

Aldersgate UMC of Butte, Montana
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Sunday, May 23, 2021

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Background to Scripture

As we prepare to hear the gospel text on the Holy Spirit guiding us into all truth, hear these words from the Gospel of John 18:37,38. This is Jesus speaking to Pilate:

For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' ³⁸*Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'*

In Acts 2 is just a bit of background of what happened on the day of Pentecost some 2000 years ago. Keep in mind that Pentecost, meaning “fiftieth”, has its roots in the Jewish festival celebrated on the fiftieth day after First Fruits, also known as the “Festival of Weeks” which was a harvest festival. For Christians, we celebrate Pentecost as the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Jesus. Hear these words from 2nd Chapter of Acts:

²When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Acts 2:1-4

The lectionary recently is filled with scripture on Truth. The mystical gospel of John is speaking the truth on how the Holy Spirit will guide us into all Truth. May Christians everywhere open our hearts and minds for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth:

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

26 'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. 27You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. 4But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them.

The Work of the Spirit

'I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: 9about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

12 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine

and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Message

“And the Spirit Will Guide You Into All Truth”

Preachers by and large hope that they are expressing the Truths of God. **If not, what are we doing?** On the one hand it may seem a bit arrogant to think we are reflecting the mind of God. But on the other hand, we could always write a disclaimer before we preach like this preacher did in speaking his own truth:



This is just one way to handle this dilemma but the subject of truth goes back thousands and thousands of years because humanity has always hungered for the truth in all things.

Maybe this was what the writer of this hymn was hungering for as he wrote these words we sang at the beginning of the service.

Oftentimes, however, when we sing, we sing the words of a song without really thinking about the words. I confess this is true for me. We sing these

wonderful hymns with wonderful lyrics and they have little or no effect on us.

We opened our service today with the hymn:

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free
Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

This time when we sing these words, I invite you to consciously pray these words as you sing them. Let us sing just the first verse again of this hymn and this time feel the power in these words as a living prayer:

(We will sing verse one here which is on screen)

I trust that this time you were consciously praying these words as you sung them. **Feel the difference?** Imagine if we were faithful to God in this verse truly praying to open our eyes that we may see Truth and not be afraid of the Truth. **What are we afraid of in uncovering the truth whether that be of the Bible or politics or history? How insecure are we in facing the truth?** By the grace of God, we can face the truth with both eyes wide open.

Now once we are open to seeing the truth in all things, we ought to be open to hearing the truth in all things. Listen to verse two of this hymn before we sing this verse:

Open my ears, that I may hear
Voices of truth thou sendest clear;
And while the wavenotes fall on my ear
Everything false will disappear
Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Can you hear the voice of the Spirit preparing us to not only open our eyes and see the truth, but to open our ears to hear the truth. We live in a world where lies and conspiracy theories threaten our democracy and it is frightening to see things on a national scale that I never believed we would have to face in our society. Now more than ever we need to open our eyes as well as our ears to see and hear the truth in all things. We are promised that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth and we must trust that so that we can share this truth with the world.

Verse 3 speaks to this in this hymn:

Open my mouth, and let me bear
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;

Open my heart and let me prepare
Love with thy children thus to share
Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Let us sing verse 3:

Imagine if this became not only our prayer but it became a living prayer for all our church leaders and all our leaders in government both local and national to not only see the Truth, but to hear the Truth and then to speak the Truth with courage and love.

Holy Communion

*United Methodists practice “open communion”
where everyone is welcome to receive. Everyone!*

***Hymn of Benediction # 2238** “In the Midst of New Dimensions”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icJs25Z09ws>

***Benediction (responsively)**

Do all the good you can.

By all the means you can.

In all the places you can.

At all the times you can.

With all the people you can.

As long as ever you can.

Amen.

Amen.