

Sermon Notes 25/10/2020 - John 8:32

WHAT IS TRUTH?

INTRODUCTORY FUN: IS IT TRUE?

You could have some fun deciding about the list below.

Or you could make up your own 'is it true' statements to play with...

- The earth is flat.
- Geelong won the AFL grand final.
- Pavlova was invented in Australia.
- Jesus married Mary Magdalene.
- The Holy Spirit spoke to Martin Luther on the toilet.
- There was a storm last night.
- Holdens are better than Fords.
- Ben is a better fisherman than Matt.

JOHN 8:32 "TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE..."

WHAT IS TRUTH?

On Reformation Day we celebrate that 500 years ago an Augustinian monk named Martin stood up for the truth. He had found the truth in God's Word, The truth that God is love, the truth that Jesus sets us free, for free, and pays the cost.

Psychologists say "the truth will set you free"

Revolutionaries say, "the truth will set you free"

Gloria Steinem said, "The truth will set you free, but first it will tick you off."

Martin Luther King said,

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality."

But (as Pontius Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:32). What is truth?

WHAT IS TRUTH?

1. TRUTH IS A FIXED POINT.

Psalm 117:2

The truth of the LORD is everlasting.

I have been lost at sea at night. In a tiny tinny in huge waves. Unable to tell which way was land, and which was sea. With the water churning and rising and falling all around. Fighting simply to keep my little boat from being swamped. Do you know what saved me? A single light.

Everything else may change. Your world may change all around you, like a stormy sea at night. But truth is fixed.

Ancient Hebrew of the Old Testament...

AMAN - firm and fixed.

AMEN - true (firm and fixed)

EMETH - firm, solid, reliable, valid.

ISH EMETH - a person of truth - someone who doesn't change.

Who are the 'ISH EMETH' in your life? Those dependable 'fixed point' people?

In the Hebrew *truthfulness is faithfulness* - it's firm, fixed, and dependable.

False things may seem true, but they don't last. True things are fixed and remain through all the changes. They are fixed. Truth does not change over time. It doesn't change meaning or location. It's fixed.

2. TRUTH IS REALITY (AS IT ACTUALLY IS).

Psalm 43:3

Send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me...

I am the only person my conspiracy theorist cousin says has "disagreed by agreeing". When he described one of his theories I said, "*Well one thing is for certain, no matter how you look at it, at 911 there was a conspiracy!*"

Have you ever had an argument about truth? Or about conspiracies? Or about reality? Share what is *safe* to share about it!

Conspiracy theorists attempt to dig deep to see reality as it is. They often connect things that are not actually connected. And they often don't listen to other views but only read what confirms or extends their own thinking. But sometimes they're right too. Whatever you think of the conspiracy theorist next door... Respect them, because they are attempting to see reality as it really is.

In the Bible the word 'truth' is used to mean reality as it actually is. It is used in a law court or legal sense. EMETH is reality as it actually is.' Not what we imagine to be.

For us frail human beings that can be hard to work out. Truth can be hard for us. That's probably why truth is worth seeking and worth arguing about!

3. TRUTH IS GOD'S REVELATION.

2 John 1:1-2

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, 2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

They call our time 'post-truth'. The news constantly goes on about fake news. It's hard to know what to believe. We live in a neighbourhood where people all believe different things about the nature of reality! I talk to people about Jesus and they say things like, "Well your truth is your truth and my truth is my truth." But for truth to be true (dependable, fixed, reality) then there can not be contradictory competing truths.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and truth claims. Philosophers and epistemologists have long believed that truth is hard to find. Perhaps they're right. Human beings are not good at truth. In the book "Everybody Lies" Seth Stephens-Davidowitz explores incredible research that shows human beings seem better at lying than truth! Human beings are fallen. We have problems with truth. Which is why the ultimate truth is God's revelation.

The ultimate dependable fixed point is not something we make up. It's something God reveals.

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY "THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE?"

People often quote this verse (John 8:32).

But explore the context and see what he meant by this.

He mean himself - he is the Truth!

1a. JESUS IS THE FIXED POINT:

Hebrews 13:8-9

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace...

An Islamic person or a Buddhist can certainly be welcomed by God. But Jesus is the one who makes that possible. He is the one who opens the grace of God for us and for anyone. Whatever truth there may be in any way of thinking, Jesus is the source of it.

Jesus is not the light at the end of the tunnel. He is the one with you in the darkest part of the tunnel. He's a fixed point that cannot be taken, shaken, or broken.

2a. JESUS IS REALITY (AS IT ACTUALLY IS).

John 14:6

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me."

Life may change but you can navigate by knowing him. You may not have much idea of the world. But if you have Jesus, the fixed point, he will help you understand reality.

How has Jesus helped you see reality differently?

3a. JESUS IS GOD'S REVELATION

John 1:17-18

The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; but the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Honestly, I often struggle to know what is true. But the deepest, most real, solid, fixed truth is not something we think up or make up. It is instead something God gives. It is not made but revealed. It is a revealed thing - a revelation. It is Jesus! Jesus reveals who God is, how God thinks and feels - and that God is love.

Explore John 1:17-18. What do you make of it?

CLOSE IN PRAYER!

SAY "AMEN / TRUTH" AND MEAN IT!