

Necessary Ingredients for Every Christian's Journey

The Truth Shall Set You Free

John 8:31-32

INTRODUCTION:

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Nothing in this world is harder than speaking the truth, nothing easier than flattery.

We, sadly, live in a day and time where truth is being done away with. And one of the primary places is in the church. Truth is not primary in the lives of many “professing” Christians. You hear conversations, see posts on Facebook, how inviting and inclusive people are to all walks of life and worldviews while at the same time professing Christianity as merely their faith of choice, not as a reflection of it being the absolute truth.

Do you remember Kris Kristofferson's song, *The Pilgrim*? The chorus is...

He's a poet and he's a picker, he's a prophet and he's a pusher
He's a pilgrim and a preacher and a problem when he's stoned
He's a walkin' contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction
Takin' every wrong direction on his lonely way back home

I started with that thought regarding society today, but instead of partly truth and partly fiction, I said...

Our society is a walking contradiction, dismissing truth and embracing fiction. We celebrate insanity in our present society while criticizing sanity, formerly known as common sense, but then are appalled when our society does insane things. Truth matters and the number one place for the next generation to learn the importance and value of truth is not in school or even the church, although these are key places as well, but in the home.

Here is a “rubber meeting the road” statement. The world doesn’t respect truth because the church doesn’t anymore.

Winston Churchill

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.

Dorothy Sayers

In the world, it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair...the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.

A prime example is that many churches, as I have stated before, want the preacher to preach the truth of Scripture when in reality they don't. They want him to preach the parts they agree with, are comfortable with, and those parts that don't confront their sinful way of living. Consider another Facebook posts I put up recently regarding American Christianity and evangelism...

"I believe one of the biggest roadblocks to Biblical Christianity in America is pop culture American Christianity. In my experience, it has been a lot easier to talk to my atheist friends about our differences of belief than many who grew up in a church whose verbiage is riddled with Christianisms. There is more to the Christian life than merely saying a prayer so you can go to Heaven when you die. Heaven is not the end goal of the faith anyway, Jesus is EVERYTHING!!! Sadly, we have made Jesus a doormat in many evangelistic appeals (sadly, for many unknowingly) asking people where they want to go for eternity when they die. The focus, then, is on Heaven, and oh by the way you need to ask Jesus into your heart to forgive you of your sins so you can be guaranteed to go there. Therefore, Heaven (something good) has become the idol while the truth, who is the person of Christ (John 14:6), is diminished. What happened to John the Baptist's view that he must become less so that Christ becomes more? The truth is everything else diminishes in personal importance when Jesus enters the room or conversation. He is, as the Beaver said in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, "The King I tell ya! The Top Geezer!!!" We don't need entertainment centers identifying as churches, but the true church revealing Christ in word and deed, in action and in truth, in song and art, revealing the love and truth of Christ every day and inviting a lost and hurting world into a repenting community of Jesus to be healed, forgiven, and loved.

And what about the idea of the final resurrection (a material, eternal existence) and Heaven returning to Earth (Revelation 21)? Where does that fit into our evangelism?"

The Church needs revival and reformation!!! A revived spirit of hungering and thirsting for truth and reforming of ideology to the Christian theology as revealed in the authority of the Word of God. Christians must return to their Bibles and not inspirational speakers, shallow devotionals, or warm fuzzy opinion parties disguised as Bible studies. We need the truth of Scripture to permeate the life of every believer. We wonder why our culture and society have gone to the sewer, then we must see our own responsibility as Christians from the way we raise our kids to our lack of service in the body of Christ, to our priorities of life that outrank our devotion to Jesus. Some of you in the last five years are making the changes the Spirit of Jesus calls us to make, but some of us are playing church and failing miserably in our lives. Let's now turn to the words of Jesus.

John 8:28-47

²⁸ So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

The Truth Will Set You Free

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "**If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**" ³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.** ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

You Are of Your Father the Devil

³⁹ They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰ but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹ You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not

understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." ¹

I. Notice the Conditional Statement, "If"

A. Christianity can never be anything apart from the Word of God, and so many today want the benefits of the faith without surrendering to the truth.

B. Jesus was speaking to those who had professed belief in Him.

John 8:30-31

³⁰As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

The Truth Will Set You Free

³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him...²

C. Jesus was speaking to those who "believed in Him," but then didn't want to remain in His teaching and He called them children of the devil.

ESV Study Bible for John 8:31

Their "belief" is shown to be false in the course of the story. To abide in Jesus' word means to continue believing what Jesus has said and walking in obedience to him. This verse shows that continuing to trust Jesus and obey him is one test of who are truly his disciples.

D. In other words to abandon the teachings of Christ, we abandon being Jesus' disciple.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Jn 8:28–47). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Jn 8:30–31). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

II. The True Disciple Remains in the Truth of God's Word

A. Whether one remains in the truth of Scripture is the identifying mark of a true follower of Jesus.

B. Notice it is not membership in a church, whether you have been baptized, but rather your desire to stay faithful to the teachings of Christ.

C. If you “abide” in my word...

- μένω (72x) remain, stay, reside

D. Notice the word “reside.” This literally could mean taking up shelter in the teaching of Jesus.

E. So what are the implications of this?

F. It means that I cannot have Jesus and embrace teachings that contradict the teaching of Jesus because we are called to live like Him.

1 John 2:6

Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
³

G. Therefore, one cannot accept living and accepting as ok and normal ongoing lifestyles of sin such as adultery, murder, a liar, homosexuality, etc., (to name a few) and identify as a follower of Christ.

H. Can anyone fall into sin? Yes! But a true follower of Christ will never want to stay there because it would mean abandoning the true teachings of Jesus.

I. Someone may even struggle with a particular sin, but they are never accepting of it which is what produces the struggle. This is where surrendering to the truth introduces each of us to real freedom.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (1 Jn 2:6). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

III. Then You Will Know the Truth

A. The Greek word “kai” is often translated “and,” but can be in the conditional context here translated “then.” “Then you will know the truth...”

B. Why must you continue in the teachings of Jesus to know the truth?

C. Because the Christian view of truth is not a perspective, or a prescription, but rather is the actual person of Jesus Himself.

Timothy Keller

Jesus doesn't just give us truths; he is the truth. Jesus is the prophet to end all prophets. He gives us hard-copy words from God, truths on which we can build our lives, truths we have to submit to, truths we have to obey, and truths we have to build our lives on, but he himself is the truth.

D. To know the truth, the requirement is to know Christ's teaching revealed only in His Word, hence, why we call it the Word of God.

E. To spread Christ teachings is central in the Great Commission of those who claimed to be His disciples.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.⁴

F. Anyone who teaches something other than what Jesus taught is a heretic and false teacher which is prevalent in our culture today, but most “Christians” can't identify this problem because they don't know the teachings of Jesus.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Mt 28:19–20). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

IV. The Truth Sets Us Free

Augustine of Hippo

Before God can deliver us we must undeceive ourselves.

A. Noticed this sub-heading says, “The Truth” not “A Truth or Your Truth.”

Lesslie Newbigin

The relativism which is not willing to speak about truth but only about ‘what is true for me’ is an evasion of the serious business of living. It is the mark of a tragic loss of nerve in our contemporary culture. It is a preliminary symptom of death.

B. Truth is independent of your opinions or feelings. It is absolute in nature and is only derived from the Creator God.

We have a right to believe whatever we want, but not everything we believe is right.

C. Truth is identifying how the Creator of reality declares it to be.

D. Truth is exclusive because not every claim to be the truth is truth. For example, $2+2=5$ is a false claim because we all know *in reality* that $2+2=4$. No matter how popular the opinion is that it is 5, the answer regarding the truth is always 4.

E. So if Congress and pop culture accept that $2+2=5$, we as seekers of truth must always stand up for 4 as the answer.

F. In the same way, a boy is a boy, and a girl is a girl no matter if pop culture denies that reality. The science on the inside and the physiology on the outside of the human body both testify to the truth of reality that there are only two genders. Period, end of discussion! Why we entertain such illogical conclusions in our culture, and sadly in some church circles, is beyond me. It reveals that we have abandoned being a follower of Jesus.

G. Too much pop psychology has invaded the thinking of those in the church, and will in the end push people away from the wonderful science of psychology because they will identify it with the craziness that has become our culture.

Charles Spurgeon

A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

H. Freedom ultimately lies in knowing reality, how life works, and the Creator of it.

I. We are created for God. He is the sanity of life.

J. The Apostle John opens his gospel with “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Then a few verses later in 1:14 of John “The Word became flesh...” The Word is Jesus, and the Greek word that John uses to describe Jesus is the word *Logos* which is where we get our English word Logic.

K. If Christ is the Truth then it makes sense that He is also the logic of life. Life only makes sense in Him.

CONCLUSION

N.T. Wright

The closer you get to the truth, the clearer becomes the beauty, and the more you will find worship welling up within you. That’s why theology and worship belong together.

George Orwell

In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act.