

The Battle for Truth

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[0:00] John 17, verse 17.

I want to talk about truth. What is truth? How can we tell the difference between truth and error? How can we know what's right, what's wrong? It's important, isn't it? That we know what's right, what's true and what is not true, what is error.

And we see in John 17, verse 17, the Lord Jesus in his prayer for the disciples there says, Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth.

The Lord Jesus prays to the Father, Sanctify them, make them holy through thy truth. Thy word is truth. God's word is truth. And it's important that we start with that building, we start that building with that foundation of truth.

The truth of the word of God, that's the foundation that we build on. And the word of God is truth. It's God's truth. And in Romans 1, verse 25, it talks in the context of immorality, as some who change the truth of God into a lie.

[1:19] There's people who change God's truth into a lie. And that is true today, that this is happening today. And yet the foundation hasn't changed, has it? The Bible is unchanging.

The Lord Jesus says that not one jot or tittle, not one inchy piece of God's word is going to change. He says that it will be forever.

That the word of God will not pass away. The word of God is forever. And yet the foundation is changing in many circles today.

The people are moving away from the Bible as the foundation for living and for building a church, for building on truth. And yet the Bible is complete, it's all sufficient.

The Bible is our complete source of information. And really it's absolute truth. It's the final authority. As many religions of our day, they don't believe in final authority.

[2:16] They don't believe there's actually something that is an unchanging rule of faith and conduct. Yet the Bible says that it is true. It's true forever. As it says in Psalm 119 verse 89, the psalmist says, Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.

Psalm 119 verse 89, the whole psalm 119 is about the word of God. And the psalmist says that, Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. God's word is forever and it's for us.

And it's sufficient, it's absolute. It's not being revised and updated. God's truth does not change. It's changeless. It doesn't change according to the whims and fancies of men, of fans, of the day.

Yet the modern church, in some ways, it's going astray from the truth of God's word. We're seeing this shift. This shift that's going on from the word of God. A shifting away from the word of God's truth.

And truth is being abandoned. It's not popular. We warn that in the last days this is going to happen. That in the last days that the truth would be fallen away from. Like it says in 2 Thessalonians 2 verses 3 to 4, it talks about how the context there is of the end times, of the deception of the end times.

[3:36] And Paul says to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 3, he says, Let no man deceive you by any means. For that day shall not come except the come of falling away first.

So God's word predicts that there will come a time, and I believe it's really in our time, that there will come a falling away.

I believe we're seeing that already. At least certainly, there's certainly that trend, that there is a falling away. And God's word warns that in the end times, so in the end of planet earth, in the end of the world as we know it, that there will be this marking, this mark of false prophets, this mark of a false gospel, of false doctrine, and of a falling away.

So we need to be alert to that. As God's people, as really what can be seen as through the word of God as the remnant at times of the people that love the Lord and his truth, that we need to be alert to these things of false doctrine, of falling away, of a false gospel.

And 2 Timothy 4, again it talks along the same line as well. 2 Timothy 4, from verse 3, it says that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

[4:53] They won't want sound teaching. The people won't endure it. They won't want it. But after their own lusts, they shall heed to themselves teachers having itching ears. So they're going to want teachers that will pamper and pander to their wants.

They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and they shall be turned to fables, it says. They shall be turned to really lies, to fiction. And the Lord warns his people that this is what will happen at the end of planet Earth's days, that we are to watch out for this time.

When the truth is going to be abandoned for falsehood, the truth is going to be turned away from, and sound doctrine is going to be turned away from, people are going to turn to fables instead. And the world today, as we can see it, really, the signs are all around us of how the world today has got a kind of fuzzy-wuzzy kind of faith, a kind of airy-fairy kind of faith or spirituality, as they sometimes call it.

But this is dangerous because it's a way and it's a stray from God's word. Ultimately, this kind of movement will lead to where all kinds of churches, without any thought for teaching or truth, are going to band together.

And ultimately, all kinds of religions will come into this false kind of unity that the Bible says will one day lead to a one-world religion that will come and will oppose all true and faithful Christians.

[6:16] And in the name of religion, in the name of God, too. And why is this happening? Why will this happen? Because people are getting away from the foundation, the foundation of true faith in Christ and his word.

And John prophesies of a mysterious woman called the Mother of Harlots in Revelation 17. And it's the church structure that this woman is a picture of, that she's sitting on a city of seven hills.

And there's really only one place that you could say that a church headquarters is in a city with seven hills. And it's Rome. It's the Roman Catholic Church.

And ancient prophecies are coming alive today, where we're seeing this truth fulfilled in our day, where we're seeing this falsehood that's been prevalent and prevailing and sweeping across Christendom.

All the kinds of churches are falling into line with Rome. You know, all roads lead to Rome. And we're seeing that trend in the world today. The ancient prophecies are coming alive today.

[7:22] Another thing that the word of God talks about is how there's going to be an end times kind of false signs and wonders movement. It will not be of God, but of Satan. It will be a delusion that will deceive many.

And we've seen that in some circles today, where there's all kinds of weird things going on. I've seen some amazing videos of so-called latter-day prophets that are coming out with all kinds of crazy talk.

And people are believing them. Even though it's not got any foundation in the word of God. It's not founded on the truth that comes from God. And really, it's a delusion. The Bible says there's going to be a turning away from the faith, from the truth, to these kind of false movements, these false kind of apostate things that are departing from the truth.

Even though they might have apparent miracle workers too, we can see all kinds of talk of that. And yet, there's a falsehood that is the foundation of it, which is making it all questionable from the beginning.

And the Lord Jesus warns us. He warns his people, his disciples. He says, let no man deceive you. Let no man deceive you. He says there's going to be false Christ. There's going to be lying signs and wonders.

[8:34] There's going to be false prophets. And the Lord Jesus says that the time will come when he says, many will say to me in that day, the day of judgment. This is Matthew 7, 22.

Many will say, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils. And in thy name have done many wonderful works. And then will I, the Lord Jesus, then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. These are not some kind of Christians that stopped becoming Christians. These were people who never were Christians. Even though they're supposedly doing miraculous works, casting out devils, wonderful works in his name, doing all kinds of prophesying and whatnot in his name, the Lord Jesus says, I never knew you.

They were never his in the beginning. They were doing all these things, calling Jesus Lord, yet without really knowing him. And in the last days it says that perilous times are going to come.

A modern signs of wonders movement that's astray from true doctrine, from the truth of God. It's a corruption of the truth by the power of Satan. And it will deceive and lead many away into false doctrine.

[9:47] And the Lord Jesus, through Paul, he says in 2 Timothy 1, Paul says, hold fast in verse 13, 2 Timothy 1, 13, hold fast to the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

He says there's going to be some need to hold fast to the form of sound words. Hold this fast. Hold the word of God true and hard.

Hold it fast, the sound doctrine. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast.

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Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. Hold it fast. up with the word of God? Does it align with God's truth? And is what the preacher is saying, is it biblical truth? Is it biblical teaching? Is it founded and based upon the Bible, the word of God? Or is it just some kind of gobbledygook that's just giving people some kind of positive message or some kind of worldly kind of philosophy or some kind of philosophy that's based on prosperity or some other kind of teaching, some kind of man-made doctrine and teaching? Or is it teaching people about how to be saved?

How can we find salvation? How can we find Christ as our saviour, as our master, as our Lord?

How can I find the truth that I can live by, the truth that I can apply in my day by day? Is it that kind of truth? Is it faith that's founded upon the word? And so it's got to have that foundation. And

secondly, it's got to have that characteristic of the freedom that Christ can give. In John 8, 32, the

Lord Jesus talks to his disciples and he says to them, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. He says that we can be free indeed. We can be absolutely free, totally free.

Now some people think that freedom is just doing whatever you want, however you want, with no body to answer to, with no rules, with no God to be accountable to. That's not really freedom.

Freedom is knowing Christ as master, as saviour, as life as he has designed it to be, lived in his will, lived in his way, lived in accordance with his blessings and his guidance for your life. And the most important thing, of course, we know is salvation. It's salvation. I'm not taking it for granted tonight that everybody here knows the saviour. You might have been to church of different flavours and kinds. You might have heard people speak from the Bible or heard it on TV and yet not know it personally for yourself. How can I be saved? As the jailer cried out in

[12:57] Philippi and the apostle Paul, he said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And what a wonderful blessing it was to see that jailer as he put his trust in Christ and the truth set him free. Here was Paul and Silas in the prison and yet they were truly free. They knew Christ and the jailer who held them behind bars. He was really not free until he received Christ. As he trusted him, as he believed on Christ, the truth set him free. And that's what truth does. That's what Bible truth does. And that's where if you can come to a church where the Bible is preached, where Christ is preached, where the gospel of salvation is preached, you can find freedom, liberty, and your soul can be won, your soul can be set free. And a battle is going on against the forces of evil today. Because the enemy doesn't want people to hear the message of salvation. The enemy doesn't want people to hear the gospel of how Christ can save a soul, about salvation, about souls,

about the message of repentance, of righteousness. The devil doesn't want people to get this message. He wants to keep people confined and barred and imprisoned. He doesn't want you to be set free. But the Lord Jesus says, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. And the Lord Jesus himself, he says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He is the one who is truth personified in his own person. He is the truth. And the truth is something that we want to stand up and be counted for. It's been said that the church of Rome has not changed its beliefs. And it's more than 100 anathemas, which are saying, basically curses, damning those who accept the biblical gospel. You know, back in the reformers' day, they had these 100 anathemas, talking about people who believe in justification by faith, as we heard about earlier today. We think about grace, about faith, about salvation, through God's grace, through Calvary. The Roman church still damns people who accept the biblical gospel.

And it says in the Roman Catholic teaching, it says, if anyone says that the sacraments of the Roman Catholic rituals are not necessary for salvation, but that without them, men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification, let him be anathema. This is the teaching, current teaching of the Roman Catholic church, for which martyrs were burned under this law of the church, so-called. And it says, if anyone says that in the mass a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God, let him be anathema. Let him be cursed, it says. In other words, let him be damned to hell. If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice, consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory one, and not to be offered for the dead for sins, let him be anathema. Of course, the Roman teaching is that the Roman priest actually changes the substance of the bread and of the cup into the real body and blood.

Of course, we know as Bible believers, it's purely a picture for us. It's a representation to us of Calvary. It's not reenacted as the Roman system would teach. And they would teach that people actually can receive salvation in effect through believing in this miraculous changing of the substance of the priest, and that these things can be offered for the dead who've already died, that somehow that can be helpful to them. And people spend money to buy masses off these priests to supposedly help their dead loved ones. But the Bible says nothing of the sort. There's nothing in the Bible about such teachings, and so we know it's absolutely false. And yet, today we're seeing people bowing down to the Roman system in the ecumenical movement of today. Even people like Billy Graham. He's recommended a biography of Pope Paul VI, which encouraged devotion to Mary, the saints, worship of the wafer at the mass, and trust in the sacraments for salvation. And he called this book a classic in devotion.

Billy Graham praised the Pope Paul VI's book. And this is Pope Paul VI who said to a Hindu leader, Sri Chinmoy, your gospel and my gospel are the same. That's what Pope Paul VI said.

[17:50] And it's crazy, isn't it? And yet, some Christian, or supposedly Christian, evangelical leaders are saying to Rome, your gospel and our gospel are the same. Having visited Pope John Paul II several times, Billy Graham calls him the world's greatest evangelist. And he says that there's really no differences in that theology as far as personal salvation is concerned. We should be concerned about such things, brothers and sisters, that people are looked up to as leaders of the Christian church are toying with Rome and the false gospel of Rome. And it's a compromise. We're to be called out from the world and from false teaching. And people today, how we need the preaching of the truth of the gospel of salvation through Christ, faith in Christ and his grace that saves us. And it's because the Lord Jesus died on the cross for our sins that we can have everlasting life by faith and trust in his work on our behalf, on everything that he has done for us. That's what can save us from sin and hell. And people today, if only we could just broadcast that message loud and clear worldwide, that this message can be clearly proclaimed. And yet in some circles we're not seeing this, that it's watered down, it's compromised, it's turned away from. The preaching of holiness, of judgment, of repentance, it's neglected. And the soul-saving truth of God's word is hindered and hampered from reaching people. And as God's people, it says in the word of God, ye that love the Lord hate

evil. If we are to love the Lord Jesus, we are to hate evil and sin.

We're to find the freedom that Christ gives to follow him. And lastly, the fear of God is another aspect of the truth of God. In Proverbs 1 verse 7 it says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. The fear of the Lord, it's not entertainment, it's the fear of the Lord, it's the soul-saving truth of God's truth that can hit home. The hard truth, the disturbing truth, but yet the necessary truth. The sword of the Lord needs to strike and penetrate our hearts and cut deep and prick the conscience and to go beyond mere emotional experience and to give us sound doctrine.

The word of God, the teaching, the truth that can set our soul free. This is what we need. And sometimes we might hear from the word of God things that might strike a chord, they might come close to the bone, they might make us feel unnerved, uncomfortable. And we might feel like the people in Isaiah 30, they said to the prophet there that they wanted to have smooth things, they wanted to have pleasant things. And Isaiah said of them in 30 verse 9, this is a rebellious house, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord, which say to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. And it goes on how they wanted to steer away from the holy one. They didn't want anything to do with the holy one. They wanted smooth things. They wanted easy and pleasant things. They didn't want the hard-litting truth. And that's true today. I mean, it's our human nature, isn't it? It's in all of us, but we just want something cozy and comfy and pleasant and easy on the ears. Not something that will challenge us where we're at, of our spiritual walk, of our understanding of God's truth, of our application of it in our lives.

Are we truly free? Are we free? It says, if you know the truth, you shall be free indeed. If you know Christ, you'll be truly free. You'll be truly set free from sin's bondage. If you know the foundation, it says that we can build upon it. As we see the story of our Lord speaking of the man who built his house on the sand, in other words, of worldly living, it was just washed away when the storms came. And then we see, as he talks of the man who built his house on, he built his life upon the word of God as the foundation for his life. And that house stood the test of time, of the elements of that which was against it. And likewise, too, for your life. What is it that your life is built on? Is it the foundation of truth?

Is it the foundation of God's word? I trust that it is. And that lastly, we'll have that fear of the Lord that will be translated into our lives in holiness of living, in holiness of thinking, of walking. And we'll have that reverence for the Lord God Almighty, the absolute holy one, the holy one. And we'll think of him who says, the Lord Jesus sanctified and make them holy through thy truth. Thy word is true. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

[23:02] That's the one that Isaiah saw as he saw the Lord seated in his holy place in that holy temple as this train of his robe filled the temple. And people today, we need to be realising that truth is under attack. It's under attack. I know I've experienced it in my day-by-day life, too, of late, where the word of God and Christians who stand up for the truth, we're a target.

We're in the enemy's sights and the world doesn't like Christians. It's a fact. And we know that, as it's been said, he who wants to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come into conflict with it. It's going to mean that as a Christian, you're going to be facing some opposition, maybe in your family, maybe in your social life, that you'll know that persecution that comes from the truth. And we'll be unlike those, the user-friendly, seeker-sensitive megachurches where they could barely cause an offence if they tried because they've adulterated God's glorious gospel so much that it's scarcely evident. But we'll be a church that's solid, that's square, that's founded squarely and truly on God's truth, that we won't be washed into the murky waters and blown around with the winds of doctrine that we see in the ecumenical movement where it's pluralism and relativism and everything's relative. There is no absolute truth in some circles. There is no final authority because they don't hear the word of God. It's a religion that's based on, as we've seen, the Lord Jesus speaking that will happen of this apostasy to come, of another Jesus, of another spirit, of another gospel, another Christ. And going away really from the one who the Lord Jesus says through Paul to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6.15, that the Lord Jesus is the only potentate. In other words, the highest being of power, the highest potentate, the only potentate.

And this one of Paul, he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation. Friends, we need to know that gospel, to know that one who is the subject of the

word of God from Genesis to Revelation, really. As it's been said, he's in every book of the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ. We need to know him, whom to know his life eternal. And be alert to those that say, as in Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus says, the Son's going to come and say, lo, here is the Christ, or over there. He says, believe it not, there's going to be false Christ, there's going to be false prophets that shall show great signs and wonders. And judgment is coming. When we see these things, this worldwide movement, that I believe we're already seeing evidence of today, of a one world religion, where it's just a whole big conglomeration that will be acceptable to everyone. There'll be no place in that movement for the true gospel, for the true message of salvation in Christ. And we need to contend for the faith earnestly, because perilous times are coming. And I believe they're really contemporary with us today, that we're seeing the signs of the end of planet Earth. We're seeing the signs, and really, it's an encouragement for us, as the Bible says, when you see these things, lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh. We know that the Lord Jesus, when we see these things, it's an encouragement for us that the Lord Jesus is really just around the corner. And people tonight, just to close, let me encourage you that in these days of challenge, of testing, of persecution, and maybe increasingly so, stand for the truth. Let it be the truth that is founded on the foundation of the Word of God. Let it be the truth that will make a difference, a soul-saving difference, where there'll be true freedom from it. It's the truth that shall set you free, and it's the truth that will make a difference in your day by day, as we see the fear of the Lord will be evident in the message, in the practice, in our walk, day by day, that Christ will make a difference in our lives. And I trust that that will be true for everyone here tonight. We're going to close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord God, for your truth, that you are the truth, Lord Jesus, that you are the way, the truth, and the life. And no man comes to the Father, but by you. And Lord, we put our hearts' faith in you. Pray for everybody here tonight, that they'll know how to find that faith, that you'll give them that faith, that you will create that faith in their hearts, Lord, that they might respond to that tugging of your Holy Spirit on their heartstrings, that they might say, Lord Jesus, I can see that you died on the cross for my sin, so that I can trust your work, so I can be saved today by virtue of what you have done. Lord, we thank you for that faith that you can give that's based on the Word of God, that life that you can give, that freedom you can give, as your truth will set people free. Lord, help us to communicate that message to those around, that others might find that faith too, as they put their hearts' trust in what you've done for us at the cross. We thank you, Lord, for that. Help us, Lord, to walk in that truth, to contend for that truth, to stand for that truth. In every day ahead, as you give us time on this planet further, let us use our time wisely, we pray, Lord, that you would be honoured. In Jesus' name, Amen.