

We Carry On
[written in oral form]

John 18:33-37
Reign of X, Memorial Sunday

November 21, 2021
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The powerful, the religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus.
Jesus was a threat to them, so they said he was a criminal.
Apparently, they lied to the Roman leader, Pilate, saying that Jesus claimed to be king.

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This is fascinating.  
A loving, compassionate human travels around helping people and teaching them a better way. How was that a threat?  
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That behaviour was part of the threat because the people's devotion and dependence were shifting away from the controllers.

The main threat to those in power was Jesus confronting the corrupt leaders and exposing the systemic injustices.  
Jesus questioned authority and revealed the truth.

Secular power and brute force fear the truth.

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Jesus carried / Lived the truth of God's love and compassionate justice, and that can destabilize the control by deception and force.
The self-serving powers in place were fighting for control and needed Jesus' message terminated.
They assumed killing Jesus would take care of it.

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The occupied people were not allowed to execute anyone, so Jesus was taken to the Roman leader to be judged.  
As it turned out, Jesus had to school Pilate on his role of judge.

Pilate asked Jesus if he was the King of the people.  
A judge is supposed to bring the charge, so Jesus politely reminded Pilate of that role by asking him a question.

Jesus' petition also revealed that Pilate was being played as a pawn.  
So, Pilate renounced the masses that he controlled, and then again asked Jesus, "What have you done?"  
This is very unusual trial.

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Jesus never claimed to be king, instead he stated that he is a devotee to God's kingdom / the way of being that is far greater than secular political systems.
God's way / God's kingdom is above and over earthly power.

God's way / God's truth is far more powerful than brute force, intimidation, and the lies of deception.

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Pilate did Not get it at all. He did not understand. He only knew what worked for him and his system.

With confusion, Pilate asked, "So you are a king?"

Jesus knew he was doomed, so again he helped Pilate to form the words of accusation— "You say that I am king."

Then Jesus gives his defence stating he lived to present God's truth.

Please remember the key line: "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." --the voice from God.

We all know what happened to Jesus. He was killed.

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This is a fitting text for a memorial Sunday.

As we know, Jesus **the Christ** lived on.

The powerful message of God's truth spread out and helped form the church.

Likewise, the death of a human body is not the end.

So much lives on: the spirit lives on AND... the love and the legacy continue for generations.

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The church grew and then became a conquering institution, yet some continued to carry the truth of God's love throughout the centuries. The church found a degree of rebirth in the reformation, yet.....seems to be struggling these days.

A significant segment has forgotten the truth and has absorbed the ways of deception and intimidation.

Some wonder is it time to have a memorial service for the church. ????

There is a great decline in participation.

Will this pandemic be the final straw?

Will the church survive? Are we concerned?

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I do hope the cult of Christianity / the judgmental church dies.

However, we need NOT focus on the church, but on Christ.

Christ is Not dead.

God's gospel message, CHRIST, is alive and well.

Compassionate justice is actively happening.

Our world is very different and better than it was 60 years ago when the church was thriving.

A radical transformation is in progress.  
Consider the following:

Bullying is not tolerated.

There is respect and acceptance for those in the LGBTQ community.

There is growing support for Black Lives Matter, finally.

There is zero tolerance for sexual abuse and misogyny.  
The “Me too” movement is tearing down the toxic male domination.  
Even the macho military culture is being confronted, and will answer to the civilian courts.

The brute force tactics of the police are being challenged.

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The pandemic has revealed the anger in a small percentage of people, yet overall, there has been amazing compassion and support for those hurting.

Even hampered by a pandemic, people are striving to mitigate the climate crisis..... and there is rapidly growing awareness of the injustices against indigenous peoples.

For a small minority, they are getting lots of attention, Yes. Yes.

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God is very active. The gospel truth is transforming our culture ....and it sure looks like the way of Christ.

Remember what Jesus said?  
“Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to Christ.”

More and more people are embracing God’s way of truth / of love and compassionate justice.  
This is God’s doing.  
It is the way of Christ.

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The church is involved in this transformation, but not necessarily leading the way.

Obviously, God and the gospel truth are not confined to the church or any religion.

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I wonder what the church will be like after the pandemic is normalized.

Will we realize the church is not a form of entertainment?

Will we understand that the church’s purpose is not to make people feel good?  
The church is not a place to bask in mono-culture camaraderie.

We are called to be as Christ.

We are called to expose injustices, to work for reconciliation and transformation.  
We are called to live and be love and grace.  
The church must be in the healing and wholeness.

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I came across this statement recently by an unknown author.
“The mark of a great church is not how many people attend, but how many people live differently for having been there.”

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I do not think God has given up on the church.

The pandemic has rattled and upended the church, but I trust we the church will carry on and rediscover a deeper passion for following Christ.

We are given a powerful message—God’s message that love, justice and grace prevail.

We are not so weak.

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This past Wednesday, I went for a walk at Kiwanis Park.

The large recreation field was a vast expanse of very green grass, except for an object far out in the middle.

I walked to it. It was a large snowperson.  
Yet, the previous day barely snowed enough to cover the ground.  
Even so, someone or some people gathered all those tiny snowflakes together to form a significant statue.

Little snowflakes gathered together stood tall for all to see.

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God calls us to be faithful in the little things and that will lead to big things.

We are to carry the gospel of truth in our actions and words.

We carry on.
We strive to be as Christ.

Transformation is all God’s doing.

We carry on in faith living grace and justice in peace.

God is amazing. Christ is very much alive.

Amen.