

What is Truth?

John 28-38; John 17:17

INTRODUCTION:

Ravi Zacharias, a Christian apologist who speaks around the world, was asked which is more important love or truth, and he responded truth. The questioner quickly disagreed to state that love is the most important to which Ravi responded, “Is that true?”

This little conversation illustrates that love and truth go together but without truth, there can be no understanding of love or anything else in the world.

We see in our world today, and particularly in our society:

- ☆ *an erosion of values,*
- ☆ *confusion of identity,*
- ☆ *the extinction of logic and reasoning,*
- ☆ *the collapse of moral frameworks,*
- ☆ *Delusional ideologies,*
- ☆ *Political demagoguery* (when a politician or political groups appeal to popular desires and prejudices rather than using rational argument) I’ve seen this in both Republicans & Democrats

These issues exist because we as a people, society, country and world have lost our appetite for truth. Feelings have become the barometer in which we measure values, and critical thinking has become an enemy to many and a past time for a few. Today, we are quick to believe lies, but slow to investigate truth, and gossip is a multi-million dollar business from magazines to news reports. Why is this the case? Because we have left no room for God in our society, our homes, and ultimately our hearts.

Charles Spurgeon

A lie can travel half way around the world, while the truth is putting on its shoes.

Today we must take a look at the question of “What is truth?” This is the question of all questions because if one is not interested in truth then there are no answers for any of the other questions we may ask.

TEXT:

John 18:28-38

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.

Then Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed Him over to you."

So Pilate told them, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law."

"It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. They said this so that Jesus' words might be fulfilled signifying what kind of death He was going to die.

Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about Me?"

"I'm not a Jew, am I?" Pilate replied. "Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done?"

"My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here."

"You are a king then?" Pilate asked.

"You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice."

"What is truth?" said Pilate.

John 17:17

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.

I. Truth cannot exist without an absolute Reality

Notes: _____

A. Definitions that matter:

1. **Reality** - the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them.
2. **Truth/True** - in accordance with fact or reality.
3. **Absolutes** – a value or principle regarded as universally valid or able to be viewed without relation to other things.
4. **Relativity** – the absence of standards of absolute and universal application.
5. **Objective** - not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts.
6. **Subjective** - based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.

B. If God exist and created, then there is a creative order to creation.

Lewis, C.S., *Miracles: a preliminary study*, Collins, London, p. 110, 1947.

‘Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator. In most modern scientists this belief has died: it will be interesting to see how long their confidence in uniformity survives it.

C. Reality is separate from our perspective or opinion.

D. Truth is seeing what is absolute in regards to God’s reality.

E. Many today are moving into a “Self-created reality” versus a “God-created reality”

F. A “Self-created reality” is simply an Illusion or for many a Delusion

J.K. Rowling

“I mean, you could claim that *anything's* real if the only basis for believing in it is that nobody's *proved* it doesn't exist!”

Abraham Lincoln

How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg.

Illustration: Agricultural centered society vs. Industrial centered society vs. Technological Centered Society

II. Truth cannot exist without an absolute Authority

Notes: _____

Truth cannot exist without an absolute Authority

- A. *The Main Question:* Logically who should be the final authority of Reality?
- B. The different philosophical “isms” are based on views of authority. Some examples would be:
 - 1. **Atheism** – denial there is a divine final authority
 - a. *Hedonism* – Pleasure is the final authority
 - b. *Humanism* – Humans are the final authority
 - 2. **Theism** – God is the final authority
 - a. *Christian Theism* – belief that Jesus is the final authority
 - b. *Islamic Theism* – belief Allah is the final authority
 - 3. **Agnosticism** – No one knows the final authority
- C. The question of who is the final authority determines a lot in recognizing and acknowledging what you believe to be true.
- D. How do we determine what is true is based not on feelings but logic, and what is truth is the final authority.

Matthew 28:18

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Oswald Chambers

"The "words" of God and the "Word" of God stand together; to separate them is to render both powerless. Any expounder of the words of God is liable to go off on a tangent if he or she does not remember this stern, undeviating standard of exposition, namely, that no individual experience is of the remotest value unless it is up to the standard of the Word of God. The Bible not only tests experience, it tests truth. The Bible tests all experience, all truth, all authority by our Lord Himself and our relationship to Him personally."

III. Truth cannot exist without an Objective & Principled Morality

Notes: _____

Charles Spurgeon

The way you view God will eventually show up in the way you live your life.

C.S. Lewis

The very idea of freedom presupposes some objective moral law which overarches rulers and ruled alike. Unless we return to the crude and nursery-like belief in objective values, we perish.

Psalms 119:137-138

Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments. You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness And exceeding faithfulness.

Isaiah 51:4

Pay attention to Me, My people, and listen to Me, My nation; for instruction will come from Me, and My justice for a light to the nations.

CONCLUSION:

Albert Einstein

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters.

We as followers of Jesus are called to be witnesses, examples, and ultimately people of truth. It should be our highest passion and deepest desire, but when we desire truth, we are desiring Jesus.