

The Importance of Truth

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 0 0] Father, we give you thanks and praise that you used ordinary people to have your word written, and that your word is true. We confess before you, Father, that it can be very hard for us to actually even want to know the truth, that we can prefer our self-deceptions, our delusions, our fantasies, our quest for power and ego and dominance, that we can, Father, just prefer ourselves to the truth. Father, we know that you know our hearts, and we know that you not only know us perfectly, but you love us, even as you know us perfectly. And we ask that you would be very kind to us this morning, and that you would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us with might and power and deep conviction, so that your word would be able to come into our hearts, and that we would know the truth and be formed by the truth, to love the truth and share the truth and speak the truth with love and gentleness. And we ask this in the precious name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, I'm not doing this just to cause controversy, but I'm going to create some tension in the room right now.

Here's the tension. Imagine that you are watching me in a Starbucks or a Tim Hortons or a Bridgehead or some other coffee place, and a young woman of color or a young First Nations person says something about what's going on in our culture or something that's happened in history. And imagine for a moment that I just put my finger up like this and said, I think you're wrong, and corrected the young woman of color or the young First Nations woman. And then not only said, I think you're wrong, but began to tell her why I think she's wrong. Now, that would cause a lot of tension for most Canadians, not all Canadians, but for many Canadians. In fact, if I was to tell you that I was going to do a video, I'm obviously an old white guy, and I was going to do a video on truth and reconciliation, or about some aspects of the experience of African Americans in Canada. In fact, if I was to announce that I'd just done a video like this and that I was going to be releasing it on Monday, there would be a lot of tension in the congregation. And I would have a lot of people tell me I shouldn't do it.

The fact of the matter is that the gatekeepers of our culture say that basically certain types of conversation are protected and are, in a sense, to use the postmodern language, are privileged. And for an old white guy like me to say something to correct certain types of classes of person would, in fact, be a great evil. In fact, there's the main theory, which is taught in universities, critical theory, with all of its different offspring of critical race theory, critical theory around gender and sexuality, very specifically says that guys like me can't speak into certain types of issues. There was a very interesting columnist this week who had a line in his column that when people no longer believe in the truth, all that's left is fists, is fighting and punching and grasping for power.

Now, I say this because it's a bit of a, it creates some tension, and you can well imagine how much tension you would feel if I said I was going to release a video or if you saw me talking. Yet at the same time, we know that there's a lot of people in our culture who are very uncomfortable with how many of the, there's things going on in our, things going on in our culture, concerned to truth. It does seem as if, for a significant part of our culture, there no longer is a concern for the truth. In a sense, critical theory has led to no longer being able to think critically.

[4 : 25] And to be woke, increasingly looks like you go to sleep, rather than being awakened. It's very interesting if you have a conversation with non-Christians and they start to discover that you don't necessarily agree with how our culture goes, and all of a sudden, if they feel safe, they begin to talk, because we know how much we could be jumped on for just considering some of these particular issues. So for those of you who I have not so offended that if you're watching online, you've clicked the off button, and you're off to do something else. And for those of you who still might be steaming, but are at least willing to listen, but for others of us who acknowledge that there's some wisdom from this fellow saying that when you no longer believe in truth, all that's left is fists. It's all that's left. Very Nietzschean thought.

The Bible, believe it or not, the text that we looked at today has a lot of profound wisdom to offer our culture and for us as a congregation. So if you were turning your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 14 and following, we're going to look at this very, very old letter. 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 14 and following. And very interesting enough, as I've shared in each of the last two weeks when we've looked at it, if you're a guest here, one of the things we do at Church of the Messiah is we preach through books of the Bible. That's how they're written. They're written as books. The Bible isn't a compendium of quotes. It has a few things like the book of Proverbs that have just sayings, but generally speaking, they're written as books. They have a beginning, they have an end, a middle, etc., and it's best to look at them that way. And this actually was originally a letter written from jail, a guy doing hard time in Rome during the height of the Roman Empire, maybe the biggest time of the Roman Empire, close to it, if not the absolute pinnacle of the Roman Empire. Nero is the emperor, and this particular fellow is in jail. And interestingly enough, he's in jail because of the truth. He's in jail because he believes something happened, actually really happened in history. And all the smart people and the powerful people and the popular people don't want that to be true.

But he keeps saying it actually happened, and so as a result of that, he now finds himself in jail doing hard time. And as I've shared before, at the end of the book, he reveals that he believes that he's only going to walk out of jail, this time to go to his execution, which is in fact what happened to him. And here's, now we're sort of coming up to the, I guess we've been, we've been, this is our third look at it. Let's look and see what he says here.

So remind them, verse 14, remind them of these things and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good but only ruins the hearers.

Now, some of you watching this are hearing this, okay, George, this is just really, really, really puzzling.

[7 : 39] I mean, as soon as he says irreverent babble, as soon as he says ungodliness, a good grief, George, he's talking about religion and spirituality. George, how can a text talking about religion and spirituality possibly be helpful to our particular issue?

Don't you understand all the fights that come because of religion and spirituality? Aren't you aware of the terrible history of Christians fighting each other over words?

And George, I mean, and why just the Christian faith? Like, don't, can't you just see that this is, like, what? Like, some people go look at this, what, George, this, whatever you said about the beginning, I am interested to try to figure out how you can have a concern for the truth and hear some wisdom about it.

But going to something like this, like talking about ungodliness, good grief, George, that's not possibly going to be something that's going to lead us to anything profitable. Now, I'm going to have to confess that Christians have often, in fact, it's interestingly enough, you can't, in a sense, out-critique the Bible on this because what is the Bible actually warning you against?

It's warning about Christians fighting over words. In other words, what you can say is that there's been a long history of Christians being hypocrites. They don't read their Bible. They don't read their Bible and understand that, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, you guys are getting into a huge fight over, whoa, whoa, whoa, time out, time out.

[9 : 00] Let's read 2 Timothy 2, verses 14 to 16. Let's take a chill pill and let's have a bit of a, you know, cool down about this. So, I mean, in a sense, he's writing this because God knows our hearts, how easy it is for us to forget this and to get into big fights over words, right?

So that's actually, you know, so have there been lots of Christians who've been very bad in the past? Yes. Am I a bad Christian many, many times in my life? Yes, by the way. I'm not up here trying to point the finger at the other Christians out there.

If I do that, I have three fingers pointing back at me. But here's the big claim that's underneath this text, which is a very, very shocking thing for our culture.

To become a Christian is to take the red pill. To become a Christian. This is the Christian message. Some of you have heard me share a line by Spurgeon that Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

And I've been thinking this week that maybe we could reformulate that and say Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where to get the red pill and urging them to take it.

[10 : 24] Now, those of you who aren't familiar with the language, it goes back to The Matrix, a sort of a culturally formative movie that was made about 20 some odd years ago. And in that, this fellow Neo is given a choice.

He's given a red pill. The person holds his hand out and gives a red pill and a blue pill. And if he chooses the blue pill, then everything will just go back to normal. But what we, the viewer, understand as normal is that he's actually not living the life he thinks he lives.

He's actually just in a vat being used as a battery to give energy to machines. And he can either take the blue pill and just go back to a life of pleasant illusion and delusion, or he can take the red pill and he will be freed from that delusion and illusion and has to live with the weight of understanding what the world is really like.

And I understand that for most people in our culture, religion is just part of values. It's part of like a hobby. It's a type of therapy. It's something that is understood just to make you feel more comfortable.

And if religion and all is just something to make you feel more comfortable, a type of therapy, something you just happen to like or enjoy, maybe for historic or family reasons, then to argue about the truth or falsity of it is just completely and utterly ridiculous.

[11 : 46] It would be like, I don't know, arguing whether crocheting is better or a needlepoint. It would be like arguing whether you should make pierogies as a family or cabbage rolls.

Like to get into a big fight over that is just a sign of immaturity and untamed egos. And so for a lot of people in our culture to think that Christians would get into an argument about things is just like that.

It's an argument over whether you make pierogies or cabbage rolls. But actually, the fact of the matter is, is that Christianity believes that when you receive the gospel, the offer of part of the offer of the gospel is that will you take the red pill?

That, in fact, Christians believe that if you accept the gospel and begin to be formed by the gospel and the word of God, that that's actually taking the red pill, that you will begin to understand that the world is very different than you think.

That, in fact, there is a devil. That there is a last judgment. That there are demons. That there are angels. That there is, in fact, revealed truth from God. That, in fact, it's not just that every view of God is correct, but that the real God, the true God, is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[12 : 54] Three persons, one God. That there is a Savior. That there is something about the human condition that can't be fixed by the human condition. And that part of the journey of being a Christian, of the quest of being a Christian, is to begin to be formed more and more and more about the truth so that you can see and understand the world as it really is.

This is, in fact, the claim of the Christian faith. But some of you might push back and say, okay, George, good grief. How on earth could you possibly know that, George?

You can get up on your hind legs and make such a claim. Well, interestingly enough, Jesus, there's a very famous story in one of, in three, I think it takes place in three of the ancient biographies of Jesus.

Ancient biographies, either written by eyewitnesses or written based on eyewitness testimony. When many, many, many, many, many eyewitnesses were still around and could say, no, no, that's wrong, that's wrong, we need to fix this or whatever.

And in three of these ancient biographies, there's a very, very powerful story. And it's a story, some of you here will know it, where Jesus is teaching and he's in a room and some fellows have a friend who's paralyzed and they want to see if they can get Jesus to maybe heal them.

[14 : 10] But people won't get out of the way, they can't get in. And so they go up, they knock a hole in the roof, which is pretty rude. Hopefully they're all carpenters and could fix it later or whatever, however you could fix roofs back in those days.

They never tell you that part of the story, but I'm sure something like that happened. And they drop the guy and they have ropes or whatever, they lower the guy in. And obviously they want Jesus to heal this guy.

And Jesus makes this very, very, very shocking claim. He says, son, your sins are forgiven. Now, people back, you know, we are such, Canadians in 2021, we are such chronological snobs.

We think that just because back then they didn't have TikTok or flush toilets that they were stupid. There's a very good argument to be made that using TikTok makes you stupid, by the way.

Or Instagram or Facebook might lower your IQ. And that maybe a time before that they were actually smarter. But those people back then, they weren't dumb. They said the exact same thing a group of Canadians would say.

[15 : 19] If it was Tim Hortons, all of a sudden the roof came down and Jesus was there and they asked Jesus to heal the guy. And Jesus said, son, your sins are forgiven. All of them said, who can forgive sins but God alone?

Talk is cheap. You know, Jesus can say whatever he wants. But they're smart people. They say, well, that's just a ridiculous thing to say. So what does Jesus say to them?

Jesus says to them, well, listen, what is easier for me to say? Son, rise up and be healed? Or son, your sins are forgiven? What's easier? Well, of course, you can't just have somebody just perform a miracle.

All of a sudden, a man like Jesus just says something. And what goes on inside the body is that if there's like nerve endings or whatever that have been broken or blocked, or there's a blockage that those in a sense are removed, that if there's things that aren't connected, that there's an act of creation that will join nerves, that the muscles that have atrophied will all of a sudden be firm enough that they could walk, that this is like a mighty thing.

If I just speak that and all of a sudden these acts of creation and negation that create health, if that just comes, that's impossible. And so Jesus says to show that I have the authority to forgive sins, the implication is I'm going to heal this guy, but he says to show that I have the authority to do this, son, rise up and walk.

[16 : 43] And three of the ancient biographies say that that's exactly what happened to the young man. You see, the fact of the matter is, is that in the history of religion and spirituality, all sorts of claims are made.

But the fact of the matter is, is that when you just respond to me that, George, to make this claim that to become a Christian is to receive the red pill, that's just you talking. That's because you're used to the fact that, generally speaking, religions and spiritualities don't provide any evidence.

They just make claims. But that's one of the reasons why out of all of the religions and the spiritualities that exist in the world, the historic and great ones that bespoke and chosen ones of the day, that what is completely and utterly unique about Christianity is not only that, like, gospel doesn't mean good rituals, good morals, good advice.

It means good news. And the good news is that God has actually done something in history in such a way that you can examine it and see whether or not it's possible to be true. Because, you see, that's exactly the claim that's made by Jesus.

And it's very, very interesting that in the context, in the context of profoundly wise writings, and profoundly wise writings that is out of the writings of what we call the Old Testament, our Jewish friends call the Tanakh.

[18 : 04] I was just talking to a Jewish friend the other day, and once again we had that very, very same little dance. I refer to it as the Tanakh, and he referred to it as the Old Testament, and I joke that that's like, that's what you do if you want to be friends.

I use the Jewish term, and he uses the Christian term, and we're both talking about the same book. But, you know, but it's out of these writings that human rights have developed.

It's out of these writings that are notions of, the best notions of justice have developed. It's in fact out of these writings that the notion that powerless people see things about the powerful, that the powerful don't understand about themselves, that comes out of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

I mean, that's the grounding that I have to be careful challenging a young Aboriginal woman, or a young woman of color about what she said. Because the fact of the matter is, it's a constant theme of the Bible, that the powerless often see things in the world about the powerful, and about the world that the powerful just don't see, because it's very easy for the powerful to become blinded by power and pride.

That is a biblical idea. It wasn't invented by French intellectuals in the late part of the 1900s.

[19 : 24] It's in the book of Ecclesiastes. It's in the Psalms. It's in the Proverbs. And it's in the context of these profound writings of psychological depth that have done much good in the world.

It's in the context of this overriding narrative of creation that's good and of fall, and that explains the presence of good and evil in the world, and our divided nature.

It's in the context of this overarching story of God promising that someday He would send a deliverer to do what human beings cannot do for themselves. It's in this context of this overarching story, of this profound wisdom, that Jesus comes and walks amongst us and says, the Romans are going to crucify me, and I am going to die, and on the third day I'm going to rise from the dead.

And you're going to know it's true. And that's what happened. That's a claim about history. It's a claim about history because we would have to say, good grief, remember the story about the man healed by paralyzed?

Well, if something like that happens, then maybe he can forgive sins. That's a very reasonable thing to believe. But you see, if that's true, and if, in fact, Jesus really did die and rise from the dead, if Jesus...

[20 : 57] Oh, have I just lost... I've never turned my mic on? I've never turned my mic on. Let's just take it off. It's irritating. If Jesus really died from the dead, died from the dead, rose from the dead, if He really did this, if there's things like miracles that have happened, it means that the way the Globe and Mail and the CBC talk about the world is not true.

And that maybe to know and hear the good news of the Gospel and to receive it and accept it is to take the red pill and to begin to be led by Jesus into what the world is really like.

in a world where there is science, a world where there is truth, a world where truth should be valued, and that we should basically try to understand that using fists to solve issues of truth is never going to lead to the truth.

The way you come to a leading of the truth is a moral quest that the living God, the true and living God, desires for you to embark in, to know the truth, and to be formed by it.

See, the fact of the matter is, and this is, the way the sermon is structured, I really want to talk a lot about this. I might just read the rest of the text very quickly to draw out a couple of points, but here's the big idea behind this.

[22 : 22] Not only is it that Christians understand that to become a Christian is to take the red pill, and it's a red pill that isn't just to lead you into a... Here's the other thing.

I think it's going to be on the screen. The Lord created and launched a movement of truth and love that builds communities of truth and love for the glory of God and the good of people. See, that's what's sort of behind this text.

It's behind the entire New Testament. It's behind what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh and what we call the Old Testament. The Lord created and launched a movement of truth and love, not just of love and not just of truth, but of truth and love that is to build...

It does build communities of truth and love for the glory of God and the good of people. That's what the Lord's doing.

That's the context behind this advice that he says, don't quarrel about words, don't pay attention to irreverent babble, learn to handle the word of truth. Learn to handle the word of truth.

[23 : 29] You see, because since the truth matters, words and how you use them matter. And since the truth matters, words and how you use them matter.

And if I was to add another thing, I'd say since people matter, words and how you use them matter. Because we all know that we can use the truth in a cruel and heartless way.

We can use the truth to beat people up, to belittle them, to diminish them, to rob them of hope, to make them ashamed. And I bet every single one of us here in the room could tell you a story of how a person has used the truth in a way against them which has been brutal, heartless, vicious.

But on the other hand, we also know people who, out of a mistaken notion of love, will not speak the truth. I remember many, many, many years ago, there was somebody who told me they thought that they were called to the ordained ministry.

And I hate conversations like this. I'm very Canadian. Eh? Yeah, I'm very Canadian. And so I, you know, Canadians always prefer passive aggressiveness over just, you know, being direct.

[24 : 54] And so anyway, I said to them, I didn't think God was calling them to be ordained. They were upset with me. And then they told me two or three other people in the church who all thought they were called to be ordained.

And then a week later, one of the other, a couple of the other people came up to me and said, I hear that you told Bob that you didn't think he was called to be ordained. And he's really mad.

And I said, yeah. And they said to me, we don't think he's called to be ordained either, but we didn't want to hurt his feelings. And we're really glad you told them. Now, whether I told it in a gentle way or not, I don't know.

I'll find out maybe I was too harsh, you know, with a particular person. But we understand that since the truth matters and since people matters, words and how you use them matter. And see, once again, if you understand that the Christian faith is trying to communicate about what the real world is really like, like, I'm very simple-minded.

At the beginning of the service, at the beginning of the sermon, when I say to you that ultimately God caused the scriptures to be read, like, I actually think that's what happened. I'm very simple-minded.

[26 : 03] I think that's what actually happened. And when I pray that God would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us, I actually believe I'm talking to my Father in heaven and that Jesus is interceding for me.

And I actually believe when I talk to God, I ask him to pour out the Holy Spirit, that he will, because that's something he asks us to pray for, that he will do what I've asked, what we've asked him for, and that he actually does pour the Holy Spirit out upon those of us in the room.

I actually believe that's what's happening. And I don't just say this because I'm weird, although many of you now maybe think I'm weird.

I do this because I believe that Jesus really did rise from the dead, that the tomb was empty, that they never found the body, that he appeared alive to many, many witnesses, that the miracles he does in the Bible actually happened, that you can't say that Jesus was a great moral teacher, because if he, the Bible very clearly shows that Jesus claimed to be God and you can't claim to be God and be a great moral teacher, he either knew that he wasn't God and therefore he was lying and therefore he can't be a great moral teacher, or he actually, he wasn't God, but he thought he was, and then he's insane.

He's like the, he's like many of the mental people who are off their meds that we see wandering around the streets of Ottawa, poor, demented people that need our mercy and we should pray for them, and that's Jesus.

[27 : 40] Or he really did rise from the dead and the grave is empty, and he did claim to be God, and he did claim to come to save us, and that means he's the Lord. And that the world is different than the way Ottawa U and the CBC and the Supreme Court of Canada and Hollywood and Bay Street tell us.

And we need to be part of a community of truth and love to learn how to love better and love the truth better and not live by hatred and not live by fear and not live by lies.

And that is what Jesus calls us to. And you see, this is why when Paul says here that you need to, you know, don't get into quarrels and infighting and don't just listen to irreverent babble but learn to handle the truth rightly because if there really is this news that there is a God that does exist who loves you and loves you so much that he died upon the cross for you so that if you accept what he's done for you, God does in your life what you can never do for yourself.

He makes you right with himself and the Holy Spirit actually lives in you and you actually at a spiritual level become changed. Your emotions might not change right away.

Your body might not change right away. Your finances or any of these things but at a spiritual level who you are at the level of your of the depths of who you are that now actually is completely and utterly changed as if you have become born again.

[29 : 28] If you were to hear, if you were to get an email tomorrow saying that dear sir, dear madam, we regret to inform you that we've now done an audit and discovered that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine that was given to you had been mishandled and hadn't been kept at the proper temperature and so therefore was completely and utterly worthless and we administered it to you, every single one of you who received an email like that would feel sick and angry.

Why? Because they didn't handle the drugs properly. They didn't handle the vaccines properly to your harm and it's because we're talking of the real world that the Bible says what it says.

But some of you might say, George, and this is a very, very valid pushback, you'd say, George, well how do you know the difference between quarreling over words? How do you know the difference between irreverent babble and rightly handling the word of truth?

Like, George, how on earth do you know that? I mean, George, you've been involved in controversies, I know you have and so how do you know when you're doing that or what? Like, what's going on, George?

And if you have that question, that is the world's best question because, you see, that's part of the point of verses 14 to 16 because I have to come to God and say, God, is it I?

[30 : 49] In this case, is it me? Like, which one am I here, God? I shouldn't come to the text arrogantly presuming that I'm only always rightly handling the word of truth, that there's no ego ever in me, that I never want to win an argument, that's what other people do, that's not...

Time out, George. Part of the point of the mystery of the text is on one level we all understand the distinction between this, we all understand it. What we don't always understand is which side of the distinction we were just on three minutes ago.

And so this text, you see, I have to watch the time, this text is calling for you and me and us as a church to constantly have moments of moral reflection about our own lives.

Jesus warns us about seeing specks in other people's eyes and not seeing the log sticking out of our own eyes. The book of Psalms warns us about the problem we have of flattering ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

And so a text like this is to call me, not to say that I'm never going to try to actually defend the truth. It's not that I'm never going to actually try to be careful with words, but to always come out of it and say, okay, you know, Lord, was I...

[32 : 15] What was going on there in my life? Like, was I just... Did I cross a line at some point in there? Was I doing something to manipulate the other person?

Was I doing something to belittle the other person? Was I doing something to shame them? Was I just coming on so heavy that I... Was I stopping... Was I stopping listening? Did I stop listening?

Did I just listen to the first three words they said and then close my ears as I formulated my rebuttal? Have I walked away thinking how proud and wonderful I was with my cutting word, my telling word, that I got you word?

Is that what went on in me? Lord, did I just leave that conversation as a bully? As an arrogant person?

You see, here's where the gospel is very important. The word Christian doesn't mean good. The word Christian means a follower of Jesus.

[33 : 21] Why do I need to be a follower of Jesus? Because I do wrong things and I can't fix myself. I need a savior. And that's part of the profound and wonderful news of the gospel.

Is that Jesus doesn't weigh my merits. He doesn't say, oh gosh, George is so brilliant. He's so articulate. He's so winsome. He's always gentle. I'm going to bring him into my kingdom because boy, is he ever going to add value.

No, that's not how the gospel works. I was a person completely and utterly caught in self-deception and I needed the Holy Spirit to pierce the darkness and blindness of my mind and bring the red pill into the center of who I am and I need the grace of God to take my anger, my pride, my vanity, to pierce all of that and bring me that red pill of the gospel that I would know my savior who saves me and saves you not weighing my merits but pardoning my offenses, who saves the angry, who saves the timid, who saves the proud, who saves the weak, who saves the person who has no backbone and the one who's just completely and utterly encased in armor, who saves the indigenous in the First Nations and the black, the people from the Caribbean and Africa and Singapore and China and the Middle East and Afghanistan and Canada not weighing our merits but we need a savior,

I need a savior, you need a savior. There is a savior. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. You see, this tells us another important thing is to know the truth about God, the world and yourself is a moral quest.

To know the truth about God, the world and yourself is a moral quest. It's not just an intellectual quest, it's a moral quest to believe that there is a way of solving difficulties that doesn't involve fists, that there is a truth that does exist, that you can have a conversation, that you can listen, that you can hopefully enter into in a way which is gentle and respectful of the other person and that you can pursue the truth, that you as Christians, because we have a father in heaven, that we can pray that people who disagree with us, that they will come to know the truth, that we can pray that if we are blinded about this particular issue, if my privilege or my skin color or my power has blinded me to privilege, that Lord, have mercy upon me and deliver me from my blindness that I might know the truth, that I might be humbled by truth, mastered by truth in a way which is always loving of you and loving of your creation and loving of other people.

[36 : 17] Lord, have mercy upon me, have mercy upon us. May we be a community of truth and love for the glory of God and for the good of people.

Just, it's the time I just, let's just read the rest of the text so you hear it. Verse 17, or verse 16, but avoid irreverent babble for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness and their talk will spread like gandrine.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus who have swerved from the truth saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. What's probably going on there is if this idea that somehow or another I've just, whoa, I'm resurrected.

I'm already living in the heavenlies. Well, what my body does doesn't matter and how can you say that I lied, that I, like, it's a way to actually, it's a way to make you sound religious and spiritual while it pardons the crap and the lies and the anger and the violence and the evil you do.

That matters. That matters. And then it goes on and says in verse 19, but God's firm foundation stands bearing this seal.

[37 : 35] The Lord knows those who are his. You know what, I don't have the time. I shouldn't say that. Go back in your devotions and read the rest of this text. But here's the point about the text.

Since people, and it's already been covered in the stuff that's going on, you'll go back and you'll see that the fact that the truth, knowing the truth is a moral quest, it means you have to flee certain things and pursue certain things.

And pursuing things like faithfulness to God and being right with God matter if you want to know the truth because it's too easy for my pride to make me hurt people and for my pride to no longer want to know the truth.

It's too easy for that to happen. To know the truth isn't just a matter of the mind, it's also a matter of a moral quest. And here's the thing, since people matter to God, people should matter to you.

Therefore, seek to win the person for Christ, not the argument for your ego. Since people matter to God, people should matter to you.

[38 : 38] Therefore, seek to win the person for Christ, not the argument for your ego. And in the secular world, if you're in the business world, if you're in the scientific world, if you're in the media world, I mean, to seek to win the world for Christ, you can't maybe always try to win them for Christ, but you can win for the good of the culture, the good of the people, because the truth is good for you.

Don't live by lies. Don't live by hatred. Let's be people of truth and people of love. Please stand. I invite you to stand. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you continue to do this wonderful, miraculous work.

You've done it, Father, for very powerful people where you've pierced the darkness and brought the gospel home to them. You've done it for addicts and you've done it for alcoholics.

You've done it for housewives, for soccer moms. You've done it for politicians. You've done it for working class people, Father, that you continue to desire people to know Jesus, to know that he is the way, the truth, and the life, that he loves them, that he is the Savior, that he is the one that can fit them for heaven, that to make them, to begin to form them to be a person of the truth and a person of love.

And Father, we thank you that Jesus is still the Savior, that you are still bringing him to people. And we ask, Father, for our loved ones and our friends who do not yet know Jesus, that you would bring Jesus home to them and that they would take the red pill of the gospel.

[40 : 17] And if there is anyone here who is present or watching this online, Father, that the Holy Spirit would move in their lives, that they would take the red pill of the gospel. And Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would so form us by the gospel, so form us by your word, that your Holy Spirit should be so real and active within us, that not only that each one of us as individuals will be a person of love and a person of the truth, but that we, a Church of the Messiah, that we will be a community, Father, of love, a community of the truth for your great glory and for the good of our city, the good of our nation, the good of our world.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen.