

# THE TRUTH

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Date: 20 May 2018

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] let it go. Turn away and slam the door. I don't care what they're going to say. Let the storm rage on. The cold never bothered me anyway. It's funny how some distance makes everything seem small and the fears that once controlled me can't get to me at all. It's time to see what I can do to test the limits and break through. No wrong, no wrong, sorry, no right, no wrong, no rules for me, I'm free. Now for those who aren't familiar with those words, it's probably because you don't have young children and specifically young girls. They are some of the lyrics from the song Let It Go in the Disney movie Frozen. It won the 2013 Oscar for the best original song. It's sung by a character in the movie, determined to no longer be the good girl that her family and her society want her to be.

Instead, she would let go and she would express what she'd been holding back inside all this time and she declares that there's no right, no wrong, no rules for her anymore and now she will be truly free.

That definition of total individual freedom is not just Disney philosophy 101. The Supreme Court of the United States declared this in one judgment on abortion where it said, at the heart of freedom is the right to define one's own concept of existence or meaning of the universe and of the mystery of human life.

In other words, that view, relative worldview declares that there is no such thing as universal truth that all people have to agree with or have applied on their life.

Truth is what you make of it. It's whatever's right for you is the relative worldview and it's the common worldview in our society.

[ 2 : 3 5 ] Any form of absolute truth is regarded as ultimate bondage and especially religious truth and especially in our country, Christianity and its truth is particularly stifling because it's been tried for a couple of centuries and been found wanting.

So American pastor Tim Keller wrote this, the late modern mind presents itself like this, we have come to realize that we don't need God to explain the world we see, science does that job for us.

We don't need God or religion to be moral, to love and work for a better world or to have meaning and fulfillment in it, fulfillment in life. What we need is to be free to live life as we see fit and to work together to make the world a better and more just place to live.

And religion gets in the way of all of this. It constrains our freedom to live as we wish and it divides us so that we cannot work together.

That's the world in which we speak into and the Christian faith speaks into. Universal truth is seen as being oppressive, relative truth for each individual.

[ 4 : 1 2 ] You make up what is right and wrong for you and live accordingly. That's regarded as true liberation. It's one of the highest values, if not the highest value of our culture.

And yet, it is totally unlivable. The Supreme Court in the United States will make that declaration in one case, but it will oppose a standard of truth in every case.

It's based on the Constitution of the United States. The citizens of the United States are not free to live however they want, whenever they want. The law courts will see to it that's not the case.

The law courts will make that declaration in one case.

Exclusively the way, exclusively the truth, exclusively the life. And so Jesus does what's unacceptable in our society. He makes exclusive claims.

[ 5 : 44 ] But as we saw last week, everyone is making exclusive claims. To state that all truth is relative, and that there is no such thing as universal truth, is in fact an exclusive claim in itself.

It claims to have the sole truth, and that is that all truth is relative. And so the question is, which truth is ultimately liberating?

Which truth is the liberating truth? And so my hope for this series is for the thinkers amongst us to be led to belief in Jesus, and for the believers amongst us to think a little bit deeper about what it is that we believe.

And our focus today is the second one of those truth claims of Jesus, that is that he is the truth, the exclusive truth, the truth that is applicable for all people and all times.

And there are three main points. What is truth? A truth that sets you free, and discovering truth and freedom.

[ 6 : 58 ] That's my three main points today. So first of all, let's start at the beginning of this Christian worldview of what is truth. And right at the very beginning is where it starts to be laid out for us.

Genesis 1 verse 1 makes a very significant point that there is no reality that existed before God. It says, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and empty. That is, before creation, before the universe was banged into existence by God, God was.

He existed outside of everything that's created. He stands outside of all created things. And he spoke, according to the Bible, the universe into existence.

He speaks, and he creates history. He doesn't create, just interpret reality and interpret history. He creates reality, and he creates history.

[ 7 : 59 ] That's what happens when God speaks. And this God, as creator, is the one who defines all things, because he is ultimate reality, because he stands outside of all things.

Therefore, he is ultimate. Reality is created, it's determined, and it's defined by this God. And so the absolute, the absoluteness of God, his existence, is totally incredible for us to consider.

A God who never had a beginning, never ending, never becoming, never improving, simply and absolutely there to be dealt with on his terms, or not at all.

That's the absoluteness of God. When he speaks, he reveals reality. He reveals things the way they actually are.

They are. And Psalm 119, verse 160, says this about God when he speaks, all your words are true, all your righteous laws are eternal.

[ 9 : 18 ] What, to take a shortcut here, what Psalm 160 is saying, is that the sum total of everything that God reveals is true.

The sum total of it is true. It's truth. But notice the second part of it, in verse 160, all your righteous laws are eternal.

And it says this various ways, from 155 to 160. It's not just that the sum total is truth. That is, it's not just the vibe of the word of God, which is true.

It's all the individual parts are true. Every part is true. Even the bits that we don't like, the little parts that we want to ignore, are true.

It is reality revealed. So the whole and the parts are all true. They are true because when God, who is ultimate reality, speaks, he reveals things the way they actually are.

[ 10 : 30 ] Truth is when reality, God, and the communication of reality are in aligned with one another. That's what truth is.

It's when reality and the communication of reality are in alignment with one another. The opposite of truth is lies. And lies are when reality and what's communicated about that don't align with one another.

And we all, hopefully we all get a sense within us when we get this feeling when someone's lying to us. Because what's being communicated to us and what we perceive to be right don't seem to align.

When God speaks, he always reveals reality. And as finite human beings who have a beginning and who have an end, we have no ability to discover the full picture of reality.

You see, when I think someone's lying to me, my perception is that they're lying to me, but my perception may be wrong. Not with God.

[ 11 : 55 ] The creator God has to reveal the way things actually are. because that is who he is.

He can only ever reveal reality. And that's exactly what he says he's done. And in fact, this is the unique claim of the Christian faith that we looked at last week.

How do we know the unknowable? How do we know the unknowable?

Well, the unknowable has come to us. It's what John chapter 1 affirms. In the beginning was the word. That is, this is a reference back to Genesis chapter 1.

In the beginning was the word. That is, he existed before everything was made. And the word was with God. And the word was God. And he was with God in the beginning. Through him, that's through the word, all things were made.

[ 13 : 01 ] Again, back there, Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. And without him, nothing was made that has been made. So this word was the creator who existed before all things and is God.

And then down into verse 14 of John 1, we see something startling. the word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, that is, the glory of God who came from the Father full of grace and truth. And so you ask yourself the question, who is verse 14 talking about?

Who is this one who is God who existed before creation, who created everything, who is full of grace and truth? Verse 17. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Where reality, the way things actually are and the representation of reality, the communication of that reality so that we can see reality come together in the most profound sense is in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 14 : 17 ] that's the unique claim of Christianity. Jesus is to God what a photo of me is to me.

Now, I could run a competition for us here this morning and ask you all, hand out pieces of paper, some colouring pencils and stuff and what I'm going to get you to do is I'm going to get you all to draw and colour in a picture of what I look like as a four-year-old and some of us are going to come up with better versions of that and I will love you for that and some of you are going to come up with totally wrong versions and we could all have a competition, we could all put them all up here on the board and then judge the competition and see who's got the best example of what I look like as a four-year-old and there might be a whole bunch of similarities in those pictures but the only way, the only way that we could end speculation as to who is right is by producing a photo.

Thank you. Thank you for those who immediately went, oh, I appreciate that. That's the only way to end speculation is to produce the photo and that is what Jesus says he has done with ultimate reality.

He's revealed things the way they actually are by showing us reality. He shows us God and ultimate reality and what he does is he shows us truth.

That's why he claims this astounding, profound claim. I am the way. I am the truth. He doesn't just speak the truth. He doesn't just reveal the truth.

[ 16 : 07 ] I am the truth. I am reality and the communication of that reality at one and the same time.

And I am the life and no one comes to the Father except through me. And so the most ultimate reason why Jesus could say that he was the truth is because he is the God.

He doesn't just communicate a message from God. He doesn't just speak the truth although he does speak the truth. He is God.

He is the communication of God to us. He is truth. And as I said, the place where ultimate reality and the representation or communication of ultimate reality come together in the most profound sense is the person of Jesus Christ.

And what Jesus does at a number of points as the word of God who came to dwell amongst us is what he does is he confirms and affirms consistently that the historical Christian scriptures as being the self-revelation of God.

[ 17 : 26 ] He does that consistently. Luke 24 he does it where he goes along walks the road to Emmaus and he shows the disciples how all the scriptures point to him.

He confirms it as truth that accurately represent reality the way things actually are.

So the 66 books of the Bible with Jesus at the centre is truth. That's why we got our core value in this church a Christ-centred Bible saturation. Jesus declares it as truth and therefore the authority by which all things are measured.

The Bible is where God speaks what is real and absolute and therefore what is true and the Bible is where we meet Jesus it's where we meet reality it's where we meet God.

The Bible is the way God the ultimate all important reality reveals himself to us with clarity and authority today.

[ 18 : 35 ] And so if God is more important than anything then the Bible is more important than anything but God. It's why we have this core value at St. Paul's.

The God who made everything the God who controls everything has a purpose for everything this God has spoken to us with absolute clarity and authority.

2 Timothy 3.16 says all scripture is God breathed and is therefore useful for teaching rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. God breathed literally it came out of his mouth.

in what God has revealed to us we are not left without a knowledge of his will we are not left without a knowledge of him at work in his world we are not left without wisdom we are not left without a revelation of the way of salvation and friends if we could awaken our hearts and our minds with absolute confidence that this is so just imagine how we would navigate the complexities of life and its millions of absolute truth claims that we face day by day.

The Bible is God's provision for us it is sufficient for life and for faith. So secondly why would we or our society want to know this truth?

[ 20 : 14 ] Why would we want to know this truth? Because the truth sets you free. That's why.

Jesus said an astounding thing in John's gospel he says if you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

See the connection there between truth conformity to the truth and liberty and freedom. Know Jesus treasure Jesus and you will know true and enduring freedom.

And I take it that everyone sitting in this room wants to be free. free. I mean free in the deepest fullest sense.

If the opposite of course of freedom is bondage and slavery I'm just assuming no one here wants that. I'm just I don't need to do a poll at all I just assume no one wants that kind of kind of life.

[ 21 : 23 ] All of us would rather be happy in freedom than enslaved to even the most pleasant of addictions. we all want to be truly free.

And yet what our society claims is that absolute truth leads to bondage. What Jesus claims is truth leads to freedom. And Jesus makes this walloping statement in John 8.

If you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. And so people who heard Jesus say that in the first century just as some of us might say it right now Jesus what are you talking about?

You know we are already free we don't need you to free us we're already free in fact they answered him we are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone how can you say that we shall be set free?

You're not offering us anything here Jesus is what they're saying to him and what Jesus says is you're thinking about one aspect of freedom but Jesus is thinking about something totally different something more important something they can't see and so Jesus immediately clarifies what he chooses to set them free from I tell you the truth anyone who sins is a slave to sin Jesus is saying that everyone sins and therefore everyone is enslaved to sin and when you use your freedom when you use your individual freedom to pursue your personal desires at the cost of God that sin and while it might be exhilarating for a moment it leads to bondage that's what he's saying this means here that sin is not just a bad act sin is in fact a power over our hearts over our lives that makes us do bad acts and sets us against

[ 23 : 32 ] God and other people there are many many kinds of freedoms that we can make for ourselves but this is one freedom that we cannot make for ourselves this slavery is too deep this slavery is too all encompassing and all entangling sin enslaves us by making anything and everything look more desirable than knowing Jesus it also enslaves us by eventually damning us forever and it enslaves unless someone or something intervenes which is what Jesus says in verse 36 if the son sets you free you'll be free indeed the son who is Jesus is Jesus talking about himself here the son of God who is Jesus who is the truth who sets free in verse 32 is the son who sets free in verse 36 he frees us from the damnation of slavery by becoming damned for us in his death on the cross as our substitute he frees us from the dominion of sin over our hearts by changing our hearts to see him as more desirable than anything we become truly free to be who we are who we are made to be to love him and to love others so if the son sets you free you are free indeed so let me give you a definition of full and complete freedom you are fully free when you have the desire the ability and the opportunity to do what will leave you with no regrets forever you are fully free when you have the desire the ability and the opportunity to do what will leave you with no regrets forever so firstly if you don't have the desire to do a particular thing you're not fully free to do it because more than likely you're being forced to do something you don't want to do so if you have the desire to do something but no ability to do it you can't do it so you're clearly not free to do it but if you have the desire to do something the ability to do something but no opportunity to do it again you can't do it so you're not free to do it but if you have the desire to do something the ability to do something the opportunity to do it but doing it destroys you then you're not fully free if it destroys you in the end you're not free doesn't lead to liberty leads to bondage to let's let me get slightly practical here for a moment let's talk about parachuting you make it to the airport without having an accident in the car tick that box you now have the freedom of opportunity you've done the classes you know how to jump out of an airplane and to pull a rip cord tick that box you now have the freedom of ability you're up in the plane you look out the door and you just can't wait to jump tick that box you have the freedom of desire that's because you're not frozen with fear when you look out the door and so you

jump and as you free fall you are enjoying every moment of this unbeknownst to you that your parachute is in fact defective and it's not going to open on you no matter what you do and it's not a tanned jump are you fully free are you free indeed for about 30 seconds or so what you are doing so happily so freely will kill you you don't know it but the moment you jumped out of that plane you are in fact enslaved to destruction you don't know it but you are there is no way to help you from that moment you're now enslaved to destruction you're oblivious but in just a matter of time you'll find out it feels like freedom right up until that moment when you pull the rip cord and in that moment all of the exhilaration will prove to be an illusion it will all the exhilaration will just go it's now fear and the realization you are now enslaved to death to be fully free we must have the desire the ability and the opportunity to do what makes us happy forever no regrets it will never come back and it will never bite us that's what

Jesus promises us and it is utter foolishness for Christians to envy the so-called freedom of those who jump out of the airplane of self preoccupation and sin and revel for a season in the exhilaration of free fall of greed and free fall of fame the free fall of sex the free fall of power the free fall of comfort and holiday homes and travel and free fall of adventure fall of security oblivious to Jesus all this so-called freedom is the exact opposite of God's design for humanity and it is a vapor only Jesus the son of God who died and rose again to life can set us free and make us live happily forever only Jesus that's the truth that will set us free and to be happy forever all of our sins must be forgiven and

God's wrath must be removed and Christ must become our supreme treasure our supreme desire Jesus has already done it he died on a cross he absorbed God's wrath and he rose from the dead and is today supremely precious if the son sets you free you'll be free indeed so one last thing for those of us who have embraced Jesus as the way the truth and life and as a church we're in the middle of mission month and we want people all over this world to come and know this freedom that's in the truth in Jesus so how is how's it going to happen in our society like ours that has rejected Christianity and is addicted to relative truth and the belief of the sovereign self that each one of us is in ruler of our own individual lives and we choose our own way how does this message of exclusive claim of

Jesus trump every other exclusive claim 2 Corinthians 4 gives me the answer to that in 2 Corinthians 4 in verse 4 it says that all people are blinded to the truth of the gospel blinded to the glory and the truth of Jesus Christ by ourselves we simply cannot and we will not see the truth it's a matter of the will of our lives to say I will not accept this truth verse 6 in 2 Corinthians 4 says that the God who created all things at the beginning in Genesis chapter 1 shines light into our blindness into our dark hearts and when he does that darkness is pushed out and we see Jesus for who he is we trust him and we have freedom verse 4 verse 6 blindness sight darkness light verse 5 is right in the middle and that's the means that

[ 33 : 07 ] God uses to take us from darkness to light this is what it says what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake that's the means the means God uses to take people from a relative truth to the truth of Jesus and see him as glorious and right and true and needs to be embraced for my freedom is the proclamation that Jesus is Lord of the universe he is who he says he is he is God he is true he is the master of all things and he's the one who sets the agenda for our lives the crucified Jesus Christ has been exalted through resurrection as the heavenly

Lord according to Philippians 2 God suffering servant is the ruler of the universe the man Christ Jesus is the exalted God over all histories over all people and Paul says here you make that clear don't distort that gospel by showing away from it and especially in this day and age where we don't like exclusive claims you make this exclusive claim clear you proclaim it do not distort it do not shy away from it proclaim it from a heart of love and a life of service that's what I think he means when he says that we don't preach ourselves all self interest is laid aside here the means that God uses to shift us from sovereign self and relative truth into the clarity of who Jesus is and embracing that clarity is bold clear plain proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ as Lord from a heart of love and a life of service the unchanging the unchanging historically plausible blood bought good news of Christianity is truth for everyone and you might have walked in here today and you might have been who what verse 4 describes here as someone who lives with relative truth you're the sovereign self you don't believe Jesus is true and you might have been who what verse 5 says that something strange happened in me this is a truth that causes the blind to see it's a truth that causes darkness to be distinguished sorry extinguished for death to be defeated for eternal life to be granted and freedom from bondage true and enduring freedom is only discovered is only experienced when we ironically fully surrender to Jesus

Specializing■■■■ montrer to Jesus as a daily step pride halt to win okay thank you finally free and