

**PENTECOST: IN FAITH WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Reformation Sunday**  
**October 28, 2007**

**Jeremiah 31:31-34**  
**Psalm 46**  
**Romans 3:19-28**  
**John 8:31-36**

**What is truth?**

Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, posed this question to Jesus prior to sentencing Jesus to death (John 18:38). Jesus told Pilate that he “was born into this world to tell about the truth” (John 18:37, *CEV*). Jesus’ testimony to the truth was an indication of his power – a power that confounded those who belonged to the kingdoms of the world.

In the prologue to John’s Gospel, Jesus is described as the one from whom “all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us” (1:14, *CEV*). In John’s Gospel, the word “truth” appears 25 times in contrast to a total of six times in the three Synoptic Gospels – truly an indication of the significance of this term.

In the gospel text for Reformation Day, we hear Jesus say, “the truth will set you free” (8:32, *CEV*). And so, we may ask ourselves, “What is truth?” And from what are we “set free?”

In the Bible, truth refers to what is dependable, tested, and trustworthy. It is firm and never changes. Truth in the Bible is based on God’s unchanging purpose for the world and all the people God created.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul reminds us that, “because of Christ Jesus, [God] freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins” (Romans 3:24, *CEV*). Jesus, the tangible presence of God in the world, is the Word Incarnate and the point of access to our life with God. Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6, *CEV*) and it is he who sets us free. This is indeed good news, and this message is at the heart of the reform movement that took place within the Church nearly 500 years ago.

Indeed we are set free; by God’s grace we are saved and set free from sin. But what are we set free for? Again, we turn to the words of the apostle Paul who admonishes us to use our freedom “as an opportunity to serve each other with love” (Galatians 5:13, *CEV*).

In so doing, we embody the new agreement that God promised through the words of the prophet Jeremiah: “I will write my laws on their hearts and minds. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (31:33, *CEV*). This new agreement implies that people will know God. Instead of being written on stone tablets, God’s laws will now be written on our hearts. In contrast to our sins being “written on [our] hearts like words chiseled in stone” (Jeremiah 17:1, *CEV*), God now promises to forgive our sins and to forget the evil things we have done (Jeremiah 31:34).

As the Body of Christ on earth, the Church is called in every age to bear witness to the truth. Yes, the truth sets us free! And having been set free, may we be reformed and transformed to proclaim God’s liberating word!

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Houser & Scott Tunseth, eds., *The Learning Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 2000), p. 1992.

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**On this Reformation Day, we remember to pray for the Church.** May it remain faithful to the truth of the Gospel as revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus and may we remain steadfast in God's Word.

**Activity Corner:** "Speak the Truth"

Supplies needed: Bible; paper; pen/pencil.

Look up the following passages from John's Gospel:

1:14	14:6
1:17	14:17
4:23	15:26
4:24	16:7
5:33	16:13
8:32	17:8
8:40	17:17
8:44	17:19
8:45	18:37
8:46	18:38
	19:35

Each passage contains the word "truth" (some translations may use a variation of the word; i.e., "what is true"). In four of the passages, the word appears twice. Invite members of your household to discuss how the word is used in each verse and to make note of their understandings. Conclude by asking each one to compose a prayer based on their insights as to the meaning of "truth" and how the "truth" has set us free.

