

What is Truth? Part 1

Why does it matter?

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What is Truth? Pontius Pilate asked that question almost 2,000 years ago while interrogating Jesus regarding the accusations of the Jewish leaders in John 18:38. Reading the account of this moment, you get the sense that Pilate was expressing an inner struggle of his own. Unfortunately, however, Jesus does not answer him, nor does Pilate press the issue – and so, his unanswered question is left hanging in the atmosphere and with which every succeeding generation must grapple.

In the Biblical times of the Judges (Old Testament book by the same name), the writer records the following in at least two passages: “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). Thus, in the approximate 400 years of Israel’s history covered in this one book, it becomes clear that Truth was whatever anyone wanted it to be for them. Reading the stories, one can quickly ascertain the danger to the individual, family, and community when Truth is whatever someone wants it to be.

From Biblical times right up to today, we see people living, working, voting, and worshiping as though Truth was like a thermometer when, in reality, it is a thermostat. Truth is a constant. Society does not create or shape Truth; instead, society is shaped to the degree that it lives up to Truth. ~~We can see this lived out in many major cities where the false claim that law enforcement is overwhelmingly and hopelessly racist, resulting in cries to “defund the police”—these cities complied, and the citizens are paying the price.~~

Truth is not something we create; instead, it must be discovered and then align ourselves with if we hope to manage through life successfully (and beyond death’s door). For example, can you imagine trying to build a house with a measuring tape made of elastic material so every time you used it, the definition of an inch was always different? Or, what if a judge could decide what is right or wrong according to his or her personal desires on any particular day?

Approximately 300 years after the times of the Judges, Isaiah’s words could not be more accurate to our current situation in America:

Isa 59:14-15 NIV84 “So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; Truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey....”

When society fails to value Truth above all in the creating of policies and laws, the result is that justice is “driven back,” denying victims their right to equal protection under the law (see above). Furthermore, Isaiah says that when someone dares to declare the Truth in such a society,

that brave soul becomes “a prey” (i.e., a “target” on their back) – today, we see this as “Cancel Culture” with all of its rage and anger toward those who refuse to toe the party line.

Rod Dreher, in his book, “Live Not By Lies” (about the persecution of Christians under Communist rule), writes that when “the heresy of heresies is common sense...” and when “the existence of external reality is denied,” then Truth has been driven out, and that which is right (righteousness) and sound “stands at a distance” – to the great harm of the average citizen and ultimately society as a whole.

Truth matters more than we realize. Justice, law and order, peace-filled cities, stable families, and a promising future for the next generation can only become a reality if Truth wins out over ideology, political correctness, and “woke-ness.” Likewise, for the individual, the Truth about God, the soul, eternity, sin, forgiveness, heaven, and hell must be discovered, as well, because once one’s life is spent, there are no “do-overs.” We prepare ourselves for so many things (going on a trip, retirement, saving money for a particular purchase). Does it not seem wise to prepare now for one’s last day on earth? John 3:16-17 is an excellent place to start.

Our founding fathers stated in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident...,” and the result of the self-evident Truths to which they held has become the freest, most prosperous, and desirous nation this world has ever known. It is long past the time for our generation to “hold” onto (and lift up) these same self-evident Truths – founded on the belief in an all-powerful and merciful Creator God – if we are to have any hope of saving this nation from completely unraveling. The choice begins with the individual, by seeking out Truth – God’s Truth – and aligning your life accordingly.

In 1975, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn gave his last speech to his fellow Russians before the Communists government deported him; it was entitled “Live Not By Lies” (Rod Dreher chose this for the title of his book, mentioned earlier). Speaking to his countrymen who would remain under the heavy hand of Communism/totalitarianism, he said something like this: “You may find yourselves living in a nation filled with lies, but the lies do not have to live in you.” The same is true for us today – there is great freedom when we live by the Truth, even if we are the only ones. We will look more into the “Power of the Truth” next month. Until then. (I would love to hear your comments or questions by email too).