

# Sermon for Sunday, May 24, 2009

## Seventh Sunday of Easter

By Tim Ljunggren

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| <b>First Lesson</b>  | <b>Acts 8:26-40</b>  |
| <b>Psalm</b>         | <b>22:24-30</b>      |
| <b>Second Lesson</b> | <b>1 John 4:7-21</b> |
| <b>Gospel</b>        | <b>John 15:1-8</b>   |

Sometimes we only catch glimpses of God, don't we? We're not able to see the totality of the Divine standing before us, beckoning us to come closer, asking us to only believe and receive what is rightfully ours—pure love and grace, perfect freedom, a chance to rest from those things and situations in our lives that our literally driving us crazy.

It would be easier to believe if we simply saw God in God's heavenly glory, with a few miracles mixed in for good measure. We are, after all, a pragmatic people; we know all about the scientific method to confirm whether something is real or not, and we would like to apply those same standards to our faith as well, wouldn't we?

We need absolute assurance. We need absolute truth.

“They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Today, Jesus' words in the form of a prayer ring out to us loud and clear, just like the crisp peals of a church bell on Sunday morning. We are surrounded by Truth; not just glimpses of it, but the entirety of it. It's staring us in the face, and we're the ones who constantly blink and turn away.

I'm reminded of Pilate's question to Jesus just before Jesus' crucifixion—do you remember it?

“What is truth?”

So, this morning, I'd like to present the same question to all of you—"What is truth?" What is divine truth? What is the truth that Jesus talks about this morning, the truth that sanctifies us and protects us?

Sometimes—maybe most of the time—we confuse God's truth with our own; I've said it before, but I think it certainly bears repeating: We know that we've created God in our own image when God despises the very same people that we do. When that happens, our truth becomes paramount to us, brushing aside or knocking away any sort of divine guidance that we can receive. Sometimes, when we concentrate on our own truth, we miss the bigger picture—that God really couldn't care less about what we think is true.

There is only one reality—there is only one Truth. That Truth belongs to God.

That isn't an easy Truth, is it?

We cop out most of the time when we talk ourselves into believing that God is basically unknowable, and that God's Truth can only be surmised when we get bits and pieces of it through our daily lives. The truth is (pardon the pun) that God continually and constantly makes God's Truth known to us in all of its glory. We don't have to wait around for glimpses and then guess the rest—the answer is right before us, and the truth will indeed set us free.

That divine Truth is what Jesus is talking about today; it's a Truth that cuts through all of our defenses, all of our convoluted ways of looking at ourselves and the world, all of our precious notions of "right" and "wrong," "good" and "bad," or any other notions we may choose to have. God's Truth is not a feeble truth based on the fallacies of our very human ability to conform the truth to our own fragile needs—it is a Truth based on the power of promise and sanctification, a Truth that resides outside of our own petty preconceptions.

I'm reminded again of another line—this one not from Pilate, but from Jack Nicholson in *A Few Good Men*: "You want the truth? You can't handle the truth!"

Sometimes that's true. We can't handle the truth—we can't handle God's Truth. We make it all too difficult, all too complex, all too disfigured. God's Truth is simple and profound:

*God loves us. Period.*

Amen. ...