

How's Your AIM?

Accuracy

10/15/18

We live in a culture that is now being called “post-truth”. In fact, that word was Oxford English Dictionary’s word of the year for 2016. Another way of defining “post-truth” is “no-truth”. If truth is arbitrary, then there is no absolute truth. Unfortunately, that is the equivalent of insanity. Humanity, individually or corporately, cannot live sanely with no truth.

As Christians we believe that the Bible is the source of God’s revealed truth. Many of the Bible’s claims are unique to Christianity. Therefore, we must decide whether or not the Bible is indeed the source of ultimate truth or not.

Without a doubt, the greatest truth the Bible tells us is that we cannot make ourselves right with God. However, because of His great love for us, He has made a way for us to know Him. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is that we, as sinful humans, can only be made right with God through the shed blood of Jesus, God’s only son. That is the absolute core claim of the Bible. (John 14:6) It is only because of God’s grace that we can come to know Him. We must by faith choose to take God at His Word and believe what He says. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I am going to leave that consideration for you this week and include a number of verses below for your consideration as well. They have to do with God’s gift of truth to us in His Word. Please understand that deciding on this issue is not optional. To not decide is to decide. They also have to do with the “truth” that knowing the truth is not enough. We have to choose to live in the truth and by the truth.

One of the things that I think we all have to consider is that we all tend to believe our version of the truth. We tend to approach subjects, including the Bible, with our own bias. We can and do try and make the Bible say what we want it to say, or what we think it should be saying. I believe that our greatest quest is to know the truth, and the truth will indeed set us free. (John 8:31-32) It is the truth that will set us free, not our version of truth. That, in fact, will enslave us.

With that in mind I think there are three things that it is helpful to distinguish:

1. Biblical truth

There are absolute truths about life and death, salvation and judgement, and how we are to live our lives pleasing to God. They are not culturally determined, but they are always culturally relevant. We do not get to vote on them, or add or detract from them. They are biblical, God-given absolutes. In essence they are God’s rule for how we are made and how we are to live. They are not arbitrary or capricious. God tells us the truth for our own good.

2. Cultural truth.

There are certain “truths” that are cultural rather than absolute. This can include church culture as well. In some church cultures, dancing or playing cards is considered – or once was considered – a sin. There are more significant issues than those obviously, but it is so important to distinguish between revealed, absolute, biblical truth which is cross-cultural (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and cultural truth which *seems* fixed, but actually changes with time and location.

3. Personal preference

Much of life is built around personal preference. This can be, and often is, important. It certainly influences families and life choices. Most couples have some pretty significant adjustments to make around preference issues based upon their family of origin. Again churches often have significant preferential issues. Styles of services, including music, is a big one. Preferences can be and are valid. What they cannot be is on a par with the absolute truth of God's unchangeable Word.

This week I want to encourage us all to think through the things that "control" or influence our lives. Are they based on God's unchanging truth or something else? I do indeed believe that The Truth will set us free, but false versions of truth, even ones we hold very dear, will enslave us.

VERSES TO PONDER ABOUT GOD'S TRUTH

(**Matthew 22:29**; 2 Timothy 2:15; **2 Timothy 3:16**; **Hebrews 4:12**; John 16:13-15, 17:8-17; Ephesians 4:15; Elders—1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)

VERSES TO PONDER ABOUT RESPONSE TO GOD'S TRUTH

(**Matthew 7:24-27**; John 14:23-24; **Hebrews 5:11-14**; **James 1:22**; 1 John 2:3-4)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Is there or is there not absolute truth? Why or why not?
2. If there is absolute truth, where do you find it? Are there sources of truth other than the Bible?
3. If there is truth, what is our response to it?
4. Are we sometimes confused between biblical truth, cultural truth, and personal preference? How can we distinguish them, and what are appropriate responses to each?
5. How important is truth in our everyday lives? Is your answer actually reflected in time and priorities?