



DATE: July 26, 2009

TEXT: John 3: 31-36

TITLE: "John VIII: The God of Truth"

After a three week break we return to our study of the Gospel of John. We are looking at the words of John the Baptist regarding Jesus. A couple weeks ago we looked at John the Baptist... this morning we are looking at his testimony regarding Jesus. John is talking about truth.... that is the truth of God. The greatest battle we have today is over the question of truth. This is true in science... this is true in Politics... this is true in faith. I want to use the words of John the Baptist and share 5 lesson on truth.

Lesson # 1 God's truth is blunt and will cause offense. *John 3: 31,33,36* states....

"The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.... 33The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful..... 36Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Here is one of the great struggles of Christian in the 21st century.... speaking the blunt truth of God in a society that condemns blunt as "insensitive" or "intolerant." Try standing up in a school today... and it could be Junior High School or a Senior High School or it could be almost

any college in America today and say **“you must accept Jesus Christ as your Lord..... if you do not you will experience the wrath of God for eternity.”** Our kids, no matter what age they are, know they can not say that in school. That is a paraphrase of the words I just read from the Bible. The words are truth..... But in our day and age can not be as blunt as John or as Jesus.

What we do is rationalize and candy coat God’s Word. Let me say I am not advocating insensitivity as Christians. We do not seek to insult people. On the contrary we try to act to people in a loving, caring way to all people. But we must be careful that our love and care does not mean ignoring the truth of God. It is hard. I struggle with this every single week I prepare a sermon. I can honestly say I do not know if I have found the right balance. I am sure you struggle with it at your work place, or at your school, or in your social club. My only advice is this.... be people of prayer. Ask God to lead you to the right balance..... yes, we are called to state the truth of God in all situations. Yes, at work, yes at school, yes in our social groups. And yes we are to actively love our neighbor.... even those who strongly disagree with the Word of God. Be people of prayer.

Also understand this truth.... the Word of God will offend. If your goal in life is to never cause offense then you must give up the Gospel of Christ REPEAT. Know this truth.... Jesus caused offense. Again and again people were mad at him.... mad to the point of execution.

Scripture is clear in the inevitability of offense. Paul in *2 Corinthians 6 states...*

Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it can not be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together? How can Christ and the devil agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? (Good News Bible.)

2 Corinthians 2 gives these words.....

14But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. 15For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.

I there any question why the truth of God's Word causes offense.... I can be the "aroma of death" to the non-believer. That will not be welcomed

Lesson # 2 God's truth is absolute. *John 3:34 states....*

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit

We live in a day of rationalization. We often say to ourselves..... "**well that was the truth in the 1st century when the Bible was written... we understand truth more today in the**

21st century.” By the way.... people made the exact same argument in the late 1st century and the author of Hebrews commented on this idea. He said in *Hebrews 13*

7Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. 8Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.

The fact is this... the Word of God is very white or black. Wrong is wrong and right is right. We live in a world of gray. Many time our decisions are mostly right... or mostly wrong. I believe it is important to remember that the gray is sinful. We should not rationalize and pretend that gray is good.

Allow me to give an illustration of this. This is a very real illustration and struggle I face. I had a ministerial colleague who got in a lot of trouble in his church because he refused to marry couples who were living together. Let us be honest... many couples are intimate before marriage. Should a minister marry a couple who continue in this lifestyle before marriage? I do. Is that a compromise and grey? Yes. Does it give implied sanction to the premarital intimacy? Maybe. Do I want them to get married? Yes. Is intimacy before marriage a sin? Yes. Is it an unforgivable sin. No. Do I hope that by having a Christian marriage and pre-marital counseling I

may have a long term impact on them toward Christ. Yes. Is this rationalization? Maybe. We live in a gray world and the grey is sinful.

We all struggle with issues like this... everyone of us. If there is no struggle then you must ask yourself if you are living a life in obedience To Christ. His truth is absolute. It is unchanging.... we live in a grey, changing world. It is a struggle every day.

Lesson # 3 God's truth is liberating. Again, *verse 36 of or text states.....*

36Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life

John 8:31 states.....

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John in his letter give this wonderful truth... (*1 John 5:9-12*)

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The good news is this..... because you have surrendered you life to Jesus Christ you have eternal life. You are free from death. Remember biblically death is defined at separation from

God. You are free from condemnation.

The image is this. Every person is in prison awaiting their execution. That includes you and me. The sentence is just. We deserve execution. It is a big prison. It includes the entire planet.... but it is a prison. One day the jailer comes to us as tells us that a friend has chosen to be executed in our place. All we have to do is accept this gift and chose to love the friend. Our choice. If we chose to accept the gift we are set free form the prison. We may still live on this earth for a few decades... but we are free. Our eternity has begun. We are in the Kingdom of God. We pray for that every time we pray the “Lord’s Prayer” Thy kingdom come or earth as it is in heaven”

We are free! We are loved! We are the children of God! Rejoice now!

Lesson # 4 The truth of God can bring condemnation. *Again verse 36 states*

but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Death will be permanent. God does not send people to hell..... God allows people to continue living in hell for eternity. REPEAT. Life without Christ is hell. Hell is lived on this

earth when life is without Christ. If a person chooses to live a life without Christ God will not force a person to live with Christ when they leave this earth. They experience the wrath of God.

Again, contrast this truth about God with the make believe God we have created the last 50 years or so and the God we see on T.V. This make- believe image God is all love. He accepts everyone.... at least everyone who is a least somewhat good. The criteria for good is self. The greatest sin is intolerance. The wrath of God is reserved for people who are “narrow - minded. God would never allow a person to go to hell..... especially if that person is baptized. The bible is good book that gives some guidelines... it is joined by the Koran and any book written or endorsed by Oprah.

Scripture is clear..... to reject the truth of God is to receive the wrath of God. Again... we must avoid arrogance. We must understand that our understanding of scripture is not perfect... but honestly the Bible is not a mystery book. God gave us the Bible to give us truth. The vast majority of the bible is easy to understand unless it is purposely twisted to fit a truth system

contrary to the plain words. The need to invite and encourage family and friends to listen to the truth of God is great.

Finally lesson # 5 the truth of God is a person. Our text says

“The one who comes from heaven is above all...the Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.”

The truth is Jesus Christ. Allow me to close with a great quote from the *New American*

Commentary.

The coming of Jesus was, according to Johannine thinking, the close of an era when only partial insight into the message of God had been available. With the coming of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit, not only Jesus but even the believer has a much more intimate relationship with the Spirit than was possible in the old era. The Spirit, who was to represent Jesus as ‘another’ counselor, was to be in the believer in the most intimate sense

The truth for a Christian is not a vague theory. The truth is not a set of correct facts. The truth is a person. The truth is a relationship with Jesus Christ. **“I am the way, I am the truth.”**

said our Lord Jesus. We live in and we live with the truth. Praise be to God

AMEN