



DATE: October 18, 2009

TEXT: John 7: 14-36

TITLE: “ JOHN XX: The Truth of Jesus”

We are on a journey together. We are journeying through the life of our Lord Jesus. By going step by step through the Gospel of John we are seeing the journey of our Lord Jesus. I love remembering this fact: we are looking at a real person who living in a real setting. The year now is most probably 29 A.D. It is now early October of that year. Jesus will make his journey to the cross in about six months. Jesus, in our text is attending the Festival of Booths.

We know from our text that Jesus is now considered an “enemy of the state.” Or at least an enemy of the religious establishment. Jesus threatened the status quo of religion. Truthfully, that still can be today a reason for hatred. The Jewish leaders had established a religion that gave them great power. They were even cooperating with the hated Roman occupiers in order to maintain the peace and maintain their power. As we will see in story of the cross, the Sanhedrin (the ruling body of Judaism), Herod, the secular ruler of Judaism, and Pilate, the Roman Governor of the province, were cooperating to maintain the peace and their positions. Jesus was

rocking both the religious peace and the political peace. The leaders wanted him dead. Our text is placed in this environment. Jesus, knowing they wanted to arrest him, still went to Jerusalem.

Jesus still taught on the steps of the Temple. Jesus taught the truth as he was confronted by two groups... he was confronted by the Jewish leadership and he was confronted by the hostile crowd. I want to share 2 lessons on the truth as taught by Jesus.

Lesson # 1 Jesus clearly declares that His words are truth. *John 7: 16-17 states....*

16Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. **17**If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

Jesus could not be any clearer.... his words are the words of God.

Let us think for a moment what our sources of truth are. The first source of truth, I think for every person are our parents. For at least the first 5 years of our lives our parents are the total and absolute source of truth in our lives. I remember in college I saw a survey determining the reason vote the way they do in American elections. They found out that 75 to 80% of all Americans vote the way their parents voted. It has little to do with issues, little to do with the candidate.... the truth taught by parents is deeply ingrained in every person. Some of these truths

are good, some in my opinion not so good.

The second source of truth in a persons life is not school.... its T.V. At a very early age children begin watching T.V. When my kids were young it was Sesame Street and Mr Rogers. I'm not sure what preschoolers watch today. And the influence of T.V. grows more and more and more. It continues until the day we die. Look today... we watch shows that strengthen our ideas of truth. Do you get your news from Fox News or CNN and NBC? Do you watch Dr Phil or Oprah or Ellen or the 700 Club? I believe some of the truth is good, some not so good.

The third source of truth is our schools. Beginning at age 5 and continuing for the next 13 to 18 years kids spend the vast majority of their time in school. Schools have the goal of teaching not just the 3 R's but also values. They purposely supplement the homes in the teaching values. Allan Bloom a number of years ago wrote a Book entitled The Closing of the American Mind In this book he states....

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. It this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students reaction; they will be uncomprehending. That anyone should regard the proposition affirming relativism as not self-evident astonishes them, as though he were calling into question $2+ 2 = 4$.

Relative truth, tolerance above all else, achievement in life are some of the values purposely taught by our schools. Some in my opinion are good, some are not so good. It is a source of truth for every one of us.

The fourth source of truth for each of us is government. For example the anti-discrimination laws teach truth. They tell us that it is wrong to think that another person or life style is wrong. They also passed by Court fiat, the no prayer in School. Teaching the total separation of our life into a religious area and a non-religious area. Again, in my opinion some of the truth is good and some of the truth not so good.

The fifth and final source of truth for many people is the church. This includes the Bible and the Words of Jesus. Here is the issue I am presenting this morning.... Where do you rank these sources of truth? Not just by words but by lifestyle, actions and opinions. I believe all would agree that the first four sources of truth are fallible. Parents can be wrong. I remember the first time I really began distrusting my parents. I was in 5th grade and my parents separated for the first time. (They actually got back together and separated 3 more times until they finally

divorced.) I remember my Mom saying they still loved me... but I wondered if they knew anything about love. T.V. is fallible. As I get older I am coming to believe there is very little truth on T.V.

Schools are fallible. My wife and I were talking about No Child Left Behind Laws and how the government are trying to force schools into being the primary source of morals and values and how this is necessary because so many families are in crisis. But also how this is an absolutely impossible task for the schools. Kim has given up her free period to tutor kids who need to pass their PSSA's to graduate... but overcoming their family indifference and habitual laziness is very difficult and discouraging.

Governments can be wrong. Law is not truth. Just because it is legal to get an abortion does not make it the truth.

Jesus in our text says his words are the words of God. God does not lie. God's word are absolutely true all the time regardless of circumstances. No relativism. Black is black, white is white. Again the question is this. Of the sources of truth.... do you place the Word of God.. The

bible above all else? As parents is your # 1 goal to teach your children God's truth and not necessarily your own? This was hard for me... because my parents were not active Christians I had to teach my children values that were very different than I had learned from my parents.

Again my point is this... do you truly believe that Jesus Words are the Words of God.... and do you base your entire life on this fact?

One final point from our text. Again the text says this.....

16Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. 17If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

Notice the way to discover the truth of Jesus. Only by deciding to act in obedience to it. This can not be some intellectual exercise. We must be acting in the Will of God. Allow me to state this negatively. People who do not surrender to the Lordship of Christ, can not know the truth of God. Do not expect wisdom from a non-Christian. They may be smart and have great intelligence.... but not wisdom.

Lesson #2 Legalism is not truth. From our text *John 7: 21-24*

21Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. 22Yet, because Moses

gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. 23Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? 24Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

Jesus is pointing out the ridiculousness of trying to discover truth in the Law or in any law. I began this sermon by pointing out the power of the Jewish officials. The basis of this power was the Jewish Law. The leaders said you must obey the law... which means obeying them and their interpretation of the law in order live. That is power. Jesus disputed this truth.. And it is the reason they sought to put him to death.

Legalism is the belief that by doing a set of actions you can please God and be saved.

Legalism can be broken down to two categories... both in the day of Jesus and today.

Category # 1 Strict legalist. These people have a very demanding set of rules that must be adhered to in order to please God. Strict Catholicism is an example of this. In strict Catholicism to please God you must

.....Be baptizedregularly go to mass
.....regularity go to confession and perform acts of penance	
.....take first communionGo to two years of CCD and join the church
.....receive last rites give gifts to the church

I am sure there are others I am not aware of. But lets not pick on our Catholic brothers and

sisters. Protestants have their own list....

.....Go to churchgive money
.....accept Christread the bible
.....be a good personspeak in tongues in some churches

My point is this... Christianity can never be achieved by doing. Christianity is not something

we do it is who we are. *Psalm 51* says this truth this way...

**16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.**

**17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.**

Surrender of our lives to Christ to receive the grace of God. That is the truth Jesus teaches.

Category # 2 Legal minimalism is very popular truth today. This says do minimal tasks and

you will please God. Often it is ... 1. Be baptized. 2. Belief in God. And 3. Try to be the best

person you can be. People believe this will please God. This is a lie... a great lie of Satan. Believed

by many people.

I close Again with this question... is your life based on the truth of Jesus. We all can choose

our lords... that is our sources of truth. Choose this day to believe and obey the Lord.

AMEN