

A Biblical Worldview

Truth Devotion

8/31-9/4

The Side of Truth (Day 1)

Scripture Reading — John 18:36-40

³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’”

⁴⁰ They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

“Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” — John 18:37

Jesus’ statement here about truth is in line with everything he has taught. Jesus stands before Pilate “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). He is the bread of life; the living water; the way, the truth, and the life; the only way to know God the Father (John 6:35; 7:38; 14:6).

As he stands before this Roman governor, Jesus offers Pilate the chance to experience the truth and enter into a relationship with him—like one of his disciples.

But doing that would be very costly for Pilate. If Pilate were to accept what Jesus has to say, he would have to make the truth more important than Rome. Or political power. Or wealth. If Pilate accepted Jesus’ claims and set Jesus free, he would be throwing away his credibility with the Jews, if not his entire career.

In this book John has been helping us to understand that all we possess on this earth—all our power, influence, and wealth—pales in comparison to the truth of Jesus. The offer Jesus extends is the chance to experience life with God the way we are created to live it. *Nothing* is more important than that.

Sadly, Pilate rejects Jesus’ offer.

What about you?

What might you need to let go of in order to embrace the truth of Jesus?

The Clarity of God's Word (Day 2)

Scripture Reading — Psalm 119:97-105

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⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law!

I meditate on it all day long.

⁹⁸ Your commands are always with me

and make me wiser than my enemies.

⁹⁹ I have more insight than all my teachers,

for I meditate on your statutes.

¹⁰⁰ I have more understanding than the elders,

for I obey your precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have kept my feet from every evil path

so that I might obey your word.

¹⁰² I have not departed from your laws,

for you yourself have taught me.

¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste,

sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ I gain understanding from your precepts;

therefore I hate every wrong path.

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¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet,

a light on my path.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. — Psalm 119:105

After explaining something carefully to you, has someone ever asked, “Now, is that as clear as mud?” One wrinkle in the teaching of *Scripture alone* is the clarity and comprehensibility of the Bible’s meaning for human readers.

The Reformers believed that the church of their day had wrongly guarded Scripture by forbidding that it be translated into the common languages of the people and by claiming that only the clergy could interpret its true meaning. Starting with Martin Luther, the Reformers taught that God’s salvation plan in the Bible is clear to ordinary readers who put aside their own biases and depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps not everything in Scripture is perfectly clear, but the Bible is clear enough to give guidance for faith and life.

Today’s verse in Psalm 119 calls God’s Word a lamp for our feet and a light on our path. If you have the time, read all of Psalm 119. Using the Hebrew alphabet, this psalm lists from “A to Z” the weight, value, and clarity of God’s Word.

Although you may not understand everything you read in the Bible, if you put aside your biases and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and understanding, God’s Word will speak clearly to your heart. Then give thanks for his Word and put it into practice to please and serve him, today and every day.

The Power of the Truth (Day 3)

Scripture Reading — Acts 6:1-7

The Choosing of the Seven

⁶ In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews^[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. — Acts 6:7

It is tucked away almost like a footnote within the story of the rapid growth of the church of Christ in the first months after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. And yet, recalling the rejection and betrayal Jesus experienced from his very own people, these few words in today’s verse come as a surprise: “a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

Perhaps for a while these priests had gone along with the efforts of their leaders, thinking that if they could force people to stop talking about Jesus, the whole matter would just go away. Perhaps for a while they had tried to go along with covering up the evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. It was probably very difficult for some of these priests to change; after all, they had spent their whole lives serving in the temple worship, bringing sacrifices and doing many other rituals on behalf of the people. But now they were called to new roles as believers in Jesus, whom they had opposed but who was also the Messiah they had been waiting for.

This little note reminds us how the penetrating virus of self-deception can be overwhelmed and healed by the medicine of simply admitting the truth. As Jesus himself promised, “The truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

Following Truth (Day 4)

Scripture Reading — Romans 1:21-32

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. — Romans 1:25

In our reading from Romans today, Paul paints a picture of what happens when people do what is right in their own eyes.

When people “suppress the truth” (Romans 1:18), they no longer want God to function as God in their lives. Their thinking becomes futile, and their minds and hearts grow dark. And God says, in effect, “If that’s what you want, that’s what you get” (The Message). God gives them over to their own desires, and all kinds of immorality and destructive behavior take over in their lives. Paul summarizes in a way like this: “Since they didn’t bother to acknowledge God, God quit bothering them and let them run loose. And then all hell broke loose” (The Message).

If I didn’t care about God or what God says, I might be irritated by this passage. But I do care, and the last thing I want is for God to let me destroy myself. Since I know how easily I can turn to my own ideas of truth, or what I wish truth to be, what do I do with this?

God’s answer is clear: we need to follow the one who is Truth, the one who won’t be deceived or deceive. That’s the track to life. The only road.

The story of the lost son (Luke 15) gives me hope. It tells me that when Truth helps me see that I am off track, my Father is also waiting to help me get home. That is gospel truth!

God's Divinely Inspired Word (Day 5)

Scripture Reading — 2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped... — 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is exceptional and unique because it is God's own project from beginning to end. This is the foundational teaching of the Reformation, for it is through Scripture alone that God reveals his salvation plan.

The difference between the Bible and other collections of wisdom across the ages and around the world is that those collections are inspired by human wisdom. The Bible, says the apostle Paul, is divinely inspired. The term that Paul uses to describe this inspiration can be simply and profoundly referred to as "God-breathed."

How the Bible is God-breathed is truly a mystery. God the Holy Spirit has spoken universal truth throughout history in all kinds of circumstances. Despite a vast array of personalities with all of their individual gifts, quirks, strengths, and shortcomings, the Holy Spirit has spoken in and through the many writers of the Bible to his people in the past as well as today.

Because the words of the Bible are "God-breathed," or inspired, they are wholly trustworthy, giving us all we need for faith and for living a life that pleases God.

Are you steeped in God's Word? If not, let it become the bedrock of your daily life, nourishing, challenging, and leading you in pleasing God and loving your neighbor.