experience you had? How does Jesus' moral character impact what He says about being the voice of truth?

8. Reread John 18:38. Pilate's voice and mocking question is still loud in our culture today. This series will give us a chance to examine the voice of fake news. We may encounter phrases like, "You do you," "There is no absolute truth," "That's my truth" and others.

What are some other thoughts that you've heard about the idea of truth that are being offered today? Why do you think these are so popular right now? Think about why these truths are embraced. How do they help people who are hurting or searching for something?

9. Read our theme verse for the series, Colossians 2:8, *"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ."*

What does it look like to be 'taken captive' by hollow and deceptive philosophy? In your own words, why is it so important that we depend on Christ rather than on 'human tradition' or 'elemental spiritual forces of this world'? How would you explain this idea to a non-believer?

10. PRACTICE: With your group, pray Colossians 2:8. Ask God to open your minds and point out areas where you may be missing the truth. Pray that God would teach you to be on the side of truth.