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WHAT IS TRUTH?



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Truth Through the Lens of Faith

It is common in our postmodern world to believe that “truth is relative.” People today say, “Truth is whatever you believe.” Some even say, “People who believe in absolute truth are dangerous.” Yet the Bible is clear, “He is ... a God of truth.” (Deuteronomy 32:4) and, Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6), He is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), and He tells “the truth” (John 8:45). Further, the Scriptures tell us that the Word of God is truth (John 17:17) and Christians should walk in the truth as revealed by Jesus, including living by the standard of morality that He taught (Ephesians 4:17-32 and 5:1-17).

It is important to know what we believe. As Christians, we believe that Jesus is Lord and that the Bible is the Word of God. These beliefs are actually core convictions; someone once said that beliefs are things you are willing to argue about, but convictions are things you are willing to die for. Post modernists like to quote John Wesley — that we ought to “think and let think.” But, Wesley’s full quote was: “We think and let think except in

matters that cut at the root of Christianity.” The essential doctrines of the faith have stood the test of time — the Apostles’ Creed and other historic tenets of Christianity have provided clear, ethical guidance for Christians — always and everywhere, including the areas of personal relationships and social engagement.

Truth is more than just someone’s opinion. If we find “god” outside the Scriptures, we shape a “graven image” that lacks the power to instruct us in the way that we ought to go and cannot lead us in paths of righteousness. Ultimately, the Word of God is our source of solid instruction about how to live life the way it ought to be lived. The Bible also warns us away from those things (behaviors as well as ideas) that would harm us; it tells us when we are going astray and shows us how to have a right relationship with the Almighty, Who uses the Scriptures to mold us and shape us in His likeness.

If our convictions are anchored in solid theology, we will be able to withstand the winds of false doctrine

that sweep so many people into dangerous situations that threaten their faith and ruin their relationships. Sadly, today we have Christians brash enough to discard those doctrines and substitute the products of their own imagination. Our culture is awash with the new age ideology that claims each person can decide what is true; that each of us is a “god.” What folly to believe that we who are so small are the center of the universe and that it is all about “me, me, me.”

So, do we take the Truth of God as revealed for 2,000 years and shape it to the fleeting fancy of contemporary human intellect and the passing trends of today’s popular culture?

No! Our Christianity must be founded not on human invention but on divinely revealed truth. This truth enables us to experience the redemptive, transforming power of Jesus Christ, who made freedom and dignity possible for all human beings. 1 Corinthians 2:12-15 warns that those “of the Spirit” will always be misjudged and misunderstood because the things that we hold as Truth are foolishness to the world.

In matters of doctrine, we who call ourselves Christians are called to contend for the faith. We must counter those who suggest that they are the source of truth and those who try to create truth out of thin air. We must counter those who measure the validity of truth with their own intellect.

Relativism and subjectivism are not superficial differences from orthodox Christian faith. These are not just irrelevant philosophical differences; they are profoundly moral problems. They indicate a spiritual rebellion, a shaking of the fist at God as if to say, “I refuse to accept the plain truth of Your revealed Word to men.” At heart, they indicate an unwillingness to “bend the knee” before the Almighty.

Everything we do is nothing but “sounding brass or a clanging cymbal” if it is not prompted by God’s leading, founded on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and based on His Word. We believe that the Gospel, the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, is the essential foundation for all social action; that only the grace of God and the Gospel He entrusted to us has the power to change us and change the world. ■

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