

Truth

The question of truth is important. Jesus says that he is truth. If we are to lead people to Jesus we have to know the truth. We don't have to know everything but we have to know enough so that they can know enough. Then as we enter our life of discipleship (with the Holy Spirit pointing us to Jesus) we grow in truth. So we have to study the Word and be open to grow into what is truth. Truth matters. It's totally a matter life and death.

What is truth? Is there any truth? What people say

Person 1 - 'There's no such thing as truth.'

Person 2 - 'Christians are so arrogant. They claim only they have truth.'

Person 3 - 'Don't try and force your beliefs on me. Your truth is fine as long as you don't push it on me.'

Person 4 - 'Jesus isn't the truth. All roads lead to God.'

Person 5 - 'There's your truth and there's my truth. They're both truth.'

To mess with your head

If there is 'no truth' then that in itself must be a truth, unless there is a doubt about whether there is truth. If there is no truth, why do people even bother to worry about those who claim truth? Hmm..

Some History

Christians have got themselves in a bit of a muddle through time. In the 16th century some Christians were denying the world was round, that there was a universe and that the universe changed. What's more the Roman Catholic Church persecuted and heavily censored anyone who dared to question their so-called 'truths.'

So when Copernicus wrote 'De Revolutionibus' in 1530, saying that the earth spun on its axis daily while it wandered around the sun (completing this every year), there was a lot of hostility. His friend Galileo then dared to assert that the universe was ever-changing and shaping - and that 2 different weighted objects dropped at the same time would hit the ground at the same time. He was forced to admit he'd gone too far by the Catholic Church.

In recent times, Christians have said crazy stuff like you can't be a Christian and go to the movies, or you can't be involve din the arts or rock, rap, dance music. The legacy of this is that there are many industries where Christians don't hold positions of responsibility they should.

The World and Truth

1. There have been many inquiries looking back at when things went wrong. Some of these enquiries have taken years to make happen and for justice to be done – such as the one to do with Hillsborough (where Liverpool football fans died) or the Birmingham IRA Bombing inquiry. One inquiry in Britain called 'The Hutton Inquiry' tried to get at the truth at why a top British scientist apparently killed himself after being named as a source for a controversial piece of journalism by a BBC reporter. The upshot of this was many felt there had been a whitewash (the government getting away with causing a scientist to die because he disagreed with government policy).
2. There has been enquiries launched after Parmasat, an Italian company, were discovered to be millions of euros in debt after alleged corruption. The future of Parma FC the Italian football club was also in doubt because of this at one stage.
3. Looking back to the Iraq War (2003), the reasons why Britain and the USA went to war against Iraq were questioned more strongly after the man leading the hunt for 'weapons of mass destruction' quit his post saying weapons were unlikely to be found. 'Weapons of mass destruction' were the main reason given for why the so-called 'Coalition' forces went to 'war' against Iraq (as well as the fact that Iraq invaded Kuwait). Over time more and more allegations were made about fake evidence. A set of evidences (called a 'dossier') used by the then President Bush and the then PM of Britain, Tony Blair was found to be the work of a PHD student. We are no longer sure what the 'truth' was to do with Iraq – with other voices (such as a former member of Iraq's government), claiming there were chemical weapons but they were smuggled out of the country.
4. With Brexit, so many things were said by all sides that people were confused as to what the truth was and whether anything was true! We live in a complex world where truth is distorted and manipulated by politicians, hackers, national governments, agencies and interest groups.

Finding the truth matters in different arenas, places and situations.

Why is truth so important?

Here's some truths about truth..

1. Lack of truth costs money - we have to pay people to check up on others because people are dishonest. We have checks, police, traffic wardens, cameras, accountants.
2. Lack of truth costs lives - many people have been killed in dubious wars, killings, violence, because people don't obey health and safety rules, because people who tell truth are killed and so on..
3. Lack of truth costs your soul. Or will do one day.

What's the Word got to say about truth?

1. Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth and the life. He didn't say he was one of many options but THE way, THE truth. The Bible tells us that Jesus is God, the Son of God and was involved in the creation of the world and of you and me. So all roads do not lead to the true God.
2. Without the truth we are lost. We wander along our merry way in life but we cannot find true direction. I know because that was what my life looked like before I became a Christian. I ignored God, I went my way, did my own thing. What did it lead to? A bit of fun but a pointless life. Jesus said in Matthew 7.13-14 that the gate to true life is narrow, hard to find - but the gate to hell is wide and easy to find. So we learn that finding and following the truth is not always easy, but if you truly and without reservation seek the truth you will find it.
3. 'I tell you the truth..' The words of Jesus time and time again point to the fact that what he said was the truth. So The Bible testifies to the words of Jesus being truth. Jesus says this phrase 30 times in Matthew alone. (NIV translation)
4. John 8.31-33 says, 'To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 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?"'

So the truth actually sets you free. It's like the cases of men and women falsely accused of crimes here even in the UK that have been locked up in prison. When the truth comes out they are released, set free.

This is how it is with Jesus. The promise of those who believe in Jesus is that they will be set free. Paul goes on to warn us not to let this freedom mean that we do whatever we want. No, we are given freedom by living within the principles given by Jesus. A life outside these principles is no longer truth and no longer brings freedom (though many think it does).

(See our session on Freedom for more)

5. We also learn that many will reject the truth. (Romans 1, 2 Thessalonians 2)

6.; The enemy seeks to stop the truth and tries to rob people of the truth (Galatians 4.16, 5.7)

7. We should speak the truth (in love) - Ephesians 4.15 and wear the truth - Ephesians 6.14

What does this mean in practical terms for you today? Which one of these can you relate to? How can you grow in the truth today?