

What is Truth:

The Only Remedy for a Culture in Chaos

Selected Scriptures

Introduction

John 18:38 – “What is truth?”

- No more fundamental question
- Not just “that which is true,” but “the standard by which all claims are measured.”
- Foundational to knowledge itself
- Genuine vs. counterfeit, fact vs. fiction, reality vs. fantasy, moral from immoral

Truth in History

- Premodernism (up to 17th century AD): Truth can be known by divine revelation
- Modernism (ca. 1685–1989): Truth can be known via scientific inquiry (senses and reasoning)
- Postmodernism (ca. 1989–present): Truth can’t be known; likely does not exist
 - “My truth” vs. “Your truth”
 - “Anything can be true, even a lie, if enough people believe it.”
 - Morality becomes nothing more than competing personal preferences. No one can consistently denounce genuine evils (e.g., slavery, holocaust, segregation) as morally wrong.
 - When a consistent application of your worldview prohibits you from denouncing such obvious wrongdoing as objectively evil, your worldview has been proven wrong.

- Reality is upended. The concept that “We can both be right” embraces pure subjectivism.
 - Undermines a fundamental axiom of all rational thought: the law of non-contradiction, which states that a truth claim (A) and its negation (not-A) cannot both be true at the same time and in the same relationship.
 - “There is no absolute truth” is an absolute statement. If the claim is true, it’s false.
 - When a consistent application of your worldview leads you to the absurd denial of reality, or to self-defeating and self-contradictory claims, it’s an indication that your worldview has failed.
- The choice has always been between the God of the Bible or absurdity. Our culture has chosen absurdity.

The Delusion of Transgenderism

- There is no more brazen denial of reality than to suggest that a man can be a woman if he feels like it.
- In a recent documentary, a conservative commentator interviews a Gender Studies professor, and says he wants to “get to the truth.” The professor responds, “I’m really uncomfortable with that language. ... It sounds deeply transphobic to me.” He then threatens to stop the interview, saying, “You keep invoking the word ‘truth,’ which is condescending and rude.”
- Truth is inimical to those who wish to embrace absurdity and deny reality. But it’s not that truth is transphobic; it’s that trans is truthphobic.

Suppressing the Truth

- Our society is so eager to embrace transgenderism because it is so eager to deny the absolute truth and objective standard of morality that relegate transgenderism to the realm of the delusional and condemn it as immoral.
- Romans 1:18–20; cf. John 3:19–21

- If they were to admit that there is an objective standard of truth, they would be forced to admit that they themselves are accountable to God’s law. “Sure! Men can be women! Anything, so long as I can sin in peace!”

Love and Truth

- “Love is love!” the culture shouts, quite unlovingly.
- But love, “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). A culture that revels in unrighteousness and rejects even the existence of truth can have absolutely no idea what love is.
- Inextricably Bound Together
 - In the nature of God (Exod 34:6)
 - As the sustenance of the worshiper (Ps 40:11)
 - In conformity to Christlikeness (Eph 4:15)
 - As the sphere in which the Christian life exists (2 John 1:3)
- Any society that rejects the truth will find itself in chaos, one mark of which is celebrating hatred as if it were love—calling evil good and good evil (Isa 5:20).
- It should be no surprise that a culture that has no idea what love is also has no idea what hate is, and sees the loving act of truth-telling as hatred. When you reject the truth, you accuse as hateful those who would dare disturb your delusion.

So What?

- It’s not enough to diagnose the problem, to discern it, or lament it, or decry it, or mock it. It is not enough to long nostalgically for “the good old days.”
- Neither is the proper course to coddle postmodernism’s uneasiness with truth by compromising.
- Neither compromise nor retreat, but bold confrontation: Matthew 5:13–16

- Consider five pillars of the truth of the Christian worldview, so that we can see how essential the truth is to Christianity, and so that we might be able to sound forth to the world a clear answer to Pilate’s question, “What is truth?”

I. The Value of Truth

- Inestimably valuable (Prov 23:23)
 - Freedom from slavery (John 8:31–32)
 - In mortal conflict with Satan (John 8:44)
 - Disobedience to truth brings wrath and indignation (Rom 2:8)
 - You love the truth or you perish (2 Thess 2:10)
 - The purpose of Christ’s incarnation (John 18:37–38)
 - “We can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8)
 - The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15)
- ➔ The truth is identical to Christianity itself

II. The God of Truth

- Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16
 - You cannot be uneasy with truth but a follower of God
 - Father (John 7:28; 8:26; Heb 6:18)
 - Son (John 1:14, 17; 14:6; 2 Cor 11:10; Eph 4:21)
 - Holy Spirit (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6)
- ➔ Truth is that which is consistent with the mind of the triune God of truth. The culture is in chaos because its people have rejected this God from being Lord over them | and have exalted themselves in His place (Rom 1:25)

III. The Word of Truth

- God has graciously *revealed* His mind to mankind through His inerrant Scriptures: the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).
- 2 Sam 7:28; Prov 30:5; Ps 119:160; John 17:17; 2 Tim 2:15
- ➔ Truth is that which is consistent with the Word of God, as revealed in the inerrant and sufficient Scriptures. The culture is in chaos because it has rejected God's unchanging Word and has exalted in its place man's own twisted reasoning and fluctuating feelings.

IV. The Gospel of Truth

- The message of those Scriptures is the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Although all people have sinned and fall short (Rom 3:23) of the glorious standard of *perfection* that a holy God demands for fellowship with Him (1 John 1:5; cf. Matt 5:48),
 - nevertheless God the Son took on a human nature, so that He could live and die in the place of the people His Father had given Him, to accomplish their righteousness and pay for their sins (Heb 2:14–18),
 - and, having risen from the dead in victory, He welcomes all to lay hold of forgiveness through repentant faith in Him alone (Rom 3:28–4:5; cf. Acts 17:30–31).
- Saving Truth: Eph 1:13; cf. Ps 69:13; Gal 2:5, 16; Col 1:5–6; Jas 1:18
- Exclusive: Acts 4:12; cf. John 14:6. Every other proposed way to God—every other religion, philosophy, or way of life in the history of the world—stands opposed to the truth (John 10:7–8).
- ➔ Truth is that which is consistent with the Gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. The culture is in chaos because it has rejected this wonderful news (John 3:19).

V. The Reality of Truth

- To say that truth is what corresponds to the mind of God is to say that truth is what corresponds to reality. Nothing can be true that manifestly contradicts what is real.
 - Correspondence Theory of Truth
 - Proverbs 12:17 – The witness who speaks truth reports words and events as they really happened.
 - Acts 26:24–25 – You see, a man out of his mind mistakes fantasy for reality and believes that are not so. Truth is sharply contrasted with such falsehood and fantasy. It is consistent with reality as it is.
 - Titus 1:14 – Truth is neither manmade nor mythical
 - Jer 9:3; Rom 1:25; 9:1; Eph 4:25; 1 John 1:6; 4:6
 - “No lie is of the truth” (1 John 2:21).
 - Truth is not variable from person to person, or society to society because reality is not variable from person to person, or society to society. We all inhabit the same world, under the same God, who governs providence by the same inviolable laws of nature and logic.
 - It doesn’t matter if “no-gravity” is “your truth.” If you jump from a five-story building, you will still fall to your death. Gravity is reality, whether or not someone believes in it.
 - The truth is the same. God is God, and we are not. His moral law as revealed in the Bible is the rule of our lives. If we disobey, we are liable to His judgment. The only way of escape is faith in Jesus Christ. Someone may not *believe* in those facts, but the truth is true no matter who believes it or rejects it.
- ➔ Truth is that which corresponds to reality. The culture is in chaos because it has rejected reality and exchanged it for subjectivist fantasy and self-determination.

Conclusion: Speak the Truth

- Our culture has exchanged the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25), and God has thus given us over to unbounded lust and impurity (v. 24), to homosexual perversion (vv. 26–27), and to a depraved mind that embraces the absurd (v. 28).
 - But if our society has come under the judgments of Romans 1, we must follow the prescription of Romans 1: the proclamation of the truth of the Gospel by which sinners can be saved from divine judgment (Rom 1:16–17).
 - Though the things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man (1 Cor 2:14), and though the natural man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18), nevertheless God still opens the blinded minds of the unbelieving and shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:4, 6).
 - He does this by the proclamation of the very word of truth that the unbeliever so hardheartedly rejects (1 Pet 1:23–25).
 - Faith comes not by philosophical speculation, nor by cantankerous bickering, but by hearing the message concerning Christ (Rom 10:17).
- ➔ My plea for 2023: Do not retreat from the chaos of this culture. March right into it. Engage. Have conversations. With gentleness and reverence, give the Bible's answers to the lies of the age. Be salt and light. Proclaim the truth—of God, of His Word, and of His Gospel.