

What is Truth

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[0 : 00] of isolation in different parts of the world, cooking has become a popular thing to do. And so with this picture, what impression does this picture of food give you?

How do you decide if this food tastes good? And how do we know if this is good for us to eat?

So that is something that you bear in mind. Afterwards, during the discussion, we talk about this. So in 1984, Time Magazine made a feature report on the bad effects of cholesterol.

But then 30 years later, Time Magazine changed its mind and advised its readers to eat butter. So that is the change in opinion.

And last year, the United States Department of Agriculture released a list of foods that are most likely to meet our daily nutrition needs.

[1 : 02] So they tested a thousand different types of foods. And they selected the top 100 most nutritious food. So we can look at the bottom three of the first 100.

There are sweet potato, figs and ginger. And then we go to the top three. So these are almond, surimoyah, there's custard apple and ocean perch.

Now, interestingly, if we go to number 10 to eight, they are snapper, beet greens and pork fat. Can you believe that pork fat ranks number eight out of 1000 most nutritious foods?

It is more nutritious than snapper. Now I'm not making a statement about what we should eat. This is just a simple exercise to help us to think how we usually form our opinions.

We make up our minds usually based on experiential truth and traditional truth. So experience truth is what we learn by experience and what we see, what we hear, what we touch.

[2 : 12] Traditional truth is what we learn from our cultures and social norms, what our parents told us, what our teachers told us, our friends and our society.

Okay. So these two aspects of truth, how we learn how to form our opinions about things, but they're not necessarily accurate if we rely on them only.

We would know that and I know that from my own experience. As I see patients and make decisions day to day, and I just find that when I judge people just on the surface, it's so often that I make mistakes in what I see or presume to be.

So we need a third aspect of truth to help us. That is the revealed truth. Truth that is not because we experience or been taught to us or from society, but from even a higher authority.

That is just like this, just now about the pop facts that we would not learn from our own experience or our culture, but the scientists somehow found that.

[3 : 30] Okay. So that is the revealed truth. So first of all, I would like to consider about experiential truth. So experiential truth, traditional truth, and revealed truth.

So experiential truth, we consider about what Pilate think or thought about Jesus. So when Pilate asked the question whether Jesus was the king of the Jews, he wasn't asking because he wanted to verify Jesus' pedigree, whether he was already a king.

Actually, I'm sure Pilate would have make up his mind the moment he saw Jesus, about who Jesus was. So he would have heard about Jesus before then, that Jesus was born outside of a wet log, into a carpenter's home family, this poor family, growing up in the insignificant town of Lazarus.

And he, Jesus had a band of uneducated and uncultured followers from the north. And also he would have heard that Jesus was not in a good term with the Jewish leadership.

So that's what he heard. But what did he see now when Jesus appeared before him? When Jesus would be disheveled or unkempt, because Jesus had spent the whole night without sleeping, and no washing up.

[4 : 58] And Jesus' hands were bound. And also from the Bible, we know that Jesus had no form or majesty that Pilate would even care to look at him, or had no beauty that Pilate would esteem him.

So just from what Pilate hear and see about Jesus, he already make up his mind who Jesus was. So why did Pilate ask the question then?

I think Pilate just did not know what to do with Jesus. His experience with Jesus told him that Jesus was a nobody. This could be the most ridiculous case that Pilate was asked to make a ruling on.

Pilate, do you know how he would explain to Caesar why he would crucify a nobody? However, Pilate's experience with the Jewish leaders told him that if he did not cooperate with them, he would lose their support.

So in his reply to Pilate, Jesus was neither angry nor fearful. Jesus wanted Pilate to think about his question. Did Pilate somehow perceive the kingship of Jesus?

[6 : 14] Or did he just repeat what other people told him? Pilate's opinion about Jesus? The way we consider pork fat is like the way Pilate was considering Jesus.

Once we have decided, we make our mind pork fat is bad for our health, it is very difficult to change his opinion. And we all know that if we are aware of how we make our minds about things.

And it's very difficult for us to change. Even if the circumstances tell us that we could be wrong, sometimes we are so stubborn, we just don't want to change.

So unless the Holy Spirit convict Pilate's opinion about Jesus based on his experience would remain unchanged regardless of what Jesus said. So now this may be a good time for us to pause and think about our own opinions about God, about other people, about ourselves.

Is it possible that we could be wrong all these years about things? And I think it is always a good thing for us to think about this, about how we form our opinions.

[7 : 32] So the next aspect of truth, I would like us to consider a traditional truth. Pilate did not ask Jesus, sorry, Pilate did not answer Jesus' question kindly.

Jesus asked him how he formed his opinion. He was a bit annoying. So he said, how I form my opinion is not the point. I'm not one of you people and I don't care what the Jews believe.

The point is that your people have handed you over to me. What have you done to upset the Jewish traditions? And in his kindness, Jesus explained to Pilate that he, Jesus did not conform to the traditions of the world.

Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of the world, my servants would have been fighting that I might not be delivered to the Jews.

I was born and come to this world for this purpose, to bear witness to the truth. I think if I could paraphrase it, this is what Jesus was telling Pilate.

[8 : 38] He said, Pilate, my kingdom is nothing like yours. Your kingdom is a kingdom of poverty, a kingdom without glory. In your kingdom, everyone craves for richness and glory.

In your kingdom, you compete with one another for richness and glory. Your self-esteem is based on your achievements and appearance. You are a governor, yet your heart is still restless.

You fear Caesar may remove you from this position if you do not cooperate with the Jewish leaders. You fear your lieutenants, lieutenants may betray you.

My kingdom is not like this. My kingdom is rich and glorious. I do not need to wear impressive clothes. I do not even need to have an attractive face.

All the external appearance will not add to my richness and glory. I am rich and glorious. I do not need my people to fight for me. In fact, I fight for my people.

[9 : 40] And my people will be given this richness and glory that they would no longer compete with one another, but would love one another. So Jesus was explaining that his kingdom is nothing like the kingdom of this world.

Remember during the time of Samuel in the Old Testament, God was very angry when the Israelites asked to have a king like the nations around them.

God did promise the Israelites that they would have a king. Then why did God become so angry when the Israelites asked for it? It's just because they wanted a king like the nations around them.

And that's exactly what God didn't want to have. They want to have a kingdom like the rest of the world. God set aside the Israelites to have a kingdom that is different.

And so God was angry at the time when they asked for that king. So if we integrate life based on traditions and cultures, we want to be strong and powerful so as to live comfortably.

[11 : 00] Just like the Israelites, they want to be strong. They want to be strong. They want to have army, the armed force and to be well known. So when we do that, we want to be strong and powerful.

So when we do that, we will compete for supporters and resources. The Jewish leaders plotted to get rid of Jesus because of the fear of losing supporters.

Pilate is now cooperating with the Jewish leaders to crucify an innocent person because of his fear of losing their support.

So what are you going to do? Will defend on idea from define someone that these world is important or for their teachers do? That's a great tip for us to learn how to son and flourish. I can talk on do it and it's good to think about that.

So we can now, we'll come back to the original question, what is true? So Pilate then asked Jesus, what is true? So without waiting for Jesus to reply, he walked away.

[12 : 14] Pilate was not asking if there is such a thing as true. Pilate was saying, who cares if there is such a thing as true? Pilate was telling Jesus, I know you're innocent, I know you're framed by the Jews, but it is in my own interest that I cooperate with the Jews.

I have the power to decide your life and death. How can truth help you? We do live in a world where truth is not important. Though we said it's important, but when you come to things that will give us benefits, or we would then sacrifice this truth, children would quickly learn that you do not usually get what you want by telling the truth.

Sometimes it's our good intention that we do not tell the truth, as we think that some truth may hurt the hearer. So because of the manipulation of truth and cover up truth, it is difficult for the court to communicate.

We just second guess one another and see whether people are actually telling the truth. So if someone tells you, you look handsome or pretty today, you may respond with thank you, but in your heart, you might be thinking something else.

We all do that because of the way we treat the truth. In a way, Pilate was right. Some truth in the end may not matter.

[13 : 52] However, Pilate thought that power was what would matter. He was wrong here. What matters is the truth, is the truth, the truth with a capital T.

So once you know the truth, you will be free as what David read just now from John 8, 31-32. Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

This truth was why Jesus came to the world. This truth is not something we can learn from experience or traditions. It can only be revealed to us. So we now come to this part of considering what the revealed truth is.

So this truth is the one that will set us free and it's written in the pages of the Bible. That's why Jesus said if you abide in my word, you will be free.

So I will mention just three important points of the truth. So point one is that God reigns. That is from Isaiah chapter 52 verse 7.

[15 : 09] How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns. And as we are reading this story of Jesus, he is the one who brings this good news.

He lives up this good news. Your God reigns. Point two, Jesus has overcome the world. John 16 33. I have said these things to you, to the disciples, that in me you may have peace.

In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world. Point three, God loves the world. John 3 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believed in him should not perish but have eternal life.

So I'll come back to those three points. Point one, God reigns. God is ruling his creation. Looking at the way Jesus was being treated by the Jews and Pilate, it does not seem God was in charge.

But we see again in the story, who was calm and composed, and who was frantic and irritated. Even without going deeper into it, looking at how different people react to the situation, you can see that Jesus was in charge.

[16 : 36] Throughout the book of John, Apostle John takes pains to point out the fact that God is working out his purpose in the life of Jesus. So in a way, Jesus was proclaiming the truth even louder when he was bound than when he was free, because of how he responded to the whole situation.

So because the good and great God is in charge, Jesus did not need to worry and he did not need to take charge of the situation.

The same thing as well for us. I don't need to be in charge. God is in charge. I do not need to win every argument, even though I think my opinion is more valid.

I do not need to vindicate myself, even though I believe that I misunderstood and overlooked. That's exactly what Jesus didn't do. He didn't need to do. If Pilate knew and believed in this truth, he would have behaved differently.

The second point is Jesus has overcome the world. So we can consider that the world is proud and self-centered. Jesus has overcome this world.

[17 : 55] How did Jesus overcome the world? Jesus did not fight hatred with hatred. Jesus did not fight self-centeredness with self-centeredness.

Jesus overcome the world by bearing the hatred of the world and the wrath of God on the cross. Sometimes I have reservation with telling our children that Jesus is like the superhero in the mobis.

Jesus is not neither superheroes who use their superpower to overcome their enemies. Jesus overcomes his super weakness. Because Jesus has overcome the world, I no longer need to conform to the ways of this world.

I don't need to follow what the world does or tell me to do. I'm free from needing to seek fairness for myself. I'm free from needing to show others how strong I am.

It doesn't matter anymore. Point three, God loves the world. In response to the world's hatred towards him, God loves the world.

[19 : 00] God did not command Jesus to come and conquer the world. God did not send Jesus to negotiate with the world. God gave Jesus. He gave Jesus as a worthy sacrifice to fulfill the righteousness of God. Pilate asked the Jews whom he should release from prison as a sign of good will for their Passover.

The Jews chose Barabbas who was guilty of robbery and insurrection and led Jesus the innocent one to take his place. And this is the meaning of Passover that the innocent Lamb of God died to shed his blood so that the guilty ones could be set free and live.

When we can understand why Jesus was crucified and believe in him we start to understand life is not about winning.

We are then free to lose. We are free to lose our faith. We are free to lose our health. We are free to lose our properties. We are then perishing in the fears and worries of this world but a life that is anchored on the truth that God reigns that Jesus overcome the world that God loves the world.

For those of us who are old enough we will still remember the epidemic of smallpox. The smallpox virus could have killed up to a billion people over his 2,000 years of existence in the world.

[20 : 41] The way to prevent smallpox was recognized about 500 years ago. Most people rejected the vaccination until about 100 years ago.

It took another 70 years before smallpox was eradicated. It took smallpox a lot more worse than the COVID-19.

It took a long time to stop this disease because people thought it was foolish to inflict yourself with the cowpox virus and the medical establishment then rejected this method until those who promoted vaccination vaccinated themselves and showed people that they were okay.

That's why it took a long time for this to happen. So would you eat pork fat? If you see the scientists who published this finding and they started to eat pork fat for many years and didn't have any problem then we might start eating pork fat.

So the same way it is difficult to believe that Jesus will achieve much by subjecting himself to these kangaroo courts and also the shameful and painful death on the cross.

[22 : 04] Even Peter changed his mind about Jesus and denied that he was one of the followers of Jesus when it came to the point. But exactly because Jesus was willing to die for what he stands for, we know that Jesus was telling the truth.

Later, all his disciples who deserted him at that time, they were also willing to die for this truth, for which purpose came to the world. Jesus is the highest authority who has revealed to us that he has a kingdom and this kingdom is nothing like that of this world.

He came to tell us what life is about. Will we listen to his voice? Pilate asked, so you are king? Jesus answered, you say that I am a king.

Jesus implied that if you admit that I am a king, you will also recognize that I am your king. if you understand that Jesus is the king of the kingdom of truth, why we will not submit to him as your king?

I will pray now and after I pray, we will sing the song, Behold Our God. Father God, we thank you for Jesus being the light in this dark world.

[23 : 35] Thank you for helping us to see this light. Father, may you help us those that have seen the light to be like the broken vessel that would leak out this light to other people, that many more may see your glory in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to worship you as our king and our God, the one who freed us from the bondage of this world.

may you help us to live a life that is worthy of your calling in the way we make our decisions, we form opinions about things and people.

Lord, help us that we might be willing to lose, willing to die for the truth. Thank you, Lord, for we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.