“Truth Came”

Where do you go to find the truth? I asked that question to begin one of my online meditations a few weeks back. Today, I’d like to expand what I said in that online message.

Again, the question: Where do you go to find the truth? *Maybe it’s easier to ask where you don’t go to find the truth!*

*Hopefully, you weren’t looking for truth in the barrage of political campaign ads leading up to this last election!* It’s hard not to think back on them without laughing! Such a parade of lies and half-truths, put out by *all political camps.* And yet it’s not funny when you think that probably more than $2 billion was spent on these ads that were full of falsehoods!

*I certainly would not go to the news media to find the truth.* The erosion of honesty and integrity in the American news media is one of the major moral failures of our time.This is an area of great concern to me. I’ve delved into it a lot, and I believe media bias is well documented.

Those of us who are older remember newscasters like David Brinkley, Walter Cronkite, Peter Jennings, Mike Wallace. While they had their political views, they didn’t let them get in the way of presenting fairly balanced and objective reporting of current events. That’s no longer the case.

Today we have news coverage that is driven by ideology and partisan politics. Most of the mainstream media – the major networks and their spin-offs - are liberal/far left. Cable news channels like Fox News or The First are slanted towards the conservative/far right point of view.

You won’t find much positive about Donald Trump on ABC or CBS or MSNBC. You won’t see many people on Fox News saying anything good about Joe Biden or Kamala Harris. To actually see newscasters on the verge of tears following Donald Trump’s victories in 2016 and 2024 exposes the lack of objectivity and fairness within the news media today!

Generally speaking, over the last few years, cable news viewership has been in decline – people are getting their news elsewhere. Perhaps a reason for some of this is that people are on to the fact that you can hardly find honest reporting that isn’t slanted to the right or left. Former CNN CEO, Chris Licht has said, “The facts are that people have lost trust in legacy media.” Since the November 5th election, CNN has lost 47% of its primetime viewership. MSNBC has lost 53%.

Of course, “news media” also includes magazines and newspapers. *So, I hope you don’t accept as truth all that we hear or watch or read in the news!*

*Nor would I suggest going to the internet or social media if you’re looking for truth.* We’re talking Facebook groups, the ads that pop up when you go online, blogs (blogs are comments, viewpoints, news, published online or on a website).A few years ago I read a book called *Trust Me, I’m Lying,* with the subtitle: *Confessions of a Media Manipulator*. It’s author, Ryan Holiday, made lots of money churning out misinformation on the internet. He says how people who write storieson the internet get paid by advertisers by the number of “hits” their story gets (people clicking on the site). Writers who produce the fastest win, regardless of the quality of their writing, or whether or not it is actually true and factual.I encountered this reality recently. Our adult Sunday School class has done a lot of Andy Stanley studies. He’s the lead pastor of North Point Church, a megachurch with numerous sites in the Atlanta area. I came across this

article online that said he resigned from being pastor of the church, due to conflict over his view on homosexuality. I hesitated to share this with the class. Glad I didn’t, for it wasn’t true! *God help us if we believe everything we read on the internet or social media!*

*Surprisingly, I wouldn’t go to places of higher learning if you want the truth.* You would think the hallowed halls of our colleges and universities would be fertile places for honest inquiry and unbiased pursuit of the truth. Sadly, more and more institutions of higher learning have become captive to ideologies, social and political views that suppress one’s search for truth.

One recent study involving over 1500 professors found that 50% identified as liberal, 17% as moderate, and 26% as conservative. (Almost twice as many liberal professors). But it also revealed that conservative professors fear that their ideas and beliefs will be met with resistance or outright opposition on campus, resulting in negative consequences. One other study found that extremely progressive/activist *college administers* dominate institutions of higher education.

I recently read a book written by a professor at Drexel University who maintains that “left wing brainwashing” is taking place at many of our colleges and universities. He says that those promoting “social justice and equity” have infiltrated these schools, most often in the area of student activities, and thoroughly documents this push towards the progressive ideology. He includes actual quotes from those who do this, as they explain their mission to convert students to their way of looking at the world. *I wouldn’t bank on getting the truth in our places of higher learning!*

*I even have some reservations about going to religious leaders and the church in our quest for truth!* You wouldn’t think a preacher would say that, but I just did! Why do I say that? Well, one church, one religion, one denomination, one religiousgroup will differ from the church down the street, or the religious group across town,or a different denomination or religion.

I’m certainly not saying we shouldn’t be involved in the church, or that the church doesn’t have any of God’s Truth - but the conflicting teaching and messages we get from different churches and church leaders can be very confusing.

*If that isn’t brazen enough, let me also admit that some people even question whether the Bible is a reliable source of truth.* People look at various parts of the Bible and raise questions.Did God literally take 6 twenty-four hour days to create the world? Did Jonah really live in the belly of a big fish for a while? Did God really tell the Israelites to totally annihilate their enemies – even the women and children?

Now I personally believe the Bible is the Word of God, God’s inspired message to humanity, but I also realize that some people may question whether everything in the Bible is *literally* true.

So, what’s left? Is there anywhere we can go to find truth? The truth about God. The truth about us and human nature. The truth about the life and the meaning of life? *Yes there is somewhere to go! It is Jesus!* In last week’s message we looked at the beginning of John’s gospel. John doesn’t tell us about Jesus’ birth. He goes back way further and writes about the

- 2 -

Son of God pre-existing before creation. And how this Son of God came to earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Last week we looked at how *grace* came through Jesus: “And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only

son, *full of grace*” (John 1:14).

But John continues: “full of grace, ***and truth***”. Jesus came into the world, and was *full of truth*!

In a way, this should not be surprising. Jesus is divine. Jesus is God. And God is Truth. There’s no falsehood in God! Hebrews 6:18 says, “It is impossible for God to lie.”

Jesus once said flat out: “I am the truth”. Shortly before Jesus was arrested and crucified, Jesus said to His followers, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life” (John 14:6). He didn’t just say, “I speak the truth,” or “I bring you truth”. His whole being embodies truth. So, if you want the truth about anything, you will find it in Jesus.

*Jesus showed us the truth about God.* That God created everything that exists. The universe, creation, didn’t happenby chance, but because of the purposeful action of a Creator. God is not someethereal force, some cosmic spark of energy, but a Supreme Being who cherisheswhat He has made, and is involved in His creation.That God is all-powerful and all-knowing, awesome in His holiness, and yet He is kind and merciful and gracious.

*Jesus showed us the truth about us human beings.* That we were created in God’s image, and therefore are the crowning glory of God’s creation. and can relate to God as no other creature. We humans have thepotential for a relationship with God that no other part of creation has. We canknow and experience God and His love.But also that we are sinners, that we have this bent towards doing evil and going our own way. And this “sin” distances us from God, and that we are in need of forgiveness, and reconciliation with God.

*Jesus showed us the truth about life and the meaning of life.* That we were created to glorify God our Creator, to align our life with His will and purposes. We were not created to live self-centered, self-serving lives.That joy and satisfaction comes when God is at the center of our life, and we love God, and we love and care for others.

During Jesus’ trial He was brought before Pontius Pilate. Part of their conversation went like this: “Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’ Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’” (John 18;37-38). The irony here is Pilate is asking, what is truth, and Truth was right in front of him! Pilate is in the pure presence of Truth!

So, back to the original question: Where do you go to find truth? Hopefully we’ve been reminded that all people and all human institutions may offer us *some* truths, but not *all of the Truth! Only Jesus does that!*

This is why the Bible is so important! Because the Bible, more than any other writing, points us

to Jesus. It was written by those closest to Jesus – those who saw Him, heard Him, interacted

\_\_\_

with Him, even touched Him.

And particularly, within that Bible, are the words of Jesus. The best record we have of what Jesus said and did. Some Bibles have Jesus’ words printed in red. Red Letter Bibles. A few

years back people did a take on this and said we are to be “Red Letter Christians” – Christians whose faith and ways of living are rooted in the words of Jesus.

What a shame that so many people will go looking for truth and reality all over the place, and never take time to take a Bible and read the words of Jesus, and what it says about Jesus.

Maybe you’ve read the quip kind of going around that says, “Some people are prone to believe anything they read. Why not try the Bible!”

Why not take the Bible, and even if you have questions about the rest of the Bible, put that aside for the moment, and read what the Bible says about Jesus. What He did. What He said about himself. What He said about us.

I don’t know that I’ve ever come across anyone who has seriously read and pondered the words of Jesus, who as a result has said, “Jesus is wrong and I’m right on this”, or “Jesus’ words just don’t seem to relate at all to real life,” or “What Jesus says seems so silly and shallow,” or

“His words just don’t seem to have the ring of truth to them.”

You want to know the best – the only – place to go to find the truth: go to Jesus! With Jesus, you’ll get the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

*Harry L. Kaufhold, Jr.*

*Community United Methodist Church*

*December 15, 2024*

- 4 -