

In His Image: Truthful & Wise

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[0 : 00] Well, this morning we're concluding our sermon series called In His Image Reflecting God. And we've been recognizing that as human beings, we've been created in the image of God, or as the Bible says, in His image. And you've heard me say that every week.

An important aspect of being created in God's image is the fact that we exhibit many qualities and attributes, these communicable attributes that we can see in God Himself.

And last week, we considered that God is faithful and patient. To say that God is faithful, to recognize that He is consistent, He's reliable, He's dependable, He's shown up for us before, and He will do it again. Do you believe that?

He will do it again. We also recognize that God is eternally patient, and He waits for us.

And while we seek to wait on God with patience, we can trust that as we wait, God is with us, and God remains faithful.

[1 : 13] This morning, we're concluding our series by recognizing that God is, give away, truthful and wise.

Truth. In these days of uncertainty and conflict, sure seems like truth can be hard to come by, can't it? The world is in such desperate need of hope and a place where we can anchor our trust.

So what does it mean for us to consider the idea of truth or something being true? Go ahead and tell me. What do you think? Considering something being true.

Objective truth is hard to nail it. Ah, very. Oh, that's wise, but that comes later. Correct. Correct. The veracity of something.

Any others? Something true. Honest. Excellent. So as with all the other concepts that we've studied over the course of this series, I believe that there's a level of depth or complexity here that we may not always recognize.

[2 : 33] So there's simple logic at play, right? For something to be true means that it's not correct. So from this perspective, truth is about facts.

It's about evidence. It's about proof, really. But we also need to recognize that truth is about virtue. Can you appreciate that?

It's about character. It's about, in so many ways, speaks to our belief in right and wrong. Or ethics, even. And it's also worth considering that discovering something is untrue may not even involve a deliberate deception of any kind.

Have you thought of that perspective? It may simply be that we've gained more information about something. We've gained a new perspective. Something has caused us to recognize something that we previously thought about one way as true to be not a lie, but just simply incorrect.

Does that make sense? I would have loved to be on board that first sailing vessel to have headed for the edge of the map. These folks, some laughs.

[3 : 55] These folks would have been adventurers who set out to explore the flat earth, right? Did they set out to see if they could actually sail directly over the edge?

Hopefully not. And I kind of have to wonder if there wasn't some poor soul right up at the bow, the ship leaning over going, Any minute now. Okay, hold on.

Any minute. No, I don't know. But maybe they were disappointed to discover there was no edge.

You know, they were looking at the map and kind of went, no, we're off it. That's it.

We're in uncharted territory, right? So there must have also been some relief there as well to realize, oh, we're not on a one-way trip.

Sadly, I think there's a dark side to the human concept of truth as well. Because when someone deliberately sets out to deceive someone else, they're often hiding or distorting the truth, right?

[4 : 59] And we see a perversion there, essentially. We see how sin and selfishness creep into that concept of truth and pollute it.

We distort the truth. Perhaps you've experienced that yourself. I know I have. We lie.

We hold back parts of the truth. But we often lie to cover up things that we've done and we don't want anyone to find out about. Can you relate to that?

We don't want someone to know what we've done, so we don't tell them. Or we tell them, I'm going to use the phrase, alternate facts. We lie to get our own way.

We lie to dodge responsibility and accountability. And ironically, I don't know if you've ever thought about this, we may even lie to convince people to trust us.

[5 : 59] Right? Can you relate to that? How sad and strange is that? We lie to convince people that we are honest. Have you ever lied about something and then quickly realized, oh no, now I need to keep lying again and again and again to cover my tracks?

Because what will it do to my reputation if that initial lie is figured out? Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.

Maybe you've heard that quote. It's a line from a 19th century poem written by Scottish author Sir Walter Scott. And in that line, Scott clearly recognized how we can become tangled up in our lives once we start down that path.

We can see that human tendency to lie and distort the truth throughout Scripture as well. Not surprisingly, beginning with Adam and Eve and their disobedience from God.

Well, you ate the apple. Oh, we didn't eat the apple. I mean, not really. Well, okay, technically we, well, technically she told me to eat the, and I, and remember it gets worse from there, right?

[7 : 27] Generation after generation after generation. Generation after generation. And we recognize in humanity, even in ourselves, a tendency not to be truthful.

Have you ever thought of that? Is your default always to tell the truth? I hope so. But it's worth thinking about. Are there certain areas of your life where you immediately go, mmm, that's true, I'm going to say this.

Because it's easier. It's better. Makes me look better. Makes me sound better. But let's remind ourselves something important this morning.

That in Scripture, it's Scripture itself that is our source for truth. About everything. About how to treat other people.

About how to treat ourselves. About how to treat God. It's our source of truth. As Psalm 119, verse 169 declares, May my cry come before you, O Lord.

[8 : 33] Give me understanding according to your word. We're directed to ask God to give us understanding. To help us in our quest for truth.

We're not intended to look for it ourselves or figure it out on our own. Isaiah 45, 19 says, I, the Lord, speak the truth.

I, speaking, God speaking, I declare what is right. Source of truth, God. Right?

As Christians, we are called to be people who tell the truth. That's it. It's as simple as that. But Scripture also makes it very clear that our source for God's truth, the key to unlocking God's truth, is Jesus.

We read in John 8, verses 31 and 32. To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

[9 : 47] Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. The truth of who Jesus was for them, the truth of who Jesus still is for us today, is that he is our Savior and our King.

Jesus is the source of our freedom, not just in our daily lives, but in our eternal hope. Freedom from sin, from bondage, from fear, from anxiety in the unknown.

Jesus sets us free from all of that if we let him. As we read in John 8, verse 36, So, I need a minute.

So, if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. Have you ever known transition time?

Have you ever known someone you would consider to be wise? I think I've said to you before over time that in serving at Brightwood Ranch a few summers ago, that culture is about camp names.

[11 : 14] So, it's partly a safety and security thing, so you don't want kids to know your name. It's just better. It's safer, it's wiser, and it's also really, really fun.

So, when you start working at Brightwood, everybody else, based on who you are, what your interests are, those kinds of things, pick your camp name for you.

You can't pick your own camp name, because that's not allowed, and it's also not very cool. So, you can make suggestions, but usually you get vetoed. Anyway, long story, way too long.

My camp name was, and still is, because they still call me that, some of our young adults who are here, Yoda. And I was given that camp name, because, I love Star Wars, and have since I was eight years old, but, the guy who gave it to me, I can't even remember who it was now, said, I think your camp name should be Yoda, because you are old, and wise.

And, after I stopped crying, I thought, well, that's a really cool camp name, so I enjoy it. But, so Yoda, you know, you think of Yoda being wise, if you're a Star Wars person.

[12 : 26] You think of Moses, but who are, can you think of people in your life, or throughout your life, perhaps parents, or mentors, or other people, teachers, who you thought of, as wise.

And we often, we must think, of criteria for it, right? Were they insightful? Did they have more life experience than you? Did they give you new insight, into an area of your life, or your struggles? Is it someone who shone light, on something for you, in your life, that you remember, and you equated that, with being wise? Or, perhaps, you simply recognize, that they spoke the truth. Their character, was reflected, in what they said. Sometimes, that can be, wisdom in action. Maybe it's how, they said things, or possibly, even, the economy, of their speech.

One of my favorite quotes, I love quotes, about wisdom, and I believe, that I may have shared this, with you before, but it's, it's been attributed, variously, to Abraham Lincoln, to Mark Twain, to a few people, but let's say, anonymous, because that's safer.

[13 : 40] The quote says, better to remain silent, and be thought of fool, than to speak, and remove all doubt. That's wise.

Isn't that good? And sometimes, I think we may recognize, that the more we say, the more volume, we speak, perhaps the more wise, we'll seem.

Can you relate to that? The more you fill the air, regardless of the quality, if the quantity's there, you're good. Well, I found that, for me personally, the older I get, the more I find myself, listening. I become far more interested, in what other people, have to say, and what I can learn, from them, than what I, what unsolicited advice, I can possibly offer.

I believe wisdom, means more than simply, head knowledge, as well, or experience. In fact, I believe that, true wisdom, comes, when we recognize, that we're still learning, and that we're still teachable.

[14 : 56] Right? If you're still malleable, if you're done, maybe your wisdom, isn't actually, that wise after all. But if you're always, open to learning, always seeking, to understand, to relate to others, to learn about them, that's true wisdom, to me.

I believe that we agree, that the source, of all wisdom, and knowledge, is God. Can we agree on that? Proverbs 9, verse 10, reminds us, that if we're looking, for wisdom, there's one place, to start. We read there, that the fear, of the Lord, is the beginning, of wisdom. And in the word, fear there, we recognize, awe, reverence, submission, and loyalty.

Knowing that scripture, contains a wealth, of knowledge, that God has made, available for us, let's look at, some of the things, that scripture has, to say, about itself.

The Bible says, in Hebrews 4, verse 12, for the word, of God, is living, and active, sharper, than any, double-edged sword, it penetrates, even to dividing, soul, and spirit, joints, and marrow, it judges, the thoughts, and attitudes, of the heart.

[16 : 32] Friends, do you think, of scripture, as a current, and relevant, source of wisdom, for your life? Don't have to answer. The power, of scripture, is so dramatically, conveyed, in that passage, isn't it?

Because scripture, is our true source, for wisdom, but only, because of, who inspired it. Scripture, isn't some, magical book, that imbues, power upon people, who read it.

God, inspired scripture. He, is the source. I love the words, of Job 12, verse 13. To God, belong. He owns them. To God, belong, wisdom, and power. Counsel, and understanding, are his. See, that inherent, deeply, interwoven, qualities, of God.

God, is the source, of all wisdom. And it's not something, that we can acquire, on our own. Because it is, a gift, from God. Proverbs 2, verse 6, says, for the Lord, gives wisdom.

[17 : 51] And from his mouth, come knowledge, and understanding. Again, here we recognize, that God gives wisdom, to us. And it's inherently, part of who, he is.

But I believe, it's also important, for us to remember, that in making, his wisdom, available to us, we don't somehow, don't misunderstand, we don't somehow, have the ability, to attain, all of the knowledge, God has.

Because we're reminded, in Isaiah 55, verse 8 and 9, for my thoughts, are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, declares the Lord.

As the heavens, are higher than the earth, so are my ways, higher than your ways, and my thoughts, than your thoughts. Friends, we've learned this morning, that it's in God's nature, to be truthful.

God's promises, are true. His word, is true. His love for us, everything scripture, tells us about God, is true.

[19 : 05] And by approaching God, with fear, not of what God, will do to us, but of who he is, and what he has done, for us, we gain access, to his wisdom.

Wisdom that will change, our perspective, change our attitude, wisdom that will change, our lives, and ultimately, wisdom that can, change the world.

If we're looking for, real truth and wisdom, those things can only be found, through a relationship with God, through reading the Bible, through prayer, to learn more about, who God is, and what he has done.

Not just for you, but for all creation. We've been on quite a journey, over the past 10 weeks.

10 weeks, can you believe it? I can, because I wrote the sermons. 10 weeks. We've explored 20, of the characteristics, and qualities of God, over two sermon series, back to back.

[20 : 23] And my prayer is, that you won't soon, forget this truth, because it's not going to change. You can always go back, and review it, and refresh this wisdom, at any time.

And here's a shameless plug, you can listen to our sermons, on Facebook, on our church website. We've just changed, our church website, a little bit, some of the pieces, and of how things work. Very cool new feature. So, if you go to sermons now, you can see that I've got, all of the scripture references, that I've used in a sermon listed. You click on those links, and it will take you to, the Bible app.

Very cool. Sorry, geek. But it's, it's really neat, because it will link you, directly to the scripture, that I've referred to, so you can, study on your own.

So, God works in mysterious ways, doesn't he? We would agree, I think. And I'm not someone, who believes in fate, or luck, or chance. For me, those are just, limited terms, and perspectives, that actually are windows, into God, being at work.

[21 : 34] So, it may seem like a coincidence, but clearly it wasn't. We complete our story, our story, our studies, of God's qualities, and characteristics, all of which are gifts, to us.

And then we begin, our Advent series, next week. the miracles, of Christmas. And we're going to be, recognizing God at work, bringing humanity, the greatest gift, we have ever had, we've ever received, and we've ever known, his son, Jesus Christ.

Let's pray, and then we'll have, one more song, up here, and a benediction, and then I'll dismiss us. Let's pray. Father God, thank you for the opportunity, to study, in this way.

To explore, to learn, to share with one another. To dig into the truth, of your word. Lord, do you speak to us, not in audible words, but through your, through the scriptures, through the words, of other people.

Lord, your truth, for us, is so attainable, so available, Lord, we just need to open, your word, and it's there for us. We need, if we're looking for, understanding in our lives, Lord, we can pray to you, and ask for clarity.

[22 : 58] Lord, we can complain to you, and you can bring us comfort. And Lord, when we mourn, you are there as well. And Lord, your wisdom for us, is always just as accessible.

Lord, help us to be people, who are wise, who think before we speak, who think before we act, who consider, the feelings, and perspectives, of those with whom we interact.

Lord, may we be salt, and light to people. May we bring joy, and peace, not criticism, or conflict. So Lord, we ask for your blessing, over the rest of this day.

Thank you for the many people, from our denomination, who are worshipping this morning as well.

Lord, thank you for the people of God, around the world, who are gathering today. Lord, we are one family, we are one body, with you as our Father.

And we thank you, for all that means. Lord, we pray for encouragement, in the days ahead. We don't know what lies ahead, Lord, even this coming week, as far as pandemic restrictions go. [24 : 13] But Lord, we have faith, that you are still at work. You will provide, and you will point us, in the direction, you would have us go. Lord, thank you for who you are.

We love you. We pray these things, in your name. Amen.