

Xplore - Truth - Reality

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Preacher: Steve Brown

[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 26th of October 2003. The preacher is Steve Brown.

His sermon is entitled Explore Truth Reality and is based on Romans chapter 1 verses 18 to 32. The Matrix movies are only popular for the amazing fight scenes or the graphics and all the other gizmos and whiz-bang stuff.

Because plenty of other movies have that stuff as well. The Matrix is popular because it asks the question, what is truth?

What is reality? It asks the question, which world do you live in? Is your world real or is it fake?

[1 : 16] Now if you don't believe me that the Matrix is all that deep or if you haven't seen it before, then just check this scene out. This is the construct.

It's our loading program. We can load anything from clothing to equipment, weapons, training simulations, anything we need.

Right now we're inside a computer program? Is it really so hard to believe? Your clothes are different. The plugs in your arms and head are gone. Your hair has changed.

Your appearance now is what we call residual self-image. It is the mental projection of your digital self. This isn't real.

What is real? How do you define real? If you're talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain.

[2 : 31] This is the world that you know. The world as it was at the end of the 20th century. It exists now only as part of a neural interactive simulation that we call the Matrix.

You've been living in a dream world, Neo. This is the world as it exists today. Welcome to the desert of the real.

If you didn't understand it, it's okay. I didn't understand it about the first five times I saw the movie.

But basically, in effect, the movie calls us to ask, which world am I living in?

The real world or the fake world? Amazingly, this movie appeals to youth. It's our youth who are asking the question, what is reality?

What is truth? Am I living in the real world or the fake world? You see, like a splinter in their mind, they think there's more to life than just school. Like a splinter in their mind, they suspect that TV, magazines, music, movies might give them some answers.

[4 : 05] Like a splinter in their mind, they look to movies like The Matrix to give them clarity. Like a splinter in their mind, they're searching for a real world to live in.

Our passage tonight is sort of like The Matrix. Basically, in effect, the passage calls us to ask, which world am I living in? The real world or the fake world?

If you've got it there in front of you, it'll really help. It's from verse 19. Romans chapter 1, verse 19. Verse 23.

Just last Saturday night at my sister-in-law's wedding, I sat down with a young guy called Sam. Sam had lots of questions about God. Sam had lots of ideas about how this world works.

And Sam seemed genuinely interested in finding out about the truth. He seemed genuinely interested in finding out about reality, getting a grip on reality. Sam wanted some clarity.

[5 : 31] And as I spoke to him, it became clear that he did agree that God existed. He did agree that God created the world. He agreed that humans had lost contact with God.

He even agreed that humans were sinful. It was amazing how Sam seemed to get all these basics right. He was clear about God, creation and sin.

And I've got to tell you, I was surprised by his amount of clarity. It sort of threw me a bit. But after reading this passage tonight, I shouldn't have been so surprised, should I?

Because our passage tonight says that God is pretty easy to understand. Ever since the year dot, God has been noticed by men and women.

Check out verse 20. Ever since the creation of the world, God's eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he's made.

[6 : 39] God has been noticed by men and women throughout history. And you just have to look at this beautiful world and you can't help noticing God.

You can know that he's powerful by looking at the world. You can know that he's purposeful. You can know that he's loving. You can know that he's relational.

You can know that he's perfect. You can know that he wants to communicate with us. And our passage tonight says that God is clearly seen through the things that he has made.

Do you live in that world? Do you live in the real world? The real world where God is clearly seen. Because this passage says that God is clear in the real world.

Even Sam, my friend, saw that. It was obvious to him. So if God is clear, why was I surprised to meet Sam?

[7 : 42] Why was I surprised to meet someone who actually clearly saw God's power in creation? I think the answer lies in verse 21. For though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.

You see, I was surprised to meet Sam because so many people in this world don't honour God. I was surprised to meet Sam because so many people in this world don't give thanks to him.

Because so many people ignore the reality that God is stamped all over creation. People ignore the real world and what it is saying to them.

In the Matrix, people are prisoners to a fake world. They're plugged into a supercomputer that runs a complex program directly into their brain, deceiving their minds.

They live in a fake world. They live in a computer-generated lie. They're ignorant of the fact that the world around them is false, that the world around them is a computerised lie.

[8 : 57] And as Morpheus says in the movie, he says this, and he sums it up by saying this, the Matrix is the world that has been pulled over your eyes, that blinds you from the truth, the truth that you are a slave in bondage.

People in the Matrix who are connected to this computer program are blissfully ignorant of this deception, living futile lives in a fake world, living lives in the dark, in a world that isn't real.

And in the same way, people today live lives in ignorance, blind to the fact that God is clearly stamped all over creation, blissfully ignorant, living lives that don't honour God and don't give thanks to God.

Do you live in that world? Do you live in that fake world? Do you live a life that ignores the obvious truth that God exists?

Living a separate life from God, living a separate life not honouring or thanking Him, living a separate life from God in a fake world. Tonight, the question is this, which world do you live in?

[10 : 26] Are you living in a world that clearly sees God? Or are you living in a world that ignores God? It's a very important question to ask because God says in verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who suppress the truth.

Those who suppress reality. You see, God is angry at those who live lives who ignore Him.

God is angry at those who live in a fake world. God is angry at those who ignore and suppress the truth. God is angry at those who ignore His real world and what it's clearly telling them.

God is angry at them because He made that world for us to enjoy, for us to live in and honour God in and to thank God for.

When we live in a world, in this world, and ignore the obvious about God, we live fake lives and God is angry. So how do we know which world we're living in?

[11 : 43] That's a good question. How do we know that? How do we know whether we're in the real world or the fake world? Well, God makes it clear for us. He helps us to identify which world we're actually in from verse 28.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness.

They are gossip, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious towards parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. They know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die.

Yet they not only do them, but they applaud others who practice them. Do you do these things? Do you do these things? You see, if we engage in these things, then we're living in the fake world, aren't we?

That's how we know whether we're living in a fake world or not, whether we do these things and engage in them. If we engage in these things, we're living as though God doesn't exist.

[12 : 59] If we engage in these things, we're living as though God will not punish them. We're living as though the fake world is better than the real world, just like the character cipher in the Matrix.

If you've seen it, you'll know who he is. Cipher is this guy who is free. He doesn't live in the fake world, he lives in the real world. He's come out of the fake world into the real world.

He's privy to the truth. He's seen the truth. He lives in the real world, but he rejects the real world in the end because he thought that the fake world had more to offer.

and at a very pivotal point in the movie, he says this, I've come to realise during my time outside the Matrix, ignorance is bliss.

Ignorance is bliss. You see, cipher would prefer to be ignorant than to know the truth. Cipher would prefer to prefer the fake Matrix to the real world.

[14 : 11] Cipher would prefer to indulge the senses in a fake world rather than live a little bit rough in the real world. So he rejects the real world and he tries to be reinserted back into the Matrix.

That's how desperate he is. You see, we often act like cipher, don't we? We often act like the fake world is better than the real world.

We often reinsert ourselves back into the fake world. Christians, we've had a taste of the real world. We've seen God in his creation.

We see him in his word. But we often go back and reinsert ourselves back into that fake world because we want to indulge ourselves in the sin of the fake world that the fake world offers.

You see, when you envy someone who has something that you want, you're living in the fake world. When you hear something private and you start to gossip, you're living in the fake world.

[15 : 22] When you slander people by putting them down in front of others, you're living in the fake world. When you boast about how good you are compared to others, you're living in the fake world. When you rebel against your parents' wishes, you're living in the fake world.

when you are heartless in the schoolyard when someone's getting picked on you're living in the fake world you're saying I'll take my chances God won't judge God doesn't exist God isn't stamped all over his creation and just like cipher you're saying ignorance is bliss as I spoke to Sam on Saturday night I started to get an uneasy feeling he agreed that God existed and that God created the world and that humans had lost contact with him and that he was sinful he recognised that but like the character cipher in the matrix he said in the end ignorance is bliss you see Sam had a glimpse of the real world as we spoke a glimpse of a world with God at the centre a glimpse of the world that had purpose the purpose of honouring and thanking him but he wanted to live a separate life in the end he didn't want to change his life he wanted to indulge the senses so he preferred the fake world to the real world so as we talk it sort of became obvious to me that he wanted to that he was going to reinsert himself into the fake world after our conversation ended he didn't want to honour God by living a life to serve him he didn't want to thank God for all that he had he wanted to indulge his senses for Sam ignorance was bliss tonight don't say ignorance is bliss don't envy don't gossip don't slander boast be rebellious to your parents don't be heartless to those in the schoolyard or at the workplace don't indulge in the fake world because the fake world is coming to an end and those who indulge in it will die ignorance is not bliss in the end look at verse 32 they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die yet they not only do them but applaud others who practice them instead tonight live in the real world recognise that God is stamped all over his creation recognise that God will judge all the ungodliness and wickedness of the fake world recognise that he has appointed a judge to judge the fake world recognise that Jesus died on the cross rose to new life in order to be that judge in order to execute ultimate judgement on that final day recognise that that fake world has no future and that those who continue to live in it will perish recognise tonight that ignorance isn't bliss but in the end ignorance is death so tonight we need to live in the real world don't we by honouring God by honouring him in our life by serving him we need to live in the real world by thanking God for all that he's given tonight we need to live in a

real world and experience life with God

eternally let's pray dear God thank you that you're so clearly seen in your word in your creation and in the Lord Jesus thank you that you sent him to die and to rise to be the judge and that one day he'll execute perfect judgement perfect justice and the fake world will be no more help us Lord as people of faith to continue to live real lives for you help us not to reinsert ourselves into a fake world help us to resist the temptations the indulgences but help us to get great joy and peace out of honouring you and thanking you for the rest of our lives in Jesus name

Amen