

TRUTH: Think about it

By

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“Whatsoever things are true ... think on these things.” – Phil. 4:8.

That the Lord Yahweh intended to have fellowship with man through the understanding of truth in the mind is clearly seen in the second commandment: “Thou shall make unto thee no graven image” (Ex. 20:4).

The commands says that we should not fix our eyes or thoughts on an image, but that we should focus our minds on God Himself, and exercise, not our eyes, but our brains in a mind-to-mind fellowship with Him. Jesus said that we are to worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23).

On trial before Pilate, Jesus said, “I acme to bear witness to the truth.” Pilate asked, “What is truth?” His question was not meant to evoke an answer. Rather, it was meant to be a statement: Don’t tell us that you know the truth. There is no truth; all is relative. (John 18:37-38)

Pilate would be politically correct for our generation, which fits the description Isaiah gave for his own nation: “Justice is turned away backward, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street” (Isa. 59:14). Conventional standards that hadn’t changed in centuries are vanishing into oblivion. That which was unthinkable a generation ago has become commonplace. The rejection of truth now permeates all of society – the schools, the arts, the media, the government, and even the church. Where once the church stood as the “pillar and ground of the truth” it now stands for tolerance and love is looked upon as the whole of Christianity. It says, “Don’t give us a prophet in the pulpit. Don’t disturb us with truth, just make us feel good.” Faith is not based on fact, but on emotion. The modern preacher is judged by his audience on the basis of how well he performs before them, but before God he is judged as to how well he tells the truth.

Truth is the means by which we know God, His purpose, and his plan for us. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). The truth of which he came to bear witness reveals the way to have fellowship with God, and ultimately the way to have life. All who love God have a corresponding love of the truth. The reverse is equally true: those who despise God have a hatred for truth. Truth has always been unwelcome to evil.

For this reason Paul writes that those who are deceived by Satan will “perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). These are sobering words, and explain why there is such division and confusion in the churches today, as Paul goes on to say, “For this cause God sends them a working of error, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth...” (vs. 11-12).

Here the apostle pinpoints the factor that divides the lost and the saved: the lover of truth may believe and be saved; those who have no love of truth will believe lies and be lost.

He concludes “that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (vs. 12). Our blessed Lord explained the connection between sin and unbelief when he said, “Everyone that does evil hates the light” (John 3:20). There is a direct connection between the raging immorality now extant and the rejection of truth. The generation that rejected Christ was “and evil and adulterous generation” similar to ours. (Matt. 12:39; 16:4)

“On this, then, the scriptures are clear, that one of the greatest causes, perhaps one of the most important of all causes for unbelief, is the determination of men to continue in sin” (Wilbur Smith, in *Therefore Stand*, pg. 166).

The love of truth is a mark of commitment to Christ. Paul wrote that love “rejoices in the truth” (I Cor. 13:6). His desire for the Christians at Ephesus was that they not be subject to the “wiles of error,” but that they might grow up in Christ “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:14-15).

The basic difference between the Christian faith and the religions of the world is that the Christian faith has been given through realities of history, while world religions have been invented by men, based upon their own subjective experiences. The death and resurrection of Jesus were events witnessed by people who had no thought of inventing a religion. They simply reported the truth as they witnessed it, not how they felt about it. No one can re-experience these things; they are history. They are true.

The great tragedy in our day is that churches have shifted from objective truth to subjective feelings. The question is no longer “What do you *think* about this?” but “How do you *feel* about it?” Feeling is substituted for thinking. Hymns that contain great statements of truth have been abandoned and in their place are “praise choruses” that can be repeated over and over with little thought. The worship format, including the sermon, is designed to excite emotions, not to stimulate the mind. Preaching is valued on the charisma of the preacher, not on the truth he proclaims. Churches offer excitement through physical activities and ignore the exercise of the mind through searching for truth. People are carried away by prophetic signs, which have no basis in truth. They forget what was said of John the Baptist. “John indeed did no signs; but all things whatsoever John spoke of (Jesus) were true” (John 10:41). It is truth, believed and acted upon, that brings man into fellowship with his Creator.

Truth is essential to success in all facets of life. Where truth is suppressed, freedom and prosperity will soon die. To build on false conceptions is to build on sand. Yet, in our present society there is a determined effort to deny or at least hide the truth. Government agendas are kept secret. School textbooks are filled with misinformation, and the unscientific theory of evolution is enforced while any study of creation is denied. History is grossly distorted in TV programs, and the news is either biased or falsely reported by failing to tell the whole truth.

What we are witnessing today is a universal denial of God. There is hardly any person of national, political, or social prestige today who dares to affirm what Jesus claimed: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6, cf.

Luke 10:16). Instead, there is almost unanimous consent that all religions must be acknowledged as “equal.”

With this the accepted view, there must be a denial of truth, for if truth exists, there can be no equality between the tenets of religions that diametrically oppose each other. If Judaism is truth, then Christ is wrong, and if Christ is true, then Judaism is false. Man denies this logical fact by denying the existence of absolute truth.

Nowhere is truth more vital than in the area of faith. In a hospital waiting room a woman once said to me, “It doesn’t matter what you have faith in, but you must have faith in something.” This inane view is now championed in the name of plurality and tolerance, which says all religions are equal, and that those who hold to Christ as the only way of salvation are bigoted and narrow-minded.

When Jesus commanded, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” He was demanding a complete conversion of both mind and life, based upon certain truths that He revealed. Before Peter told his Pentecost audience to repent, he first explained basic truths regarding Jesus, his death and resurrection, and the fact that He is now both Lord and Messiah. The same process is recorded throughout the book of Acts: truth was pronounced, and then the believer was commanded to act upon it. Nothing was done to create an emotional setting, not even an invitational hymn. Emotions were stirred as the result of the great truths heard and believed.

On the night before his death, Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying, “Sanctify them in the truth: they word is truth” (John 17:17). Such sanctification can come only as one becomes familiar with the word of God, which Jesus said is the truth. Sanctification also requires that one act upon the truth. Jesus said that not only are we to hear his words, but we are to do them – obey them (Matt. 7:24). The apostle John addressed the Christians as those who “walk in truth,” and who are “fellow workers in truth” (# John 1:8).

Truth is to be embraced by the mind, with each facet in its proper place to be understood. This requires a certain amount of concentration, a focusing on each thought in order that the whole can be made to fit together in a rational and logical way.

Such concentration is rare in today’s society, where sports and entertainment fill almost every minute not devoted to essential work. If we are to get back to the place where truth is known, some things of the world will have to be abandoned. Truth is still available to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who search the scriptures with a mind to learn. Then we must dare to challenge the errors and lies that abound, knowing that when we stand for truth and right we have God on our side.

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

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