

Theme: **Truth-telling: Democracy in an age without Facts**

Sermon Title: **OPPOSITION STANDING IN THE FACE OF TRUTH**

Scripture Reference: John 8:31-38

focus: v. 32 “*and, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.*”

Shivonne C. McKay

Since this year began, the nation has experienced the celebratory marker of some significant and historic events. In January we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the emancipation proclamation. In August we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. This month, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Children’s Defense Fund Organization, and the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Lord’s Day Alliance. All of the ABOVE named anniversary’s have one thing in common. At its’ inception. The basis for what began as movements were inspired by a need for truth.

Truth being that Freedom ought to be extended to all persons because all men, women and children are created equal. Thankfully, there were those who would serve as catalysts and pioneers for the change that was needed, but what about those who offered push back and opposed those who stood in the face?

Many of us empathize with Sybrina Fulton, who is still on a quest for the *truth* to be known of the events that led to the untimely death of her son Trayvon Martin. The nation currently wants the *truth* about the necessity of US involvement in the Syrian crisis. Soon, the government will be making the decision as to whether or

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not to cut 40 billion dollars in SNAP which provides food assistance to millions of

low income and elderly persons in this country. They say it is necessary, but in

this instance, do we have the *truth*? Did the National Security Agency not possess

the *truth* of the Navy Yard’s shooters background, or did they choose to ignore it?

While some would say that the quest for truth persists, others would dare say that

based on the facts of ‘things not being exactly the way it use to be, that *truth* has

indeed prevailed in this land. Whether it be through the source of local or cable

news, Facebook, twitter, or the internet, we have been granted front row access to

all of the political, and social upheavals that are *still* plaguing our society.

In my text for today, John the beloved disciple, writes of Jesus continual teachings of discipleship to the Johannine community. In earlier passages Jesus’s identity is disputed and denied by the very people he came to save the Jews. Given the historical circumstances of the time in which the text takes place, John’s aim was to inspire members of a community to maintain their belief during these troubling times. Jesus attempts to persuade the Jews that he is in-fact the one who’d come and would return as the fulfillment for all humankind. Anyone within

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the Johannine community who confessed Jesus as the Messiah was in danger of

being expelled from the synagogue. Here we have Jesus who impresses upon them

the *requirement* of what being a **true disciple means**. Jesus encourages those

who've come to believe to “**continue in my word**”, a word that will **liberate** them

through knowledge of the truth. It is then and only then that you will be set free.

The text says some not only denied but even turned towards hostility and wrath at

the one who was the promise of freedom wrapped up in the flesh.

How often have we found ourselves, in the same position like these in the text, who stood in the face of truth, yet had no room in our hearts or minds to receive it? Being the one to receive TRUTH and TRUTH-TELLING puts people's lives in jeopardy. Like those members of the synagogue, when giving or receiving the truth, you run the risk of being outcasted in some capacity. It is more comfortable to not have to deal with FACTS AS THEY ARE which is why people tend to shy away from it.

Truth telling is difficult but we have a mandate given by a God who through the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to stand firm and flat footed in the face of truth. What must we reject? We must reject, systemic strongholds that pervade our political, economic, social, and educational systems.

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We must reject, efforts to shut the government down in the face of Obama care.

We must reject claims that war is necessary, and that we can not live peaceably

with all men. We must reject claims that our black and brown children can't

learn. We must reject that poverty is a way of life for the marginalized. None of

these are truths. We must reject that as women there ought not be equally

compensation to that of male counterparts for the same work. We must reject that

despite the building of more prisons, that the life of a young or old black man is

meaningless. We should be rejecting, everything that contradicts the face of truth.

So what is truth, and how will we recognize it? According to the merriam-webster

definition; truth is the 'real facts about something. Another definition says it is the

quality or state of being true, or a statement or idea that is true or accepted as true.

Jesus definition of truth: His word, which is Jesus himself. Jesus gives a clear

mandate, which offers a condition (**If---then**), to the christians of old and and new.

That if we continue in His word, that He who is the living word will expose the

truth. He will expose himself and we will have it. We will have truth. We will have

Him and all that we need. That's good news today.

So I ask you, are you standing in the face of truth? We are all slaves to that

which we accept. Have you accepted Christ. Have you accepted his truth. HE IS

STANDING IN YOUR FACE. REACH OUT AND GRAB HIM WHILE HE IS

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NEAR. God didn't intend for us to live in bondage. “Jesus came so that we could

have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10, NRSV). He is calling us, to our

rightful place. God wants us to have a permanent place in the house....that's why

he sent his Son Jesus Christ who is the propitiation for our sins. What is opposing

your truth?

IS IT POVERTY...ACCEPT WEALTH....IS IT STRIFE.....ACCEPT PEACE....IS

IT DEPRESSION....ACCEPT YOUR NEW MIND IN CHRIST JESUS.....IS IT

LONELINESS....GOOD COMPANIONSHIP....IS IT SICKNESS.....ACCEPT

HEALTH....IS IT DEATH.... ACCEPT LIFE.....ACCEPT HE WHO IS THE

WORD, TRUTH, AND THE LIGHT TODAY.....AMEN.