

From the Desk of Miss Wilber

October 16, 2020

Throughout October we have been praying for the virtue of courage. Every morning I am struck by the words of our prayer and how true it is that I need to grow in this virtue. I expect I'm not alone in this. We all need courage to live each day well. It takes courage to be ourselves for fear that someone may tease us, not like us, disagree with us, or misunderstand us. It takes courage to work hard for fear that we may be criticized, that we may fail, or that even our best won't be enough. It takes courage to stand for what is right and true for fear that we may be standing alone or that the truth will demand too much from us.

It dawned on me that there is a significant connection between truth and courage. I think the story of Pontius Pilate provides a lot of food for thought in relation to this. The scene is this; the Jews have arrested Jesus and determined that he is a blasphemer, so they bring him to Pilate to have him crucified. Pilate finds no fault in Jesus and tries to avoid having him killed, but ultimately he does not have the courage to stand against the crowd of people crying out for Jesus to be crucified. He fears for his life and for his position in the Roman government. Here it is easy to see that Pilate lacked courage, but to see the connection to the truth we must take a deeper look.

In his deliberations, Pilate had questioned Jesus about whether he is a king. Jesus replies, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." To which Pilate responds, "What is truth?" This grammatically simple question has always struck me as extremely profound. As if Pilate is speaking on behalf of the whole world, speaking to what it is like to be caught up in the confusion of the world, so caught up that he can't even see clearly enough to know truth from falsehood, right from wrong, good from evil. Pilate is looking truth in the face and can't accept it.

Classical education first and foremost acknowledges the existence of "the truth" and then seeks to know and understand that truth for ourselves. We hope that our students will ask Pilate's question, "what is truth?", but with a genuine attitude unlike Pilate. We hope they will not remain in that state of question, confusion, and uncertainty that Pilate cannot break out of (at least not in the part of his story related in Scripture). We hope they will be able to recognize and accept the truth when it is before them and question those things that are contrary to the truth.

This is a huge benefit of our emphasis on logic, especially in the high school years. I have overheard the students discussing fallacies (illogical arguments) and how to unmask their own opinions. It takes courage (along with humility) to admit when we are wrong and change our thinking to what is true and right. I hope and pray regularly that our students will be able to do this and that we (their teachers) will be able to lead them to the freedom that knowledge of the truth brings.

Sincerely,
Miss Wilber

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'." – John 14:6