

Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” John 18:38



I'd like to share with you an exchange from the current TV drama MotherFatherSon. It is between the media mogul Max (Richard Gere) and the prospective Prime Minister (Sarah Lancashire):

RG 'I like my news to be right. To be correct.'

SL 'Right for who?'

'People who buy it, people who make it possible by watching it, **consuming** it. I make it work for them, not for me.'

'**A news channel that's always on your side, always your friend.** News that's never going to call you stupid, or criticise your faith or make you feel small; except our regulations won't allow it...'

'I parted ways with an editor of mine once...[the paper criticised the government sometimes, and praised it sometimes, Max said that was confusing]...which side are you on? He said, "**the side of truth**". **The truth is uneven, unpredictable.** That is not **the truth, it's a brand of truth, it's the brand elite intellectuals like to buy.** If we were selling to those folks it would be fine, but we weren't, we were selling to **people who wanted certainty, continuity, they wanted to know who their enemies were. They wanted to pick up the paper and feel comfortable.**'

'What did he [the editor] say?'

'He said that sounded like propaganda.'

Is news something we 'consume'? Shouldn't it be factual? What about 'Good News'? Are we 'elite intellectuals'? Are we Guardian readers or Daily Mail readers? Channel 4 or BBC? Do we want 'certainty' in our news and from the Bible, from our church services?

We won't get it.

Do we want to pick up the paper or the Bible and 'feel comfortable'?

I don't think we should. I think we should feel very uncomfortable.

'Once people stop trusting systems of representation in general and especially in the political system, they become less interest in what counts as 'true' and what as 'false'. Liars can become tolerated or even admired...'

'In Britain, 90% of people trust the Office of National Statistics, but only 26% trust the government to use and represent statistics in an honest fashion.' (Nervous States How Feeling Took Over the World by William Davies, 2018)

Pilate asked, "What is truth?"

John's Gospel does not record Jesus' answer to Pilate's question, only what he said to cause the question: '...for this I came into the world, **to testify to the truth.** Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'