

Elizabeth Peter

+Christ the King

November 25, 2018

I love movies.

I never get tired of a good ole Prince and Princess Disney movie. Besides the blatantly obvious gender roles and stereotypes, there is something about it that just feels comforting to watch it. Maybe it's because I think the prince is really good looking, and there's fun music that seems to always get stuck in my head, or maybe its because there is always a problem and the furry creatures and musical numbers lead to a happy ending with the princess being rescued, and then someone saves the day, typically the prince.

Last Sunday night while chatting in The Way, I was asked what my favorite movie was. And without hesitation, I said: Mulan. I love mulan, I mean I could watch it every week and never get tired of it.

And while the group chuckled a little at my choice in an animated movie, I rattled off my reasons for loving it. For those of you who have never seen Mulan, it's a 1998 Disney animated musical based on the Chinese Legend of Hau Mulan. She impersonates her father to take his place in a war to defeat the invading Hun Army and pretty much saves all of China by pretending to be a man.

So the three reasons I love Mulan: She saves all of China while having to overcome gender roles and stereotypes.

She won't let anyone keep her from doing whats right, and has such strong family ties that she will do anything to help her family.

In the end her story wasn't driven by a typical love story. It was driven by family, honor, and doing the right thing.

Mulan showed me as a kid what it meant to see what women can do even in the face of oppression. She went against all odds to flip everyone's ideas of what women could do, and the movie shows how hard it was to overcome that.

Movies help to shape our imaginations, and movies like Mulan help to reshape how we view our world.

And that's exactly what Jesus does in the bible. He tells our story, he **takes** the disciples and the reader on a journey to help reshape the only world we know.

**The World we know** is one of dominion and violence. Where nations must be more powerful than other nations to be the best, where people in need of safety are seen as less human than the person sitting next to us. Where simply sitting in a church, school, hospital - is no longer a safe haven but rather a target to those who wish to do harm to others.

The world we know is one where being black or brown makes you automatically a threat when you walk down the street, or just sit in a yogurt shop.

The world we know is one where transgendered people have a day of remembrance because that many people have been murdered for just being themselves.

The world we know is one that is not like the disney movies i watch.

You see, I wish life was a disney movie. So that I could have an animal sidekick, meet some cool people along the way and eventually meet my happy ending.

I wish life was a Disney movie so I could sing my way through my problems, meet an old grandma or grandpa who is wise and gives me a revelation to do what is right against all odds.

I wish life was a Disney movie so I could have a Prince sweep me off my feet and make me ridiculously rich and rule alongside him in his kingdom.

I wish life was a disney movie....but its not. Yet it seems to be easier to let a disney movie shape my mood, my values, my life than it does to let God's Word.

Maybe cause it's easier to live in a false sense of reality than realize the truth in front of us.

And like Pilot, we are confronted with the truth and we are not sure what to make of it.

What is Truth? You see we aren't the only ones asking this question. The next line in the Gospel, which isn't included in today's lectionary reading is asked by Pilate himself. "What is Truth?"

Now we are towards the end of our story. Jesus has been a serious challenge to the people in good and hard ways. Jesus as The messiah, does a bunch of non-messiah like things. Sure he goes around healing people, but then tells them to be quiet. He

includes women and children which was a no-no back then. And the dirtiest, uncleanest, and non-jewish people seem to find him, get his help and then he commends them for their faith.

Jesus the messiah goes against all societal norms and that is difficult for the people to accept. And perhaps its difficult for us to accept.

Because we want a disney prince who does all the right things, stops the villain, flashes his charming smile and saves the day.

You see, I know what the disney prince is gonna do, I can predict his actions. but Jesus- Jesus isn't like my disney Prince. Jesus the King, the Messiah, is definitely not what the world expected.

And he isn't what Pilate was expecting either.

And now the conversation in front of us is one that leaves us with more questions than answers. For Jesus doesn't just give Pilate the answers he wants, or try and say the right thing to get his butt out of trouble. No, Jesus does what he does best.

He challenges Pilate - he challenges us, our system of judgment, **our** system of power, **our** world's idea of dominion and **our** sense of truth. The back and forth between Pilate and Jesus is just fascinating.

Pilate asks 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."

It's a curious response. And it leaves me with questions like...what does it mean to belong to the truth and how do we hear Jesus' voice in the midst of so many other louder ones?

Because belonging to the truth isn't easy. It means going against what may be societal norms to treat people with dignity and respect.

Belonging to the truth means immersing yourself in Gods word so that you can tell the difference between Gods voice and satans.

Belonging to the truth means being vulnerable with God and sometimes having to sit in the uncomfortability of Gods time, and not necessarily our time.

*Belonging to the truth isn't always easy...but if you stick with me till the end of the sermon ill tell you why its worth it.*

Belonging to the truth isn't easy, Because the Loud voices are deafening. I mean sometimes I can't even hear my own voice loud enough to know what I think. It so easy to hear the other voices when Facebook tells me what everyone else's opinions are, Amazon shows me what I want and need and if I order now I can get it in 48 hours. Apple tells me that I need the next iphone- well just because.

The Loud voices are the ones that flood the headlines in the news, the ones that tell us we have to hate those across the political aisle, the loud voices tell us that we should be afraid of people just searching for a better life.

I don't know about you but The loud voices make it hard for me to hear my own voice. Let alone Jesus'

When we listen to the loudest voice in the room, we lose sight of the truth - the truth that **we** belong to.

Just because you're the loudest doesn't mean what you say is true...

*Can I get an Amen?!?*

Which Brings us back to - Truth.

What is Truth?

Truth is Jesus Christ.

Truth is the hope that Jesus offers us in his kingdom. The place we belong.

You see in Jesus's kingdom we are loved. All of us.

In Jesus's kingdom there is neither poor nor rich.

In Jesus's kingdom everything gets flipped upside....**right**.

I say upside Right because Jesus' kingdom is how it should be...

The truth of the matter is, we belong to Jesus's kingdom... now. Right now.

Not once we die, not once angels take us off to heaven someplace else. The kingdom of God is here and we have been shown the way through Jesus. Through listening to his voice and hearing the truth.

Last week in the Way pastor Bryon asked a question that has stuck with me. What is the Word of God?

He didn't say what is the bible, what are the words of God. He said word. And that comes down to just one word.

Love.

The Word of God is love, and if we look at ourselves, our actions and values, and what we do conflicts with the Word of God which is Love, then maybe we aren't quite in sync or in tune with What Jesus has been trying to teach us....and maybe **we all** just need to listen a little harder

*Now if you've stuck with me this long ---I'll tell you why belonging to the truth is worth it...*

Love changes everything.

Love allows us to hear less of the loud voices yelling at us, and more of the voices walking alongside with us encouraging us, supporting us, loving us.

the voice of Jesus is calling us to take after him and his commandments and flip the world upside right.

We live in this world - but we belong to love. This world that is full of death and destruction, but a world that is also full of Love. Because Jesus came down to show us the way, the truth, and the light. - its why he was born.

So when i think about what I love about my favorite disney movie its that Mulan didn't listen to the loud voices telling her what she can and can't do, didn't listen to the voices telling her that she couldn't change anything, didn't listen to the voices that told her she wasn't enough.

She listened to what she knew was true, and that Love, and the love she had deep within for her family. It changes everything. And then an unlikely woman, changed the fate of **her** world.

And when I think about what I love about Jesus as King. It is that every step Jesus didn't do what the people thought a messiah should do. And throughout his story he was challenged, questioned and crucified for being the king he knew we needed- the king we needed to turn the world upside right...because the Kingdom of God is here today.

As we end our Church year today with Christ the King, we prepare for the new church year next week with Advent and the preparation for a tiny little baby who will grow to be this king we didn't know we needed.

Who will show us how to love - who will testify to the truth and in doing so flip our world upside right.

And because we belong to love we too will join with him in the flipping.

Amen.