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Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, IL  
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Pentecost 2  
Saturday, June 18, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, June 19, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

# Truth and Power in the Cross of Christ

Isaiah 65:1-9

**Text:** Isaiah 65:1-9

**Focus:** The cross of Christ is the ultimate source of truth and power.

**Function:** That my hearers look for ultimate truth and power in the cross of Christ.

**Law:** In certain aspects of my hearers' lives, they may look elsewhere for truth and power. This leads to frustration.

**Gospel:** The cross of Christ for truth and power brings peace.

**Thesis:** When you look to the cross of Christ for truth and power, you will find peace.

**Title:** Truth and Power in the Cross of Christ

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

**When you look to the cross of Christ for truth and power, you find peace.**

1. In reflecting on that statement, here's the first thing to work through. **What is the relationship between truth and power?** *Sources of truth and power aren't logically connected.* For example, you could have a third-party candidate. He speaks truth all the time. But, if he doesn't get elected, he's not in any position of power. Or, vice-versa, let's say you have someone in a position of power. Say the president, the governor, or the mayor. But that person in power might lie. *On the other hand, it seems, on a psychological level, we often find that some things are sources of both truth and power.* For example, Google, science, and God. Google is very powerful in our society. You tell someone "I Googled it?" Boom. That's it. End of discussion. Or say you find something out using the scientific method. That's pretty powerful and authoritative to people. But as for God, truth and power find

a complete union in God. What God says is always true, and God is all-powerful. *In God, truth and power find perfect harmony. In fact, wherever your ultimate source of truth and power is, there's your god.*

2. In our text from Isaiah, God is calling out many people in Israel for finding their ultimate source of truth and power elsewhere. **In their case, they found truth and power in the culture around them.** *Many in Israel were not looking for power from God but were looking towards the idols of the culture around them.* Cults of the dead, deities of the underworld, worship of Ishtar. When Isaiah talks about sacrificing in gardens, sitting in tombs, spending the night in secret places, and eating pig's flesh, Isaiah's hearers know exactly what he's talking about. They do all this against the clear first commandment of the Lord – "You shall have no other gods." *Moreover, many in Israel were not looking for truth from God but were looking towards the idols of the culture around them.* Here was the view of those around Israel. You've got a realm of the gods – the divine activity. Then, you've got the realm of the visible and material – what we see around us. These combine to form our reality – where what the gods are doing up there is reflected in the world down here. Thus they saw the sun in the sky as the form in which the sun God Shamshu makes himself visible to us. But how did that match up with Israel's God? A God wholly separate from his creation who created all things? Not to be confused with his creation? Not at all. Many in Israel instead saw YHWH as part of this realm of gods, just like any other.
3. *(Transition)* Now, before I get carried away, there's something I want to make clear. **I'm not identifying you with the people of Israel.** You, the church, are different. You can be called on to repent. You aren't persisting in sin and idolatry, or what St. John calls, "The sin that leads to death." (1 John 5:16) I believe that you all do ultimately look to the cross of Christ for truth and power. When you sin, you repent, and look to the cross.
4. But, like Israel, you might be tempted to look elsewhere for ultimate truth and power. And here's what I mean by ultimate. Ultimate in the sense of holding to that source of truth and power even when it goes against Christ's teaching. **Among many other things, you might look to politics or science for ultimate truth and power.**

- a. Perhaps, you look for truth and power in a political party or candidate. You see the platform and politics of the Republican or Democratic party as completely true. And when you want change in society, the biggest place you look? Elections. But politics as the ultimate source of truth and power? As for truth, politicians go back on their words. Their ideologies don't match up with Christian teaching. As for power, there is some true power. But it's not ultimate power. The government really can't stop a virus. The government can't put an end to all injustice. **If we look to the government for ultimate power or truth, we despair and are frustrated.**
  - b. Perhaps, you look for truth and power in science. In the past centuries, science has been great for helping us to understand how the world around us works. It's a great source of truth. And it also has led to great technological advancements by giving us power over diseases. But science as an ultimate source of truth and power? As for truth, science is meant to have truths that can change. New paradigms develop. If you take something to be axiomatically true in science, that's bad science. Not to mention, there are some things that science, by its very nature, cannot explain. As for power, science has enabled us to put an end to many diseases. But it can't stop death. **If we look to science for ultimate power or truth, we despair and are frustrated.**
5. (*Transition*) To be sure, you can find truth and power in politics or science. But if you look at them as the ultimate source of truth and power, you will feel really frustrated if these things don't work out. Because they are flawed source of truth and power. That's why we look again and again to the cross of Christ as the ultimate source of truth and power.
6. The cross of Christ might not look like truth or power. As for truth, would you believe someone who claimed to be the Messiah and God and was killed? As for power, how powerful is a dead man on a cross. **But, in reality, the cross is the source of truth and power.** It is through the preaching of the cross, the preaching of the Word that people come to know the truth.

The truth who became flesh and dwelt among us. The power of the cross forgives you and me our sins. He has given peace to you and me.

7. **This truth and power of the cross of Christ was proved from His resurrection.** As for its truth, Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah, after dying, would prolong his days (Is 53:10). The twelve 12 disciples, 500 brothers, James, Jesus' brother, and St. Paul all bore witness to this (1 Cor. 15:5-8). As for its power, miracles went with the Gospel message throughout the world. The people who believe the Gospel, you and I, show the power of the Gospel in the peace that it has given to you and me.
8. Now, think about those areas of life where you're not looking as much to the cross of Christ for truth and power. Is your fundamental attitude toward government formed by Christ or politics? Is your fundamental view of the world formed by God's Word or science? If so, **look for truth and power in the cross of Christ.** In Christ is peace and truth. For our hearts are restless until we find rest in Him.
9. It's something I had to learn the hard way. When I was a freshman in college at St. Olaf. I was happy to read the Bible with my fellow classmates. But then, we were introduced to their dynamics of truth and power. They told us in our plenaries that the Bible had multiple creation accounts. That the doctrines and teachings of the Bible changed and developed over time. It was this through this development process that the Bible contradicted itself with different theologies. Their use of power, with their supposed truth, ruined people's faith. For me, my faith was in jeopardy. Fortunately, when your father is a pastor and university professor, he's able to guide you to some good resources. After lots of thinking things through, I continued looking to the cross of Christ for truth and power. I continued to acknowledge and confess Christ as the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). And I knew peace.

**And so, I invite you also to look to the cross of Christ as the ultimate source of truth and power. For we know peace when we look to him for truth and power.**

And now, may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.