

Developing a Sturdy Faith - Truth

Opening Remarks

Today we start a new series called **Developing a Sturdy Faith**. This series is designed to help you grow in confidence in two areas of your Christian walk.

1. Your understanding of the Christian faith
2. Your ability to discuss your Christian faith

As we step through this series we will be looking at a number of topics and we'll be building a case for the evidence that Christianity is true.

We'll be looking at things like:

- The origins and authenticity of the Bible
 - Historical, archaeological, geographical, prophetic
- The person of Jesus – evidences for
- Creation versus Evolution
- Proofs of the existence of God
- Basic teachings of the Bible – Salvation, Law, Sin, Heaven & Hell, Grace.

Some of the things we'll be looking at will be food for the brain – it will make you think.

Here's the great news! Each of us has been given big beautiful brains.

Sadly, many Christians seem to opt out of using 'thinking' side of our faith – and rather we discuss our faith from an **emotional** position.

But if you've ever shared your faith, the objections people have can be big and hairy, complicated and involved.

And they might want to know what you believe and why you believe it. So we have some work ahead of us.

Foundation Scripture


Let's get started with the commission of Jesus to all his followers in Matt 28.

 **Matthew 28:18 (NIV)**

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

 **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)**



... always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

 **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)**

... always be ready to give a “defense” to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...

Two Areas to Address

Seems that we need to cover off on 2 fundamental areas of Christian action:

-  **Witness** - to share our faith (we therefore must understand our faith well)
-  **Defend** - to defend our faith (be prepared to answer questions about our faith and intelligently & respectfully handle the concerns or objections posed)

- Word ‘apologian’ – comes from Apologia.
- Apologia (noun) 1. **a formal written defence of one's opinions or conduct**
- We get the word ‘apologetics’ – means ‘defense’
- Peter is saying here to be ready to defend your faith!

The Great Cosmic War Rages

There is a great cosmic war raging all around us – and it's defined in the most simplest of terms – it's a war between

- what is right and what is wrong
- correct and what is false
- what is the truth and what are lies

It is a battle between truth-claims that permeate our culture:

- religious
- scientific
- political
- social
- philosophical

It's important that we understand the nature of this war, that's when our eyes will be opened to understand what's happening in our culture.

Why was Jesus born?



Why did Jesus come to earth?

 **John 18:37 (NIV)**

"... 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."

 **John 18:38 (NIV)**

"What is truth?"

Based on Jesus' own words, we discover that Jesus' most fundamental mission was to testify, to state, to affirm ... Truth.

And that word 'testify' has a ring of legalese about it ... when someone is in court, they give testimony about the truth ... it's a combative environment where opposing forces battle it out..

Truth Matters

Now this is vitally important – if we are unable to grasp what’s true and what is not, then we have a serious problem since truth underpins and shapes everything about our **beliefs** and **values**.

If we are unsure about what is true and what is not, then everything is open for debate and ultimately we establish what’s true or not, based on our personal preferences.



What do you think **TRUTH** means?

The technical definition of truth



“that which corresponds to fact and reality”

A Simple Example of Truth

Let me give you a simple example of why truth is important.

Close your eyes – point to north – open your eyes – look where everyone is pointing.

Worldview Problem

So let’s say that we all decided to go to Koornang Road and have some conversations with folks about life and faith.

Once you get over your nerves and start talking to people, one issue that is bound to arise – stems from a ‘**worldview**’ problem. And it’s all centred on what is considered to be the truth.

So lets’ talk about this idea of Worldview for a minute – what it means and why it’s important for us to understand it.



What is a Worldview?

So as the video says, a Worldview is.

- Our particular philosophy of life or conception of the world
- The lens by which we derive meaning and purpose
- What forms our values and beliefs

A person's Worldview essentially looks at the big questions of life – and generally focuses on the 4 major things:

- Origin – where did we come from; how did we get here
- Meaning – why am I here
- Morality – what is right and what is wrong
- Destiny – where am I going when I die

We probably don't realise it but we are seeing the effects of worldview everywhere we turn:

- Chinese folks not stopping to help a baby girl
- Untouchables in India (caste system)
- War in Middle East - ISIS
- Demands for Same-Sex marriage
- Vegetarians & Vegans
- Star Wars

Authoritative Worldviews

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------|
| • Buddhism | • Judaism | • Communism |
| • Islam | • Catholicism | • Socialism |
| • Hinduism | • Christianity | • Marxism |
| • Seikism | • Atheism | • Capitalism |
| | • Environmentalism | • Satanism |

A Worldview's Relationship with Truth

It's important that we understand the implications of a worldview:

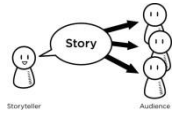
A worldview

- defines what is true

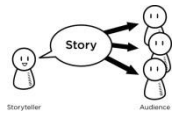
- asserts what is true

A worldview in order to be true, must conform to reality. In other words, what you say about what you believe must correspond to truth. If you cannot live by what you purport to be true, then your worldview is dysfunctional.

So let me give you an example of a flawed worldview:



Craig and Evolution. Survival of the fittest.



Relative Truth Problems.

What is Your Worldview?

You may be asking this morning, why all this talk about **worldview** and **truth**?

The big issues running around our nation today are all centred on a clash of worldviews and what people believe is right and wrong.

Consider the topics:

- Abortion
- Sexuality & Definition of Marriage
- Evolution
- Justice, Crime & Punishment
- Bio-Ethics & Stem Cell Research
- Freedom of Speech | Hate Speech

As we seek to develop a sturdy faith – we will need to have a well formed worldview – formed by the Truth of God’s words.

It happens by reading the bible, and understanding what it says – and applying the truth of God’s word to our lives.

 **Matthew 7:24 (NIV)**

24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Jesus said about himself, that he was the truth. In him there is no shifting sand, no second guessing, no confusion. His words are true and He is reliable.

Having a sturdy faith means believing the words of Jesus.

 **John 14:6 (NIV)**

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me ..."

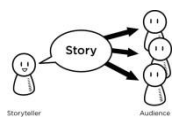
The most wonderful thing about knowing truth, is that it sets us free.

 **John 18:32 (NIV)**

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Summary

Our worldview matters, and our understanding of the truth matters. Next week we will be looking more at how truth has come under attack in all areas of life – resulting in a world that is reeling.



Story about Amway sales woman in café. I asked her, “Are you a Christian?” (Amway often has lots of Christians involved). She stated no, but loved the nice Christian people and msgs. So I asked her, “That’s great. But doesn’t it matter whether it’s true or not? If Christianity is nice, but not true – then OK enjoy it. But if it’s true, then that presents a challenge to you!”

The Saleswoman

Dear Peter,

It was really good to meet you yesterday and I took on board what you said about Christianity and I thought that it made so much sense to me so I hopped into my car and I said to myself - I hereby accept the Lord Jesus into my heart as I know and believe in him and know him to be our true saviour. Thank you so much for your counsel ...