

Hanging Out with Jesus

Stories about Jesus from the Gospels

What Jesus Wants Us To Know About His Kingdom

Unedited Transcript

John 18:28-38, Matthew 27:11-14, Mark 15:1-5, Luke 23:1-5

Good morning, men! Welcome to Man in the Mirror Men's Bible Study. If you would, please go in your Bibles to John chapter 18 and we will start at verse 28, John 18:28. Before we get to the Bible Study itself, let's go ahead and do a shout out, this morning. We're going to give a shout out to On The Rock of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, VA. A group of 10 men who have been meeting for 1 year on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at the church using the Video Bible Study. Their leader is Juan Ancalle. I hope I got that right. Juan, I want you to know that I went on to Google Translate and this is what they told me, so I apologize if I got that wrong. Also we are looking for a Field Representative for the Springfield, VA area. With all that said, let's give them a very warm, rousing welcome to the Man in the Mirror Bible Study. One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome, guys. We're really glad to have you with us.

Yes, the series that we're in is Hanging Out with Jesus. Today we're going to talk about this topic: What Jesus Wants Us To Know About His Kingdom. The text that we have before us, before we get into it, I want to just share with you that in this camping adventure that I've undertaken with my wife, I have discovered that she is not subject to insect bites, but I am very attractive to insects.

Actually, I still have problems from a month and a half ago from something that I got into, I think that was chiggers, there are chiggers, there are mosquitoes, there are flies, there are ticks, there are gnats, there are a few other things, too, so I've been collecting remedies. I can't go on like this. This week, one of our members recommended that I get ThermoSol. I haven't even opened that box yet. We'll see how that one works out.

This is something that is, I guess, a homeopathic solution. It's some kind of a wristband that you put on that's based on some geraniol oil or something like that. This is permethrin. You put this on your clothing and it repels different kinds of ticks and things like that, allegedly.

I have two DEETs. I have OFF Deep Woods, which is 25% DEET, and then somebody turned me on to this idea that there's this insect repellent, a CVS brand, that's 30% DEET. I don't know what the difference between 5% is going to make with all of these bugs and things, but I'm going to give it a try.

Then I found this. This is benzocaine. This is an itch relief, but it's also a repellent for chiggers. If you put it on, it also repels your wife. Then, this is Chiggerex. This is some sort of a soothing relief that has aloe and stuff like that in it, and I've given that a try.

Oh, I forgot my cream. What is it, hydrocortisone cream? I was using that; that's why I forgot to put it in the bag. Then I started getting into some treatments, too. I got a bite and sting kit. This is a little suction thing that you put over a bite and it's supposed to suck out the poison. It actually works, about one out of three bites. I don't know what the other two little guys are.

This one is, I think it's Benadryl. It's the ingredients that's in Benadryl. It's a CVS brand. In case that doesn't work out of the aerosol, I also have a Benadryl stick that you put on. Then I have After Bite for itches, which I think is an ammonia-based thing. I'm actually using all of these things intermittently trying to figure out what works.

Then somebody told me about Skin So Soft, and so I got a Skin So Soft bug repellent, Gentle Breeze bug repellent, with sunscreen, too, so I've been using that. Then, just to be safe, I went ahead and I bought some Skin So Soft bath gel, so I'm not using soap anymore. Now I'm using bath gel, but I really do feel pretty. Then I have this Avon Skin So Soft, which I guess is the original lotion, and I've been putting that on, too. We're going to see how all this works out.

“What is truth?”

Here's the problem with all this: what's true? What is the truth? The truth is what actually works, yeah? We're going to find all that out.

This is not unlike the problem that the non-Christian has, the non-believer has, and frankly a lot of Christians, too, is that there are so many different versions of what's true out there, it's really hard to sort through all that and figure out what is true.

Let's take a look at our text. We're going to learn something here from an exchange between Pilate and Jesus that we would not otherwise know about Jesus. The situation that we're facing here, we're going through a series of messages on a process, a very thorough process, of arresting, condemning and assassinating Jesus.

Beginning at verse 28, we read this: "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness, the Jews did not enter the palace. They wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, 'What charges are you bringing against this man?'"

So, essentially, what the religious leaders are looking for is they're looking for a hitman. They're looking for a hitman. They're looking for somebody that they can get to kill Jesus for them. It's like the mafia hiring a hitman, basically. That's what they're acting like, of course.

Verse 30, "'If he were not a criminal,' they replied, 'we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.' 'But we have no right to execute anyone,' the Jews objected. And this happened, so that the words Jesus has spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled." At this particular time, the Jews did not have the authority to execute somebody.

Now later, they stoned Stephen, and we don't know if that's in a period, the speculation that it was in a period when the authority structure had broken down or that it was just a mob taking over, so that doesn't mean that Jews weren't killing people, but they were killing Jesus, but we know why, because it

says so right here: the reason was is that the Scriptures needed to be fulfilled, and that was going to be an execution by crucifixion.

Then, we come to this passage in which Jesus and Pilate are actually talking to each other. "Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?'" Are you the King of the Jews?

Very interesting, the first time we run across this term "King of the Jews" is the Magi, Matthew 2:2, when the Magi came and said, "We're looking for the King of the Jews." Then, again, it's mentioned by Nathaniel in John 1:49, when Jesus and Nathaniel are having their exchange and he confesses that Jesus is the King, Jesus is the King of Israel.

Then again in John 6:5, after feeding the 5,000, Jesus himself says, departed from them because he understood that they were going to try to take him by force and thrust him into the position as the temporal king of Israel. There was some confusion about what kind of king was going to come. The Jewish people were not actually expecting a spiritual savior. They were expecting a concrete king, a messiah who would actually take over the role of David and restore the rule of righteousness through a temporal kingdom.

Then, in John 12:13 and 15, at the triumphal entry, hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes riding down the colt of the donkey, that he's the king, this is the king that's coming.

However, there is also this idea of the Messianic Secret. Jesus repeatedly told his disciples, "Don't tell anybody who I am. Don't tell anybody who I am." There's this revelation of his identity that is being withheld by Jesus himself.

Now, in this passage, we learn something from this exchange between Pilate and Jesus that we would otherwise not know about: the nature of his kingship. Let's read it.

Verse 33, "Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' 'Is that your own idea,' Jesus asked, 'or did others talk to you about me?' 'Do you think I am a Jew?' Pilate replied. 'It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it that you've done?' Jesus said," and this is it, "'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews, but now, my kingdom is from another place.'"

He is a king. He is clarifying, "Yes, I am a king, but I am a king from another place." There's a parable, I think it might be Luke 12, someplace like that, a parable that talks about how a man came to appoint himself king, and then he went away and he left. It's the Parable of the 10 Minas. He gave people different things to invest and so forth, but he came to be appointed as a king and then he went away.

It's the parable of Jesus. It's the parable about Jesus. Jesus is a king, but his kingdom is from another place. This is very meaningful.

Then, Pilate says, "'You are a king, then!' Pilate said," verse 37. "Jesus answered, 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason, I was born, and for this, I came into the world.'" To spread confusion among all the people.

There is a lot of confusion among the people, and Jesus came to testify to what? To the truth. "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Jesus, which one of these ointments actually works? Jesus says, "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Then, Pilate says, "What is truth?" What is truth?

One commentator said this about his comment: Whether Pilate asked the question from mere curiosity, from real interest, in ridicule or in cynical unbelief, we cannot confidently say. The possibility that any one of these motives may have influenced him suggests the various attitudes in mind with which the truth of God is regarded by men. In other words, some men are curious, some men have real interest, some are filled with ridicule, some with cynical unbelief, and there are many other motives.

What is truth? You can understand, just from this little thing over here with these medicinal treatments to both prevent and relieve the affects of just little tiny insect bites, you can understand how hard it is to get to the truth.

What is truth? There are many different kinds of truth. There is scientific truth. There are the laws of physics, the mathematical truth, there are these kinds of measurable truths, but we even know that, just take the Newtonian physics, for example. We know that Newton's paradigm, believed as the absolute scientific truth for a long, long time, was then upended by the Einsteinian theories.

Even scientific truth, there is an element of doubt that comes with truth. Everywhere truth is doubted, and we live in an age of relativism where it is wildly regarded that truth is relative, and so this makes truth difficult to believe absolutely.

There is historical truth, but we know that historical truth is colored by the presuppositions of the historians who write the truth, and so what you bring to this story will affect what the story sounds like. If you are against the history of racism and you write about the history of racism, you're going to have one perspective. If you don't see that much wrong with it, then you write the history from a different perspective. We know that history, the truth of history is you have to read it carefully because the truth can move around.

In addition to that, in addition to vested interest, you have the unreliability of memory itself. If anybody's ever watched any of these CI programs, you know that the memories of witnesses, because they say so on TV, and so it's got to be true, that these memories of these witnesses, they're not reliable.

Then you have issues, the truth about issues. The truth about deficit spending, the role of government, moral issues like abortion or gay marriage, you have all of those things, guns. You have what you believe to be true, but then you have people on both sides of these issues. What is truth? What is truth?

Then you have emotions like love. You absolutely love this person more than your own life for the first seven years. Then all of a sudden you hate that person, so are emotions true? Then we get to spiritual truth, which is the realm that we deal with here in the Bible study.

You can understand why people have difficulty believing, like Pilate, why they're conflicted about what is true.

I mentioned here, as most of you probably remember because you were here, that on this camper, I bought a vehicle that had a trailer hitch. Basically it clicked into place on the back of the vehicle, especially designed for that particular vehicle.

I came to realize that it really was less of a trailer hitch and more of like a clip-on tie that could be easily pulled off. My trailer went down to the chains two times, fortunately, once at three miles an hour, the other time at one mile an hour.

I was told that that setup would work. I wouldn't have bought a car if I didn't think it would work. Truth. What is true? This is just why I wrote down the salesman, that the salespeople that were involved, the person who sold me the camper, the person who sold me the tow vehicle.

Then I also talked to a hitch manufacturer trying to understand what kind of hitch should be on the vehicle. I did not get what was the truth. Then there were the service departments for the RV store, and then also for the vehicle store.

I still couldn't get the truth, so I had to turn to Google, of course. Then on Google there are official websites where manufacturers are representing specifications of their different vehicles, whether it's camper or car.

Then there are the forums. Oh, God bless forums. Basically this is a caricature, but barely, it seems like the guys will ask a question, then somebody will say, "Well, I don't own a camper, but let me tell you what I think is the answer." It's bizarre. "I've never seen that vehicle before, but let me tell you how to fix it."

Then there are vendors, and vendors, of course, are trying to market you things. That was a frustrating experience, but then I ran across in some of the places where it kept saying SAE J684-2005-compliant. I began to ask, what is SAE J684 et cetera? I came to learn that SAE is the Society of Automotive Engineers, and they produce standards for all things automotive, including, guess what? Trailer hitches! J684!

Then I start trying to find this J684. Guess what? If you want it, it's \$72! Seventy-two dollars! I kept looking on Page 3 of Google until I finally found somebody over in England who would sell it to me as a PDF for eight bucks. I've scoured this thing, I've been all through this thing, and so I now have a layman's understanding of trailer hitch technology.

I was struck as I was doing this how very similar that is to men who are conflicted about the truth of God, how the sources that men have for learning about God are so diverse and often seemingly in conflict with each other.

People who talk to other people about God have vested interests. A lot of times, they're talking out the side of the mouth. They're pontificating, opinionating, and they don't know what they're talking about. They basically are representing the content of SAE J684 without having the license to do so. It's not surprising that men have a problem understanding or accepting this idea, what is truth.

Jesus' truth is this: He is the king of a kingdom from another place. That's what he wants us to know.

What do we say to conflicted men? What do we say to conflicted men, men who are conflicted about the truth? We tell them, go read SAE J684 for yourself. When you do read J684 SA ... whatever, whenever you do read the Bible for yourself, understand that the more education you are about theological terms, Biblical terms, the greater your understanding.

Also, understand the more experience you have as time goes on, the more clear your understanding of spiritual truth will become. Also, tell them that spiritual truth is best apprehended not only through private interpretation but also through community, and so it's valuable to be part of a community where you're wrestling through the truth of these spiritual ideas together.

Then, at the end of the day, we need to tell men, look, no matter how much you know about Jesus and his kingdom, it's still going to be dependent upon you coming to a point where you put your faith in the truth that is there, because all of these different forms of truth that I mentioned earlier, science, history, industrial engineering, psychology, human emotions, all of them require faith. All of them require faith.

This is the big idea today: **Every form of truth requires some form of faith.** Every form of truth requires some form of faith.

What's true about the kingdom of Christ?

The idea that someone would reject the truth of the Gospel because there cannot be iron-clad 100% proof, it's unattainable, every form of truth requires some form of faith.

In fact, Pascal's Wager, you may remember, some of you, Pascal's Wager, he says that everybody basically makes a bet on whether or not God exists. You flip the coin and you bet heads, that God exists, or you bet tails, that God does not exist.

Now, if you bet heads, that God exists, there are two options. You bet heads, that God exists, but you come to the bet not believing that he exists. Then one of two things can happen. You can lose the bet that God exists and you're left where you were before, so you're no worse off than you were before, you see, but if you bet heads that God exists and it turns out that he does exist, but you believe that he didn't exist at the beginning, then your gain is infinite.

Now, what if you bet tails, that God does not exist, and you do not believe that he exists, and you're right, it comes up tails, God doesn't exist? Again, you are no worse off than you were before, but what if you bet tails, you don't believe God exists, and you lose the bet, that God does exist? Now your loss is infinite.

Pascal's Wager supposes that on the grounds of reason alone, every human being is obligated to bet yes, you see, that God exists. Reason demands that you bet yes, that God exists. Yet we know that many people don't do that, mostly for psychological reasons. Maybe they weren't hugged enough as a little baby or whatever it is. Maybe they were abused by a religious growing-up experience. They can't bring themselves to that point.

What's true about the kingdom of Christ is that it is a kingdom from another place, and Jesus has come to testify to the truth of that place and to make access to that kingdom available to anyone and everyone who wants to have eternal life.

What we need to also teach people is that because this kingdom is from another place, we are, the Bible calls us aliens and strangers here, Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2, somewhere in there, that we are aliens and strangers in this world. We're passing through this world, but at the same time, we are stewards of this world.

It would be worth looking together at Jeremiah, oh, my gosh, where did this time go? I can't even believe this. Jeremiah 29, and most of us are familiar with it, the great promise there, but a few verses before that, in Jeremiah 29:7, listen, listen, Jeremiah on behalf of God is writing to the Babylonian captives, the Jews in captivity. He says this: "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it," for the city, "because if it prospers, you will prosper."

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 talks about making it your ambition to lead a quiet life and work with your hands. 1 Peter 3:15, "To be prepared to give an answer for the hope that's within you, but with gentleness and respect."

We have a dual citizenship. We are citizens of this kingdom; we are also citizens of some governing authority, Romans 13:1, submit to the existing authorities, because God has put them in place. We have a dual citizenship.

Now, we also have, beyond the scope of this message, there are grounds for civil disobedience. We know the Jewish midwives disobeyed the Pharaoh. They didn't murder the babies, the Jewish babies as they were born, and they were rewarded by the Lord for that civil disobedience, so we know there's a place for civil disobedience.

This is the kingdom, and the benefits of this kingdom, in this world are so immense, in the next world, beyond description, but just in this world alone, the great hospitals, the great universities, the soup lines, the coalitions for the homeless, the inner city youth programs, helping pregnant teenage girls, all these things wouldn't exist if it was not because the truth of this kingdom.

Jesus came to testify to the truth of this kingdom, and it is proven in large part because, unlike some of these remedies here that don't exactly do what they say that they were going to do, unlike that, anyone who's ever actually experienced the kingdom of Jesus knows that it does work, it is true.

Because of all that, wow, because of all that, we have the opportunity, the responsibility, and the duty to let other people know about this kingdom, and the process is called making disciples. It's called making disciples.

Every form of truth requires some form of faith. The only way people get to this truth of the kingdom is through faith, and the only way to get to the faith is through the witness, and the teaching and the training and the exempling of those of us who are willing to make disciples.

What All This Means at 9:00 AM

What does all this mean at 9AM today? What does it all mean at 9AM today? All you have to do is look at Charleston. All you have to do is look at Charleston. It's interesting. Finally, a Christian response to yet another national tragedy, but the way that Charleston responded to the killing of nine people sitting in a Bible study with their pastor, the way that they have responded demonstrates the power of changed life.

I wonder, I wonder if God perhaps hasn't even sovereignly withheld such a Christian response just so that we could see how stark the contrast is with the way some of the other cities have done it. By the way, don't forget that there was a black youth shot by a white police officer in North Charleston not that long ago, so the analogy here holds.

What it means for us at 9AM is, let's go out and live our lives like kingdom people, because what people need is they need to know that the truth of God's kingdom is attainable by them. They need to understand that we can show them all the truth they need. We can show them a form of truth that will allow them to have a form of faith. Let us pray.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, our dearest Father, look, there are a lot of us right here who struggle with doubt ourselves. Jesus, you came to bear witness to the truth. Your word is truth. For this reason, you came to announce that you are the king of a kingdom that is from another place and to invite us to be part of it, and then also to use us as your ambassadors, your disciple-makers, to help other people to be part of it.

Lord, help us to keep in mind that in an age where there's such skepticism about truth, let us help people understand that it takes some faith to be that skeptical about the truth, that every form of truth requires some form of faith. Even the most reproducible scientific experiments require some form of faith.

Help us to be able to make disciples, not so much on the power of all that we know, but on the power of the changed life that we can demonstrate among them. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.