**Spiritual Cost**

Based on [Mark 7:31-37](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mk7.31-37)

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When Jesus facing the threat of crucifixion tells Pontius Pilate that he came to bear witness to the truth, Pilate famously responds, “What is Truth?” This can sound dismissive or irreverent…”**What is truth?...Who cares?...There is no truth...just words that silly people believe or don’t. Power is what matters...and words don’t have power. ‘Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me.’ If they do it is because I let them, but then I would be a fool. You are willing to die on a cross, Jesus, for the sake of some words that, when strung together, you call truth. What is truth? Nothing. Death, the power to take life, that is truth!**”

Some people believe that lying is just words. With good intention, they believe that you should say the words that will have the right effect, that will get people to do or feel what they think they ought. Words are tools, not truth carriers.

But maybe Pilate was sincere…”What is truth?...I don’t understand what you mean?” Rather than him being evil, making a choice for power over truth...maybe he literally doesn’t understand. It’s one thing to know what is meant by truth and reject it. It is another entirely to not even understand the concept. And for people who have no category in their mind for truth, can they really lie? If nothing is right can anything be wrong? If nothing is true can anything be false? If nothing is real, is everything fake?

With these heady questions, we can follow Jesus in the accounts given for healing in the gospels. Today, Jesus heals a man’s ears and tongue, and as the miracle happens he looks up to heaven and sighs. Some translate that he moans. Either way, the word in the original greek means an involuntary reaction to undesirable circumstances. Some take it to mean that Jesus is reacting to some spiritual pain, some spiritual tax that healing the dead parts of men costs him.

Recall if you will Jesus’ healing of the woman who was bleeding for 12 years and no physician could help her. The evangelist says that when she touched the hem of his garment, power left him and she was healed. Power left him...what power? Again there is a spiritual cost Jesus pays in healing people. Jesus is God, but he is also a man. And as a man he gets hungry and thirsty, he gets weary, he sighs and moans, he gets tired and loses energy.

Whether Jesus loses energy incrementally at every miracle as a payment for our healing is open to interpretation. But what is not open to interpretation is that Jesus had to die for us to live forever. He had to pay for our sins by his own shedding of blood. By his wounds, scripture says, we are healed.

And so, advance this teaching a little further. What does it matter if you lie a little bit, or if you steal and nobody knows...so long as it get you what you want and nobody gets hurt? Jesus gets hurt. Every sin you do in secret, in some mysterious transtemporal way, adds or added to the bruises and lashes and nails and suffering of the Son of God for the sin of the whole world. Because the sum total of that sin is the result of each of yours.

But how can what I do today effect what happened to Jesus 2000 years ago? God is eternal, and that mean’s we cannot understand the mechanics of everything he does in time. But we do know this, that Scripture says that Jesus is the lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world. He says that before Abraham was, I am. He says that before he formed you in the womb he knew you...not that he knew who you would be, but that he knew you. And just as surely as the sins you commit today will be forgiven retroactively by the blood of christ, so too will that sin add to the share of your guilt in the death of God.

This means nothing to the spiritually blind, or those calloused to other people. Those who care not whether their actions hurt other people, are not going to be moved to shame and contrition in the recognition that their actions hurt the Son of God. But those of us who are trustees of the true faith are daily tempted to sin and evil. And as Holy as the Spirit in us is...we can begin to think that our sins are without consequence. And if we can keep our arms, legs, and tongue from sinning...that is a small victory. The greater battle to come is to keep our heart from evil thoughts and desires. How can we win such a battle?

Throughout history and even today, there was a thought that if we could isolate ourselves from seeing and hearing evil, then we could keep our hearts pure. Monks run to monasteries and cloister themselves from the world. And it is true, guard as much as you can, what you see and what you hear. After all, Eve looked at the fruit and it pleased her eye, she listened to and heard the serpent who told her it would make her wise. Had she closed her eyes to the tree, and shut her ears, maybe she could have kept the sin out.

But our situation is no the same. If it was, then the deaf man would be blessed, because he could hear no evil, and the blind could see no evil. But as it is, the deaf man’s sin, and our sin, does not come from outside, but Jesus says it is already within us. “It is not that which goes into a person that defiles him, but what comes out of him.” The heart of man is wicked, and shutting the ears does not keep out the sickness of sin. Rather it prevent him from receiving the remedy.

Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ. What is truth?...It is not just words, it is the power of salvation for all who hear it and believe. When he heals the deaf man, he not only does a great miracle but he enables the man to hear the Word of God, and to continue to hear it for the rest of his life. Because only the Word can enter the heart, deposit the Holy Spirit, and enable us to walk in the newness of life. Only the Word can give us spiritual understanding that there is no victimless sin, but also that there is no sin either in size or number, that will not be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we know that there is no need to sin a lot or even a little harmless bit to get what we want...we already have it. Jesus has prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies, and we hear his victory in our ears, eat it with our mouths, and praise it with our tongues, that though I struggle daily with sin, the purpose of the struggle is test and show the faith, even as Jacob wrestled with God. We struggle, and it is Christ who has already won the victory.