

22nd July 2018

The Spirit of the House - Part 5

Recap: we have been talking about the spirit of the house. What defines the house of God and what are its values? We have followed Jesus in his dialogues with the religious leaders of the time. Jesus confronted them because although they were in the house, they did not have the spirit of the house.

We have discovered 6 things that define the spirit of the house and several of the values of the house. Last week we spoke about mercy. Today we are going to speak about truth.

Opening Scriptures: John 8:25, 30-36, 39-46

1. Truth is a central topic in the teachings of Jesus

John 14:6 - ... *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Jesus spoke much about the truth, the real truth, the kind of truth that His house should be about. In fact, the subject of truth is central in the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is not only the Gospel of Love (as it is known) but it is also the Gospel of Truth. In 21 chapters, truth is mentioned 24 times!

John 1:14, 16-17 ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. **16-17** - And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

The subject of truth is also central in the other epistles of John:

2 John 1:3-4 - ³ *Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.*

3 John 1:3-4 - *For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

2. What is the truth?

John 18:17-38 - ³⁷ *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸ *Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.**

What is truth? – What a shame that Pilate didn't stay for the answer to that question. Jesus came to bear witness of the truth: in other words, to precisely bring the answer that crucial question.

A post-modern author said, 'truth is no longer important'. But then why then do so many look for it? We live in world that is heading in the opposite direction of truth and it is clearly not working for them.

There is even a deliberate attack on absolute truth but where can people find true freedom outside the truth? Absolute truth, like a lighthouse, stands solid, immovable and unyielding like a guiding light.

Regardless of what Pilate thought, the beaten and bruised Jesus was indeed "*the way the truth and the life*".

3. The house of God is the 'pillar of truth'

1 Timothy 3:14-15 - *14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

The house of God is the pillar and ground (foundation) of the truth.

What a definition of what the church is in this world! A pillar of truth.

A pillar: to Timothy of anyone in the first century, this would mean something like an Egyptian obelisk or a Roman column – a vertical structure (normally round) with carved inscriptions to be read and seen by all.

What Paul is saying is that the Church is to bear the truth carved in stone to be read by all man. It is a truth 'set in stone' for all times, unchanging and always relevant. It is not 'relative' truth but absolute truth (a truth that is not absolute is obsolete).

Our post-modern world believes that the only absolute is that there are no absolutes and that all truth is relative to the individual, it is subjective – not fixed to any particular standard ("if it feels good do it").

Can you imagine how crazy the world would be if everything was relative to the individual?

There wouldn't be a justice system, speed limits were relative to how you felt on the day, stop signs were merely optional and the definition of good or evil would be irrelevant.

Isaiah 5:20 - *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

Last month, an article in a well-known magazine had this title: "*It is 2018 and shame is dead*". Values are in a state of flux, but truth doesn't change. We can't change truth, truth changes us.

Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will and character of God.

- A pillar was an elevated round structure – a reference point, a standard. In a changing world, with changing values, God wants His church to be that ‘standard’, that ‘reference point’ – somewhere where people that have lost their way (and are probably confused) can come and find truth and life.

Shane Idleman, a book author, wrote that our world “*has been desensitized one generation at a time, one compromise at a time and we are drowning in a poll of relativism*”.

- Jesus always referred to the church as an elevated place where truth should be on display for all to see

Matthew 5:14: “*You are the light of the world [like a beacon in the night]. A city that is set on a hill [elevated, and visible] cannot be hidden.*”

Philippians 2:15 - *that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*

Conclusion

God calls us, His house, to be bearers of the truth, to be a reference, a standard, a bastion of the truth in a world unsure of direction, lost in the fog of its ideas and philosophies. God calls us to be uncompromising in changing times, a lighthouse of absolute truth, showing the way to those in darkness. That is the spirit of this House.