

Truth

By Dennis Cornish

(which includes a compendium of other's inspirational thoughts)

Jesus taught that He is “*the way, the truth, and the life*, (John 14:6).” In this same passage He also taught that: “*no one comes to the Father except through Him*.” Ephesians 4:21b tells us explicitly that: “*the truth is in Jesus*,” and if we as Christians believe upon Him, and the veracity of His teachings, it is imperative that we take His word to be true, and we must boldly contend for the faith which includes the fact that He is the only way that one can be saved. Jesus is the truth and when we begin to know the truth, we will find that “*the truth will set us free*, (John 8:32).” Jesus also said, when brought before Pilate: “*I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth*, (John 18:37).”

Truth, by definition, must remain consistently singular in its nature and therefore there can be no duplicity in how it is defined. There is only one truth, and antithetically there is the falsehood that is bandied about today that it is possible that what is true for me is not true for someone else who is somehow adamant that they possess a different truth about the same fact that is being asserted. One of us is obviously wrong because truth is not malleable, it is absolute and it must stand alone as a fact of reality and it cannot be shaped, twisted, or otherwise distorted to fit one's personal ideology or world view. Reality must be grounded in absolutes, because without absolutes, truth becomes subjective, relative, and pragmatic. Without absolutes, the construct of “truth collapses into nothing more than simply a personal or cultural preference without any supportable basis or factual meaning and we are left with a vague, obscure concept, open to one's own personal interpretation of what truth is.”¹ “Without God in their lives, those who remain reprobate, when confronted with God's truth their reaction is not to embrace it

¹ Paraphrased from an article by Dustin Bengé in *Tabletalk Magazine* (Sanford, FL, Ligonier Ministries, Inc., November 2020)

joyfully but to dismiss it cynically. It is convenient to deny even the possibility of knowing any such thing as a universally binding absolute truth.”²

B.B. Warfield staunchly believed that Christianity is established upon a foundation of truth, and that truth is found in God’s revealed Word, the Holy Bible. He also was adamant that, without confidence in biblical truth and a firm commitment to the authority of the Bible, the Christian experience is reduced to one without substance or, in the case of rationalism, to an absolute rejection of supernaturally revealed truths. He recognized that the threat presented by modernism, theological liberalism, and rationalism would soon become dominant in American intellectual life in what has become known as “the post-truth era,” a term which was coined by Ralph Keyes.³ Warfield also firmly believed that the church was endangered more by subversion from within than from outside attacks. He refused to allow theological liberals and revisionists to redefine Christianity itself.

In whatever manner we choose to evangelize to an unbelieving world, pray that we as Christians remain captive by the truth of God’s Word and that we do not fall into the trap of Satan’s cunning deception. We are to set ourselves apart from the lies of the world, but with an assurance of our own salvation combined with grace, love, and confidence, we are to proclaim the truth of God’s Word to an increasingly hostile and unbelieving humanity.

Truth has been defined as that which conforms with fact or reality. It is comprised of a level of authenticity that legitimately supports an actuality of genuineness. In a word, truth is reality, it is how things really are. Theologically, truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God. “Truth is the self-disclosure of God Himself. It is what it is because God not only declares it to be so, but that He made it so. Therefore, all truth must be defined in terms of God, whose very nature is truth.”⁴

² Paraphrased from an article by David Strain in *Tabletalk Magazine* (Sanford, FL, Ligonier Ministries, Inc., December 26, 2020)

³ Ralph Keyes is a well-respected author, speaker, and teacher known for his insights into social behavior, language, and the writing process.

⁴ Paraphrased from an article in *Tabletalk Magazine* (Sanford, FL, Ligonier Ministries, Inc., March 30, 2019)

In order to live well as God's people in the world, we must understand things as they truly are.

In his book, "High Kingdom of Heaven," John MacArthur has this to say about the fall and fallen man's inability to recognize the truths of God is "*because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...* (Romans 1:25)." Every idol of the heart is the result of a lie that the mind has embraced. As a result of this embrace, man has become a slave to his own value system, which he built based on a distorted view of reality. Therefore, we do not see things the way they are, but the way we are."

We can never allow a warped sense of reality to govern our perception of truth, and this can be accomplished by the overarching Christian unity that we possess which has been firmly established on the foundation of trust and assured confidence that we have in God Himself. That being true, we must always keep in mind that the unchanging purity of God's truth can never be sacrificed for the sake of a superficial and merely outward show of unity, there can be no hint of compromise between the truth of God's Word and a daily practice of only partially living out our convictions so that we might appease and somehow harmonize with someone else's skewed belief system instead of standing firmly upon the historical and Biblically authoritative credence of our faith. It is imperative that we not metamorphize our personal or corporate faith only to find that it becomes indistinguishable, and therefore more palatable, with a culturally acceptable world view. For there to be a true unity, it must be first and foremost based upon truth which can only be found in the only trustworthy guide for our faith and our life, namely Scripture and Scripture alone. Martin Luther, when he was interrogated before the Diet of Worms in 1521, displayed the courage of his convictions as they were directly opposed to those held by the entire Roman Catholic church. In his statement before them he remained steadfast in his insistence that the Word of God is the ultimate and only infallible authority for all of faith and life. He stood on the truth of Scripture as opposed to the Pope and the churches position which superimposed the churches authority over Scripture which in effect usurped God's sovereign authority.

Real unity can only exist where truth reigns supreme and when it does, it will glorify God to the utmost. Sixty-six times in the New Testament the gospel is identified simply as “*the truth*” with the definite article ‘*the*’ pointing to the fact that the gospel is the one and only truth. Paul, at the conclusion of 1 Timothy 6, in his concern about the false teachers, exhorts Timothy to remain steadfast in his teachings and “*to guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.*”

Jesus always spoke the truth and so should we. The truth is always good — even when it is sometimes uncomfortable to discover or tell the truth, the result of doing so leads to an increased righteousness and trust; falsehood, no matter how tenaciously we cling to it, will finally ravage us and those who are close to us. A rightly perceived truth broadens our awareness of its ultimate goodness. That being said, the process of our growth through sanctification always requires the requisite time to discover, through the Holy Spirit’s guiding, what is true because it is often obscured by superficial teachings and the deceitful agendas that surround us in our daily lives whether it be in the realm of religion, politics, social, or other issues, that can shape our understanding of what we believe to be true.

Just because something is commonly accepted as “fact” does not make it true. For instance, what is considered morally acceptable by society does not make it ethical. The two words are not synonymous. Morality in today’s world is governed by that which is defined by societal norms, and it is comprised of a particular system of values and principles of conduct, especially those held and accepted as conventional, they are behaviors which the world has commonly established as typical and therefore normal. In this world view, which is based upon self-deception, truth can no longer be seen as being objective. Morality is no longer constrained by Christian ethics; it is no longer tested by the truth found in God’s word and because of this, no one without God’s guidance, can make a proper assessment of the true morality of any given thought or deed. It is imperative that Christians refrain from the world’s moral standards and cling to God’s Word to establish our criteria for what is good and therefore permissible in the eyes of our righteous God.

Ethics, specifically Christian ethics, is comprised of the principles that guide our behavior toward making the best choices that contribute to the common good of all. Ethics is what guides us to tell the truth, keep our promises, or help someone who is in need. Christian ethics can be found throughout the Bible, and the teachings as presented should be the basis that we use for all the moral decisions and the subsequent actions that we take. Truth should always be grounded in the wisdom and knowledge that we glean from Scripture as we grow in the knowledge of God and His precepts through the process of sanctification and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We as Christians are “to regularly sit under the Word of God, privately and corporately, for *“the sum of [God’s] word is truth”* (Psalms 119:160). Only the Lord speaks the truth (Isaiah 45:19); and it is to Him we must come if we want to hear it.”⁵

As Christians we do not have to walk alone, we have churches and faithful Pastors who preach the unadulterated Word of God each week from the pulpit. We have Holy Scripture for personal study, and most importantly, if we are in Christ, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide and comfort us as we navigate through the trials of life. In addition, we either have, or can develop a strong prayer life which enables us to grow in our personal relationship with our Lord and Savior. Furthermore, we have the opportunity to be in regular fellowship with other believers as iron sharpens iron. Our fellowship opportunities are not limited to a Sunday sermon; we also have small groups that regularly meet to discuss the weekly sermons that we hear from the pulpit each Sunday morning. We have men and women’s Bible studies throughout the week, prayer meetings, as well as access to the many directors, Elders, and other mature Christians that we can count on for sound Biblical guidance. The commonality in all these resources is that they are all wrapped in and by the golden thread of God’s truth. He has invited you to *“taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him, (Psalm 34:8)!”* I urge you to abide in Christ, live for Him in obedience to the truth that He is.

⁵ Paraphrased from an article in *Tabletalk Magazine* (Sanford, FL, Ligonier Ministries, Inc., March 30, 2019).