



Title: The Meaning ~~Crisis~~ Opportunity

Date: June 9, 2024

Key Idea: Everyone has faith in something, we are all believers in something. This raises questions though. How we think about meaning and purpose drive our behavior and inform our thinking. But we fool ourselves if we put faith in things that aren't true; and fail to adequately address the doubts we all have whatever we believe.

Key Text: John 18: 33-38 (ESV)

³³ 'So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world— to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. '

Key Points

1. Some people say they can't have faith because it means believing in something you can't prove. But everyone has faith in something. Everyone is a believer in something. The question is whether what you believe comports with ultimate reality.
2. Jesus led a revolution 2,000 years ago and since then, we in the west have adopted the values He taught. But many people in the west, though they still "believe" in the values, no longer know the source of those values. This disconnect threatens to undermine even the values that promote human flourishing like equality, compassion, human rights, fairness, innovation, freedom, and progress.
3. The Bible over and over tells us truth comes through Jesus Christ.
4. The Word of the Cross upends our presumptions about the superiority of secular humanism and points us to ultimate reality in a way that nature, human reason and human history cannot.
5. Our children especially are suffering from high levels of anxiety and depression because they feel isolated and hopeless. If meaning and purpose don't come from the church, they'll find meaning somewhere else: in materialist philosophy or destructive behavior.

Questions for Discussion/Application

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. What do you think faith is? Belief without knowledge as some say? Or do you think reasons and knowledge are important to build faith?
3. Do you think ultimate truth exists and we can know what it is? Or does each person's experiences or nature decide what is true for them?
4. Do you believe we can derive all the answers required to determine meaning and purpose from purely material and mechanical means such as science, research, and nature? Or are there questions that can't be answered by empirical means alone?
5. Do you believe there is a "good" set of morals and ethics such as equality, compassion, human rights, rule of law, innovation, freedom, and progress? And if so, by what means can we "prove" they are true or good?
6. Does it surprise you that the Jesus revolution more than 2,000 years ago overcame the values and behaviors promoted by other civilizations that put their faith in power, conquest, and domination?
7. What do you think John means when he says truth came through Jesus Christ? (John 1:17); or Paul when he said you were taught in Christ in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21)?

8. What does it mean when Paul says in 1st Corinthians 1:18, 'For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
9. Some psychologists have suggest that society is dealing with a “Crisis of meaning.” What does that mean to you?
10. What are the pluses and minuses of treating those with doubt or questions as enemies of the church and dismissing their concerns? What about celebrating doubt? Is there a better approach than shaming doubters or celebrating doubters?
11. What are some factors that may lead to doubt? What are the best ways to deal with doubt when they arise?
12. Do you agree that the only way to achieve real meaning and purpose is by faith in the Gospel? Is there a way you can share the Word of the cross this week with someone who may need to hear it?