

Christ and None Other Series - Week 2

“The Bound and the Free”

Last Sunday, Pastor Bryce began our series entitled “Christ and None Other” by calling attention to the need to live an examined life. The unexamined life, as we learned, is not worth living. Still, even a life examined can end in defeat. Many have spent a lifetime examining what will make them happy, content, and full of purpose; but the lack of examination, and the wayward effort to find life’s meaning, results in the same end. There is no greater tragedy to not only live void of purpose, joy, and contentment, but to live apart from God forever, the true God, who is the giver of all the good we could ever desire.

This teaching series seeks to affirm that Christ alone is sufficient for all of life. Today, we will be examining our sufficiency in the claim of Jesus Christ as the embodiment of all Truth.

Many, after examining their own life, come to this question: What gives Christianity the authority to claim *the* answer to the meaning of life; is it true? There are an estimated 4,200 various religions, cults, spiritual leaders, even atheists, who would propose an answer to the meaning of life, and these thousands of answers have billions of followers. I would add that these followers of other belief systems are very sincere in what they claim to be true, even to the point of anger and retribution if their chosen belief is challenged as being false.

The Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. We conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. We do not take policy positions.) published an article in April, 2015, describing current populations of these various religions, and the projected growth of each by the year 2050 (35 year range). Think about this: There are 1.6 billion people claiming the religion of Islam as true, with a projected number of 2.7 billion by 2050 (over a billion people growth projected). There are 1.03 billion Hindu, 500 million Buddhists, another 500 million involved with folk religions such as traditional African, Chinese folk, Native American, or Australian aboriginal religions combined, and nearly 14 million Jews, while Christianity makes up roughly one third of the world’s population (2.1 billion currently, to nearly 3 billion by 2050), as Bryce pointed out last week.

These statistics are given to reinforce the claim that there are billions of people who sincerely follow a belief system directly opposed to the Christian Worldview. Does sincerely holding any form of belief result in truth for that person? Warren Wiersbe illustrates that the answer is evidently ‘no’. He says, ‘Consider a man with a sincere desire to get to Los Angeles. He boards a flight destined for Chicago. He will never reach Los Angeles, regardless his level of sincerity. This man would need to board a different flight in order to reach the true destination.’

It is our goal this morning to board the correct flight, to reach the destination of Truth, which will inevitably bring us to the person of Jesus Christ, who alone is sufficient to give us abundant life and freedom.

TRUTH BRIEFLY DEFINED

What then is Truth and how does the person and work of Jesus Christ relate to us? John MacArthur, in an article entitled, "What is Truth?" states:

"Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God. Truth is the self-expression of God. Truth is the way things really are, objectively. God is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter (one with authority/judge), ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth.

MacArthur continues: "When Jesus said of Himself, "I *am*...the truth" (**John 14:6**, emphasis added), He was thereby making a profound claim about His own deity. He was also making it clear that *all* truth must ultimately be defined in terms of God and His eternal glory. After all, Jesus is "the brightness of [God's] glory and the express image of His person" (**Hebrews 1:3**). *He is truth incarnate*—the perfect expression of God and therefore the absolute embodiment of all that is true.

Jesus also said that the written Word of God is truth. It does not merely contain nuggets of truth; it *is* pure, unchangeable, and inviolable truth that (according to Jesus) "cannot be broken" (**John 10:35**). Praying to His heavenly Father on behalf of His disciples, He said this: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (**John 17:17**). Moreover, the Word of God is eternal truth "which lives and abides forever" (**1 Peter 1:23**).'

It is essential to understand that truth never contradicts itself. Jesus and the Word of God are in perfect agreement. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Both are the embodiment, the essence of truth. Both are the same yesterday, today, and forever, unchanging. God has revealed the truth of Himself through both Scripture and Jesus Christ.

We also find ourselves in the pages of the Word of God. From Adam, the human race has been fallen, dead in our sins, in need of redemption. Our hearts are corrupt, we cannot receive the truth 1 Cor. 2:14, we cannot do good Ps. 14/53, we think no good thought II Cor. 3:5. It is easy to underestimate or ignore the fullness of our fallen

condition when we ignore the truth of God. We think there is still some amount of goodness within, some self-redeeming quality that can please God, but we are mistaken. That is the thought of the natural man, but it is not the reality.

When claims of truth are proposed, a dichotomy, a distinct rift between truth and lie, appears. Either these claims that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the truth and that Scripture is truly the Word of God in reality, or these claims are a myth, an opiate for the masses to dull the pains of life's struggles with unfounded hopes, as the atheist Karl Marx claimed. Either man is able to save himself through various acts of self-righteousness, or man is utterly corrupt, dead in sin, and in need of a Savior.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO SUCH CLAIMS?

If one hears such a description of Jesus as truth with delight, such a one is likely a child of God, one who has been given a new heart by the Holy Spirit (for we cannot forget His work, which is essential for belief in Jesus; perhaps pneumatology can be the focus of the next series), for God's children delight in the truth of Christ. However, if one hears such a definition of truth with disdain or irreverence, it is likely that such a one is a child of Satan. The world is divided into two kinds of people: those that belong to the kingdom of Satan, who are children of the Devil, and those that belong to the Kingdom of God, who are children of God.

It may seem severe to identify a person as a child of Satan, but it is also a very true pronouncement made by Jesus Himself as we will read (v.44). We find in the Gospel of John chapter 8, verses 42-47, Jesus speaking with a group of Jews, who claimed God the Father, but rejected Jesus Christ as truly being the Son of God. As we read the following verses, think of the contrast, the dichotomy, between what Jesus claims as truth against what His opponents claim as truth.

READ SCRIPTURE

We see the striking divide. Either one is a child of the devil or one is a child of God. Those that hear the words of God are of God, and those that do not hear the words of God, are not of God. By the end of chapter 8, the Truth claims of Jesus were so hated by the Jews that they sought to kill Jesus. (In the world today, we see hatred for Christ Himself and for our fellow brothers and sisters around the world, because Christians present the Truth that opposes all other truth claims the world has to offer.

ASK: Who does the world say Christ is?

What does the world say about Jesus? The Muslim says God has no son. The Jew says Christ was not the Messiah, an imposter. The Hindu looks at Jesus as simply a spiritual example to follow, one of many ways to enhance personal spirituality, and the Buddhist must reject Christ as an imposter because the Buddha did not believe

in any form of deity. In Matthew 10:22 we find Jesus warning the apostles that they will be “hated by all because of My Name” and in John 15:18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.”) Why? Because Jesus claimed He was **the** Son of God, **the** light of the world. Jesus claimed all men are sinners before a holy God, condemned to eternal punishment. The natural man loves the darkness rather than the light, rejecting Jesus’ truth claim. The Truth divides; the Word of God is illustrated as a powerful sword, implying its task to divide. Simply put, there is a division between those that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and those that do not.

Earlier in John chapter 8, Jesus spoke to Jews that **had** believed his truth claim as being the Messiah (H) (the Christ (Gk.), the Anointed). In chapter 8, verses 31-36, we observe that Jesus sees people as they truly are. Not only is Christ claiming to be the Son of God, but He claims that all men are sinners. Jesus was revealing to these Jews who they really were, in reality, not who they **thought** they were. Jesus describes sinners as enslaved to sin; bound, unable to set themselves free. We read that Jesus claims the authority to set these men free from bondage, although these men did not even recognize themselves as enslaved.

READ verses 31-36.

Those that believed Jesus was the Christ, were truly His disciples. They had been ‘set free’ from the bondage of sin and set free from the captive lies of the father of lies, Satan. They had escaped the kingdom of darkness, and would now walk in freedom, in the Kingdom of God. As Jesus said in verse 36, “So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed”.

Arthur W. Pink writes in his “Exposition of John” regarding the phrase ‘You shall be made free’ in verse 33:

“This signifies that the natural man is in bondage. But this is a truth that the natural man cannot tolerate. The very announcement of it stirs up the enmity within him. Tell the sinner that there is no good thing in him, and he will not believe you; but tell him that he is completely the slave of sin and the captive of Satan, that he cannot think a godly thought of himself, that he cannot receive God’s truth, that he cannot please God, that he cannot come to Christ, and he will indignantly deny your assertions.”

These Jews assumed that since they were descendants of Abraham, part of the chosen nation of Israel, their standing with God was guaranteed without question. They did not view themselves as sinners. If the Jews had no boast for self-righteousness, how much more is the gentile’s claim to self-righteousness?

In America, we citizens claim to be a free people, just as these Jews claimed to be free citizens. Individuals do not want to be a slave, to be bound, for this shows one to be subject to a higher authority, unable to exercise autonomy. But the reality is, those that reject the Truth of Christ, are indeed slaves to sin. If you are here today,

and you do not believe the claim of Jesus Christ as the Son of God; Jesus Christ, Who came to Earth to die for the sins of many, and Who rose from the dead in triumph over death and eternal condemnation; if you have not repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ as the Savior of your soul, you are bound in shackles, and unable to be loosed by your own efforts; condemned already in the judgment to come (John 3:18).

In Galatians 5:1, Paul writes: “It was for freedom (***Let us all breathe that free air***) that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” From what does the Truth of Christ set us free? Christ has set us free from the curse that the law pronounces on the sinner; this sinner who has been striving unsuccessfully to achieve his own righteousness, this sinner adamantly rejecting Christ, or who is passing through this life unaware of their own enslavement. So, again we see the striking line of separation. One is either bound in sin, or has been set free by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Charles Wesley penned in 1738 the hymn “And Can It Be” which illustrates Jesus Christ loosing the captive:

**Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.**

One may say, ‘I am no sinner! I am a good person, I live in a way that is kind to all people, I do not steal from my neighbors or cheat on my taxes. I do not fall into the same category as a sinner, therefore I need no Savior’. The Word of God replies contra:

The Word of God in 1 John 1:8-10 states:

“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

The Word of God says there are no good people: ‘all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory’ in Romans 3:23, and in 3:10 ‘there is none righteous, no not one’ which is quoted from the Old Testament, in Psalms 14 and 53 which state that ‘there is none that does good’. That is the Truth! The world hears the statement ‘there are no good people’ and responds with disgust. The Christian hears this statement with a grievous affirmation AND with a steadfast knowledge they are redeemed; they are saved from their sin, because they know both the truth that they are sinners and that Jesus Christ alone is able to save.

Exhortation to Those Claiming Christ

Another person states, "I believe that Jesus is the Anointed Son of God who came to the Earth to save sinners." What are the implications of such a claim? In 1 John chapter 2 v.1-3, we find the promise of salvation, and we also find a very severe warning to anyone claiming Christ in word, but rejecting him in deed, the way we actually live. John writes in verses 1-6:

READ SCRIPTURE

(propitiation; the satisfaction/appeasement) (*those* meaning, *believers* of the whole world; we know the whole world will not be saved, as referenced in many places in Scripture).

Again, the one who says, "I have come to know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." This is a strong indictment.

ASK: Have you heard one claim Jesus Christ, but live completely opposed to His teaching in Scripture?

What does this look like? (*Acceptance of sin: fornication, homosexuality, drunkenness, unfair dealings in business, blasphemy (using God's name irreverently, abuse of the Holy Spirit).*)

Though one would claim to know Christ, one lives opposed to Him, and the Word of God says that person is a liar. Is keeping Jesus' commandments simply the golden rule, 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' and to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?' These indeed are the overarching commands found in Matthew 22:36-40 that cover as an umbrella the other commands of Scripture.

The Word of God gives many helpful, necessary commands, *if* we trust that It is God-breathed truth. There is a list developed by Christian Assemblies International, an Australian Christian Non-profit, that lists 1,050 imperatives found in the New Testament alone. John Piper wrote a book entitled, "What Jesus Demands from the World", where there are 50 chapters examining specific commands from Jesus Himself, inspired by Matthew 28:19-20 which says:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe ALL that I commanded you..."

10 of these commands (words of Christ) are:

- You must be born again.
- Repent
- Come to Me
- Believe in Me

- Listen to Me
- Abide in Me
- Worship God in spirit and in truth
- Do the will of my Father who is in Heaven
- Love your enemies, leading them to the truth
- Make disciples of all nations

From these two references showing the many specific commands, we see easily that we must delve into the Word of God to mine the priceless gems of eternal truth to '**know** that we have come to know Him' as we read in 1 John 2:3. Saying 'I love Jesus' does not prove that we know Him if we do not know **Who** He is and **what** He actually taught and commanded, living out that truth daily.

One may say, "It's unreasonable to ask me to follow so many rules and regulations!" We hear this response because this one loves the darkness rather than the light. It is because the father of lies, Satan, has caused one to believe that these commands are nothing but a restriction, meant only to hamper my personal happiness. It happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden, and it is happening as we speak now. Satan was not only asking Eve to question God's word by asking, "Did God really say?", he was also accusing God as being false to give such a command; Satan was claiming 'the truth that God was unworthy to be obeyed, because God was the liar'.

The underlying reason people sin, and continue in sin, is because they have believed the lie that their own desires, their own ways are better, more pleasurable, more rewarding than following and cherishing Jesus Christ as Lord, following after Christ's desires, knowing that His ways are better, more pleasurable. These sinners will forever remain bound in their sin unless God in His mercy gives them ears to hear, and a new heart to love, the truth of Christ.

Examining Oneself in the Light of Truth

Imagine trying to examine yourself in the mirror, in the dark. Do you see yourself as you really are? (Do your socks match?) (Is your hair out of place?) Have you ever gone to a doctor to be examined in a room completely dark? Would you trust the word of the doctor when a remedy is prescribed? Both of these are foolish endeavors, yet this is how the world chooses to examine their own standing with God, in the darkness of their own thoughts and desires.

We have attempted this morning to examine our own souls by the light of Truth as found in Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ. Based on this examination, one must come to one of two conclusions. Either one has believed that Jesus is not the Son of God, and not sufficient to save sinners, or one has believed that He is. Either one is bound in sin, or one has been made free by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, living out His Truth in all of life.

Next week, Pastor Bryce will be teaching us about the hopeful future of those who have been made free in Christ. A certain anticipation that what Jesus has promised in the future is true and for all who believe in Him and none other.

Any time remaining open for questions/comments.