

Developing a Sturdy Faith – Truth II

Recap

Worldview

Last week we began our exploration of the concept of a ‘worldview’ and what that looked like – it addresses:

- Origins
- Meaning
- Morality
- Destiny

We talked about how a person’s worldview defines the basis of their values and beliefs – and provided truth in their lives.

Truth & Definition

We stepped into the idea of truth – it’s definition we discovered is “that which corresponds to reality or fact”. And so any worldview must correspond to reality and it must be something that we can live by.

Jesus’ Mission


We saw that Jesus’ fundamental mission, the reason for his birth was to ‘testify to the truth...’ in that famous conversation with Pontius Pilate (John 18).

Jesus famously describes himself as ‘the way, the **truth** and the life’ (John 14:6).

Cosmic War

The Reason for Learning This?

If Christianity is true – then we should be able to provide evidence for it being true – we should be able to apply reason and logic to our discussions with people and provide evidences for it.

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

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

The basis of our reasoning for the defence of Christianity is based on truth – it must be, for if Christianity is not true – and absolutely true, then our faith is in vain. So where does this cosmic war over truth first start?

 **Genesis 2:16**

But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

 **Genesis 3:1**

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

 **Genesis 3:4**

“You won’t die!”

So what is Truth?

 **Ghandi’s definition**

Back to our definition:

 **“That which corresponds to reality or fact ...”**

Truth is therefore objective (outside what a person thinks or feels, i.e. unbiased) - not **subjective** (subjective information is one person's opinion).

Something that is true for one person but not for another is not a truth; it's a **preference**. Truth deals with **ultimate reality**, which is found only in God.

Truth is Absolute / Universal

 Truth is also **absolute** – meaning that it is absolutely true!

It exists to the exclusion of all other claims. In fact, once we accept the nature of truth, we also must accept that all other competing truth-claims are in fact **false**.

Postmodernism

In many ways our ‘thinking society’ has dismissed the idea that truth is absolute, preferring to adopt a worldview philosophy known as **postmodernism**.

Although this sounds like a sophisticated academic term, Postmodern simply means “after the modern era”.


If you think about truth as being absolute and fixed – then this suggests a rigidity, a strictness, a sense of certainty.

Truth is Exclusive


Let's consider why **absolute truth** has to be rejected.

Consider the statement: “The Sky is Blue”

It is a truth statement that by implication, rejects all other assertions. You may come along and say, “The Sky is Red or Yellow or Green” – but it would not change the fact that the Sky is Blue.

 So the truth is by nature, exclusive. It excludes other competing and contrary opinions from being equally true.

It draws a line in the sand that says, “I believe in this to the exclusion of all other options.”

 If I say, “The Sky is Blue” and you say, “The Sky is Red”

- Then we hold contrasting opinions.
- There is no agreement between us.
- There is no unity between us.
- There is division between us.

Statements about the sky are pretty harmless – but consider the following statements:

 **The Truth is:**

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • God is Yahwey | God is Allah |
| • Lying is Always Wrong | Lying is Sometimes OK |
| • Heaven Exists | Heaven Does not Exist |
| • Jesus Gives Eternal Life | Allah Gives Eternal Life |
| • God Created Us | Evolution Created Us |
| • We are made in God's Image | We are evolved by Chance |
| • We Have Dignity as Humans | We Are Just Higher Animals |
| • Abortion is Wrong | Abortion is Not Wrong |

Statements about the sky are pretty harmless – but when we start talking about things like:

- God
- Man
- Morality
- Heaven & Hell
- Eternity

Entire Civilisations

We are talking about issues that matter a lot – these are issues that people build their entire lives upon. It shapes their worldviews and it even provides foundations for entire civilisations, their laws and their duties.

People will fight and lay down their lives for their ideas of absolute truth.

What a person believes about these things will guide their:

- thoughts
- words
- actions

Therefore, while people hold competing views on Spiritual truths there can never be peace in the world. Spiritual truths must be unified before world peace can be solved.


Herein lays the problem with absolute truth. If you reject truth it divides us rather than unifies us.

All Religions Claim Authority

- The Hindu Vedas
- The Buddhist 4 Noble Truths & Eightfold Path
- Islam's Koran

The Cry for Tolerance & Acceptance

There has been and continues to be a loud crying out for **Tolerance** for the sake of **Acceptance** and **Diversity**.

 Can't we all just get along? CoExist – the bumper sticker we're seeing on cars.

Make Truth Relative

So, in order to embrace peace, love, diversity and tolerance, Absolute Truth has to be attacked. Postmodernism provided the mechanism. It upholds a subjectivity regarding:


- morality (sexual ethics/being truthful)
- social constructions (marriage/gender)
- political movements (isms)
- religion (monotheistic/pantheistic)
- truth statements

In other words, you could say that postmodernism is relativism - the belief that truth is relative, that objective and absolute truth is not knowable.

The Population's Education


Our educational institutions have been teaching this message for many decades now.

Allan Bloom in his book, "The Closing of the American Mind" states:

 ***"There is one thing a Professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student in America believes or says he believes that Truth is Relative"***

"Relativism is necessary to openness and this is the virtue, the only virtue, which all primary education for the past fifty years has dedicated itself to inculcating."


Nobel Prize-winning Postmodernist author, Harold Pinter is quoted as saying,

 ***"There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false."***

Why is this Problematic?

The danger of postmodernism is that it tends to deny the ability to know things for sure.

It undermines social norms and biological facts – things that we have held as truths for centuries and now reshapes them as mere social constructs:

- Gender you can now be whatever you want ( Government asks schoolchildren to define their gender - and gives them 24 options to choose from)
- Marriage has been redefined in many countries
- Family definitions have become fluid (blended, nuclear, SS)
- Language the construction of language by stating that words can be interpreted differently, that language is fluid and that the Bible written in ancient languages, is open to various interpretations of equal validity.

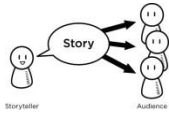
Given this underlying idea that nothing is truly knowable (a self-contradictory statement that is no problem for post-moderns), the very foundations of both moral and spiritual truth are suspect and open to re-evaluation - along with the Bible.

Enter the Church

Emergent Church Leader

 ***“So we must stop looking for some objective Truth that is available when we delve into the text of the Bible.”***

– Tony Jones (emergent church leader)



Prayer Meeting at local church. Woman is supposed to pray for our leaders. Instead she prays (educating us all in the prayer!) about ‘What is Truth? There are so many greys! We can’t hope to know truth.’

A Video Summary



Show Truth Video

The Truth Divides

If you and I understand the attack on truth, and we agree that Jesus is the truth as he states, then we cannot reconcile our views with that of the world.

We are therefore divisive by nature – given what we believe. And that is a good thing!

 ***John 7:43 (NIV)***

So the crowd was divided about Him.

 ***John 10:19 (NIV)***

When He said these things, the people were again divided in their opinion about Him.


 ***Matthew 10:34 (NIV)***

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

In the bible the sword metaphorically refers to the Word of God, which is the truth. So Jesus is saying that he was bringing a divisive truth that would separate.

Why the World Hates You

Jesus had not come to bring unity to the world. He had come to bring the truth that some would accept and some would reject. Those that would accept the truth, Jesus called to come out of the world.

 **John 15:18-19 (NIV)**

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

If we accept that Jesus is the truth, then Jesus will always divide. Consider the following verses that we read and believe:

 **John 5:12 (NIV)**

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Jesus' comments about himself divided the crowds and we see that the apostles when they preached in the book of acts also split the crowds:

 **Acts 14:4**

The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.

In fact Paul either caused a riot or a revival! (Read Acts 19) And in Thessalonica Paul and Silas preached and caused a stir.

 **Acts 17:6**

“These men (Paul & Silas) who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here..”

Truth Must Always Come Before Unity

Matthew 10:22

“You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

“It is far better to be divided by truth, than united by error.”
– **Adrian Rogers (Southern Baptist Convention President)**

Jesus presents an absolute truth-claim

It's true that Jesus presents an absolute truth-claim – “I am the ... truth.” That excludes all other truth-claims – and so you hear that cry, “You're a narrow minded, intolerant bigot! Why can't you accept other religions and their points of view?”

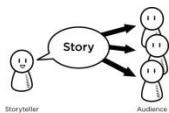
How can we know that Jesus is the Truth?

Simply put Truth stands up to scrutiny ... if you will look at the evidence of the bible, and of the life of Jesus – you will discover truth and it will set you free.

People Will Resist Truth

Sharing truth does not mean people will accept it – God's gift to people is the right to reject Truth and live a lie. It's our choice!

Soren Kierkegaard



Woman in café: Having an affair. She said that it was OK to have affairs (that was part of her worldview). I said that's wrong. She said that my truth was good for me, but did not apply to her. So I critiqued her worldview (i.e. can you live by that 'truth'?) She said that she would not want anyone to have an affair with her husband. She was unwilling to commit fully to her 'truth' (she could not live by it).

When we discover TRUTH we are called to do 4 things:

- Believe it | Act on it | Support it | Spread it

Jesus' words are words we can trust – they are words we can stake our lives on – they are words we can give our lives for.

You as a Christian should have confidence in the authority of Scripture and in the reasonableness of the Christian position,

You should be encouraged that you can defend your faith as you are sharing Truth.

The Bible can be trusted in every area of life.

Jellybean

Jelly bean count. Who got it right? How do you prove to the others that your value is the correct count? Evidence.

That's where we're headed next week as we start to look at the various evidences for the case of Christianity – we'll be starting with the founding document of our faith, the bible.