

Sermon - Sunday 13th December 2020

Reading - John 14:1-14

Theme: Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Subject: Jesus is the Truth

Key Sentence: 3 Ways to live out the Truth

1. Watch over the tongue - Jas 3:6; Proverbs 19:9; Truth in Love
Ephesians 4:15

2. God is Sovereign and the source of all truth - Jn 17:17; Ephesians
1:13; Titus 1:2

3. Study & Know the Truth - Jn 8:32; 14:6; 1:9; 6:32; 15:1

WELCOME

In a court room, we might hear the words,

"I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

But what is truth? Where do we start?

The English dictionary states that Truth is
the true or actual state of a matter:
eg. He tried to find out the truth.

a verified or indisputable fact, proposition, principle, or the
like:
eg. mathematical truths.

But truth, and its definitions, is more than that.

We as human beings are brought up from infancy to 'tell the truth' and
should we not tell the truth there are consequences, and I guess we all
know that from first hand experience.

Telling the truth is a moral expectation.

God, the sovereign creator, gave us the Ten Commandments, of which number
nine states that we should not give false testimony, or basically lie.
These commandments portray a life lived that is pleasing to Him.

A pastor had a very busy program and so decided to take the Sunday off and go and play golf. So he contacted his elders and told them he had been invited to preach in a neighbouring city and he would be away Sunday and therefore could someone to take his place.

The following Sunday came and the pastor was about to take his first swing, two angels were watching. The first angel spoke to the second, "Watch this. I'll teach him a lesson." The pastor swung and his first shot was a hole in one. Then he lined up again and again and each time got a hole in one. After a while the second angel could not contain himself any longer. "What's going on?" he said. "I thought you were going to teach him a lesson!" The first angel smiled and said, "Think about it. He's never had a hole in one in his life before and now he's got all these. Who can he tell?"

God established the truth, revealed His truth in creation BUT more specifically in His Word - the Word of truth. Have a read of Psalm 19 at some point.

The apostle John writes (1 John 1:5)

'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.'

This 'light' of God conveys the moral qualities of truth, integrity and righteousness. Not only is God the true and living God - as opposed to the false gods of this world - He also knows all things as they truly are. In other words He is not misguided or confused but rather has an accurate and complete knowledge of all things.

This God of truth cause us to love the truth, delight in the truth, speak the truth, and walk in the truth.

So where did it all go wrong? Well it is quite simple, yet the consequences are devastating. Genesis 3: 1- 8

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

The devil's greatest weapon has always been lying propaganda. He is the father of lies (John 8:44). As we have read, it started in the Garden of Eden. He lied to man about his hazardous position as a sinner. Genesis 3:4 "You will not certainly die," implying you're OK, there's nothing to worry about, there is not an issue with eating the fruit from the tree.

The devil also lied about God's motive for prohibiting the eating of the tree's fruit.

For God knows that when you eat from it (the tree) your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

He, the Devil, flattered man and maligned God. The tragedy is that man believed the lie and acted upon it. We now live with the consequences of the Fall.

Throughout the ages the organised church has held the monopoly on Truth.

At the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century there was a movement called **Modernism**. The movement was formed out of a rebellious mood, it advocated a radical approach that wanted to revitalise the way modern civilisation viewed life, art, politics, and science.

It was a movement towards modifying traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas, especially in the Roman Catholic Church.

The truth within all of this is that man wanted to believe that he didn't need God any more, searching for an abstract truth. This movement soon became the post-modernism movement where thinkers believe that there is no universal truth, abstract or otherwise. Man can see truth how he wants to see it. Humanity moved from an absolute truth - the Truth - God's truth - to a relative truth - which is no truth at all.

So how does the world treat truth? Well, the truth is whatever the individual wants it to be and naturally this leads to all kinds of problems and difficulties.

We are living in unprecedented times where the truth - absolute truth - God's truth - is maligned and completely disregarded. Here are some examples that are hitting the headlines.

The theory of evolution, is taken as fact today and it is because those who promote it want to explain how we got here without God. Obviously we haven't got time to go into any detail - but there are resources from Creation Ministries that will challenge the world view and are worth reading. And Genesis 1:1 - *'In the beginning God...'*

It is argued that life does not begin at conception and therefore abortion is acceptable. There is a wealth of information that argues different dates but where does life come from? The Psalmist tells us,'

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Ps 139:13

The claim that marriage is outdated and because God is taken out of the picture - the ordained way is not the only way. So we now have same sex marriages and even having them celebrated in churches. Even the Pope and the Catholic church are looking at ways to allow them to happen.

Genesis again gives us guidance...

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Gen 2:24)

Gender has now become fluid, it no longer binary - man and woman. I can be what I want to be and the lie of transgenderism is rife in our schools and elsewhere in society - surprise, surprise Genesis is clear ...

'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Gen 1:27)

There are other lies that are being peddled out there. Assisted-suicide or euthanasia for example and the internet is full of other perversions. Even now we have legislation being driven through the courts to make freedom of speech a hate crime. It would make anything that was said here from this pulpit - a crime.

To tell you the truth, I'm glad I'm not growing up now or having to bring children up. Children and young people, in particular, are being targeted, in schools, in universities, on TV, on Social media, in magazines. We need to pray earnestly for our young people and make sure we show them the truth. Show them Jesus.

Many will say 'we don't know where to find the truth.' Google search, social media or wikipedia will not give you the answer you are looking for.

The truth is being preached in many churches up and down the country and across the world but people are failing to recognise the truth. It is probably easier to discern truth from error but how do you deal with half truths, distorted truth and partially erased truth?

There have been many efforts to 'save' Christianity over the years by trying to harmonise or align it with secular cultures, mindset and morals. The ecumenical movement has brought church groups together but to what end? The truth has been and is being diluted to the lowest common denominator.

The Bible has been reinterpreted to make it more palatable, so that it doesn't offend. And how easy is it to offend someone today!

If this continues we will have no grounds to offer a counter-culture or a voice to proclaim the truth. God's truth.

All other World Religions want their followers to follow their truth - a truth. Only Christianity seeks to bring THE Truth to a fallen world.

Only those who despise the truth seek to avoid it, reinterpret it, or fail to speak it. We, as Christians, are to speak truth in love.
(Ephesians 4:15)

So how do we live out the truth? How do I continue to speak the truth? I'm going to suggest three biblical ways to help us live a life that is true.

Firstly - Keep a close eye over the sins of the tongue they have a tendency to spread like wildfire. False speech are the sins of gossip, slander, lying, bearing false witness. They should have no place on our lips. These sins like many others grieve the heart of God - but they can also cause great harm to our neighbours. Have you ever noticed that when you squeeze the toothpaste onto your brush and you over do it, you can never get in back into the tube!

Our words often come out too fast, without thought, and once said there is no going back. James 3:5-6 states ...

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.'

The ninth commandment tells us basically not to tell lies. Proverbs 19:9 reinforces that...

'A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish.'

The consequence of lying (white lies are still lies) is a bit like the little Dutch boy who saves the village from being destroyed by sticking his finger in the hole in the side of the dyke. Little lies, become bigger and more complicated as time goes on. The Little Dutch boy stopped the leak early on before it had time to grow out of control.

We are to speak truth in love - however hard it might seem. (Eph 4:15)

Secondly, we should, no we must, acknowledge, that God is Sovereign and the source of all truth. Therefore we can trust Him in all things. He is reliable and His promises cannot fail.

His Word, which is infallible, incapable of being wrong and true gives us a solid foundation to a coherent and consistent worldview that gives hope and elicits trust while living in an unstable world.

Jesus in his High Priestly prayer in John's gospel prays that God would...
*Sanctify them by **the truth**; your word **is truth**.* (John 17:17).

Paul writes to the Ephesians

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the **message of truth**, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,*
(Ephesians 1:13)

And in Paul's letter to Titus, his introduction says...

*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their **knowledge of the truth** that leads to godliness - in the hope of eternal life, which God, **who does not lie**, promised before the beginning of time.* (Titus 1:2)

Thirdly, study & know the Truth.

It is essential Christians old and young spend time studying the scriptures. The written Word of Truth. We all need to cultivate a deeper knowledge of Jesus and His truth - the truth. Meditate on the truth day and night. Hide it in our hearts so that we might not sin.

The Psalmist says in Psalm 1...

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)

Again in Paul's letter to the Colossians

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. (Colossians 3:16)

Jesus said clearly again in John's gospel

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
John 8:32;

Jesus' declaration,

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, No one comes to the Father except through me.

May not be a popular message for many, but it is the word of God, and it must be maintained and upheld, for it is the hope of our salvation.

If you are seeking the truth, the truth that is God - all I can say is come to Jesus. His promises are true and everlasting.

If you are unsure here are 4 truths:

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Finally, may we love, speak and walk in God's truth - so that we may glorify God and enjoy Him forever.