

## Truth?

In the book of John, we read: *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.*

(John 8:32)



Throughout history there have been times when people have tried to hide the truth or change the facts when recounting events in an attempt to make the narrative meet their own needs and help them achieve their own goals. Sometimes this is done to exclude people, belittle them, or deny their important contributions to society (for example, making sure none of the Chinese workers who built the transcontinental railroad from the west, the hardest part of the route, were in any of the commemorative pictures of the driving in of the golden spike that connected the eastern and western sections of the track). Sometimes people alter facts to try to justify actions they know to be wrong in order to further their economic interests (for example, claiming slaves were 'happy' being slaves or were not capable of caring for themselves so they 'needed' masters.) Sometimes people justify seizing power by making false claims (for example, women are not capable of managing money, learning, or making decisions so they can be denied property rights, bank accounts, education, or voting rights, and be treated as the property of their fathers or husbands). Such denying of or altering of truth, can have long lasting effects and do untold damage to individuals and society as a whole.

When people are willing to hide or try to 'change' truth, they also claim that those who tell the truth or work to restore the truth are the ones in the wrong. They attack and vilify those who disagree with their created version of truth and spread misinformation and lies to discredit those who seek and speak the truth. Among the most powerful tools for hiding truth are apathy and silence – that is: knowing the truth and not speaking up; hearing the lies and slander against others and not speaking out on their behalf. Engaging in such silence can turn an unfounded lie or misrepresentation of the truth into a nearly impenetrable wall that can destroy lives, and enclose whole societies stifling their humanity indefinitely. Such silence is evil.

Detritch Bonhoeffer said: *"Silence in the face of evil is evil itself: God will not hold us guiltless."* He also said: *"Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."* Lord, guide us to always seek the truth and speak the truth lest we get trapped within such impenetrable walls. The longer we do not seek truth and keep silent, the longer we remain in a darkness from which only the truth can set us free.

### This week, remember in prayer:

- **The conflict between Palestinians & Israelis.** May 14<sup>th</sup> marked the anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel by the U.N. with the end of British control of Palestine May 14, 1948. The original intention of the League of Nations, precursor to the U.N., was that a state for Palestinians would also be setup, & that the city of Jerusalem would remain in international control. These 2 things did not happen & the Palestinians became a people without a country. May 15<sup>th</sup> marked the commemoration of Nakba Day, also known as the Palestinian Catastrophe; the start of this stateless position for Palestinians. The treatment of Palestinians continues to include the forced seizure of their ancestral homes. Israel also refused COVID vaccination to Palestinians, who's lives they control, until the international community intervened. Both Israelis & Palestinians have been perpetrators & victims of violence over the last 73 years. **A ceasefire has been arranged by the Egyptians, and is to begin 2 a.m. Friday.**
- **People who live with racism,** bigotry, or prejudice. We see every day that we have not learned the lessons Jesus taught about how to treat each other, or the lessons from our past about the destructive power of fear & hate. Pray for those who live with the reality of racism & those who do not understand or acknowledge that they play a role in continuing it.
- **People dealing with COVID-19** worldwide; especially in places like India, Venezuela and Brazil where the healthcare systems are overwhelmed.
- **Refugees, especially children.** Though the number coming to the U.S. has slowed, remember those still fleeing their homes.

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