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We come to see the nature of this truth in the trial scene at the end of the gospel as Jesus stands before Pilate, semi-naked, stripped bare. Pilate is interrogating Jesus and says to him:, 'So you are

*a king?’ Jesus answers, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’<sup>38</sup> Pilate asks Jesus in an off-hand, cynical, world-weary way, ‘What is truth?’*

Truth at this moment of culmination of the gospel is Jesus stripped bare, vulnerable, alone, committed to what he preached and sought to show about the nature of God. For Pilate there is no truth; only the expediency of the empire. Power, influence, coercion when required. When Jesus says to the disciples take up your cross and follow me, we see at this moment what this means, the destination of this journey – faithfulness to God’s way, humility, vulnerability. Weakness, as Paul calls it.

This is the pattern we are called to; vulnerably human. The ethic of our time is that the point of being human is to achieve success, to be strong, resilient, to overcome all obstacles, to achieve our full potential, overcome adversity. This is the liberal ethic of our time that the individual can achieve anything they want; if they try.

But the truth of our humanity is that we are invariably weak, fragile, susceptible to the uncertainties of life and all it throws at us. And the truth of what it means to be human is that we connect with each other best, most truthfully, most authentically when we share our vulnerabilities, when we are open and honest about them with each other. When we share the trials of our journeys our lives resonate with each other and we experience deep mutuality; the spirit of our true, shared humanity is set free between us.

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As I have been among you have seen your vulnerability to each other. You have shared and supported each other through your difficult times. You have not sought to maintain a veneer of respectability or control of your circumstances but have allowed your suffering and scars to be seen. This is the glory of the Christian community. Because, while our society demands success and strength and invulnerability, we proclaim that God is present with us and meets us in our vulnerability. It is in these places that the Holy Spirit is glimpsed.

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