

Real Truth

We have recently done a teaching series about ‘Real Church’, last week we spoke about “Real Gospel” and today, we are going to talk about “Real Truth”.

Opening Text: John 18:36-38

*36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” 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.*

“Truth?” – talk about a conversation-stopper! The dialogue between Jesus and Pilate ended right there, as Jesus mentioned that He had come to “*bear witness of the truth*”. Although Pilate didn’t see anything objectively wrong with Jesus (he found no fault with Him), he didn’t see the point of such discussion about the truth.

1. **What is truth?** – exactly like today, ‘truth’ in those days had no fixed standard.

The Roman empire extended far and wide over so many lands and countries – each with their own religions and worldviews. If anything, for the purpose of keeping the *pax romana* (Roman peace), tolerance and accepting truth as relative was of greater value than affirming any one ‘truth’

Romans had pluralistic religious views. Much like today, in our post-modern world, truth was seen then as relative, subjective, and personal.

Truth was not ‘absolute’. Greek philosophy was all about that. Fredrick Nietzsche, at the end of the 19th century, amplified that same message and it is still shaping how many think today.

2. Pilate asked the question but didn’t wait for the answer

Up until that final statement of Jesus regarding truth, Pilate kept the conversation going. However, Jesus’ claim to absolute truth was ‘uncool’ and too narrow-minded for someone ‘civilised’ and cultured like this Roman governor. The claim of Jesus regarding truth seemed so out of touch with the current thought of the day, arrogant even. Pilate didn’t wait for the answer.

However, by nature truth is ‘narrow’. Is a math teacher narrow-minded for holding to the belief that $2+2$ only equals 4? Is he arrogant for stating such fact? Is he wrong for excluding all answers other than 4? So, yes truth is narrow and excludes the opposite of truth, which is error.

3. Why is truth important?

Why is it so important to embrace the concept of absolute truth in all areas of life? Simply because life has consequences for being wrong:

- Giving someone the wrong medication could kill them
- Making a wrong financial decision can lead to losses
- Boarding the wrong plane can take you to an unintended destination
- **And nowhere are the consequences more important than when it comes to faith and eternal things: eternity is an awfully long time to be wrong.**

All through the inspired writings of John in the New Testament there is such a strong emphasis on truth:

John 8:32 - *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

John 8:44 - *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

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

John 16:13 - *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

1 John 4:6 - *We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*

2 John 1:4 - *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 - *For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.*

Since the New Testament puts such an emphasis on truth, we should walk in the truth and never be compromising.

Truth should permeate our whole worldview. It should dictate where we stand when it comes to many of the current issues being debated in our society today.

4. I believe that one of the toughest battles we are facing in these end times is the battle for truth.

I would like to recommend that you read the first and second chapters of the letter of Paul to the Romans, in your own time. For the sake of time today, let us just read

Romans 1:16-18 - *16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness,*

(“Supress the truth” – another translation: “hinder the truth”).

V.25^a - *who exchanged the truth of God for the lie...*

V.28 - *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a **debased mind**, to do those things which are not fitting;*

(*Debased mind* – a mind that is incapable of moral or ethical discernment)

In the world that we are living in, we see an increased inability to discern between truth and lie, right or wrong, good or evil. We see the goal posts of what is acceptable changing all the time and increased resistance to any fixed truth or absolutes.

Can you imagine a world without rule and absolutes? Imagine highways without guardrails, intersections without stop signs, speed limits lifted to what one feels acceptable.

Roughly 100,000 flights take off and land every day all over the globe. Can you imagine banning air-traffic controllers and allowing each plane to fly at any altitude they wish, choosing whatever route they want, without any co-ordination?

Does the word chaotic come to mind? Precisely!

The Bible does say that in the last days lawlessness will abound (Matthew 24:12). There will be a noticeable resistance, rejection even, of any fixed rules or absolute truth.

The greatest battle ahead for us will be about truth.

5. Real church and Real truth

The assignment for the real church in these last days is to stay uncompromisingly faithful to the truth and to be stewards of the truth to a world who lost their way.

1 Timothy 3:15 - *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.***

Passion translation: “*the supporting pillar and firm foundation of the truth*”

The word ‘pillar’ in the Greek conveys the idea of strength the stability and authority.

Our job as the real church is to be that visible and unchanging pillar so people can find their way to the truth – and the Truth is a person, it is Jesus!

Conclusion

What is truth? – The Roman governor had the answer to his question right before him. A short time before His arrest, Jesus had declared “*I am the way the truth and the Life*”. What a moment. Pilate could have acknowledged the moment and the opportunity that was set before him. He could have chosen to hear what Jesus had to say. He could have made a decision that would have changed his life forever.

At the end of time, one day, Pilate will see Jesus again. **Revelation 1:7** says that “*every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him*”. Pilate will once again look into the eyes of Jesus. He will regret the decision he never made, the time he never gave so Jesus could give him the answer.

We will all stand before Jesus one day. May everyone here today seize this moment and decide to allow Jesus to come into their lives. This is the one decision we cannot get wrong, after all **eternity is an awfully long time to be wrong.**