

"The Spirit of Truth" (Romans John 16:5–16)(9.1.19)

John 16:5–16 (NIV84)

5 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

16 "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: The Spirit of Truth

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God I pray. Except for the "I pray," this use to be the oath everyone swore before they took the stand in any court. Not only did they take the oath, but they took it with their right hand on the Bible. Why? Because there must be a standard of truth. Unfortunately, as a culture, we have been abandoning an eternal standard and replacing it with a human standard.

Here is a theological definition of truth: Truth refers to what is real, trustworthy, dependable, genuine, or valid. It carries the sense of real-world dependability and genuine disclosure—showing things as they really are. The New Testament use of truth seems to cover things that have eternal validity. In the book of John, true is not just in opposition to false; but, "it is veritable, the perfect realization of the idea, in opposition to all its imperfect manifestations."

One day this week, I had two successive interactions that were diametrically opposed. They both happened in my office and the people were on the couch. I was concerned that this couple I am counseling were not born again and I wanted to broach the subject gently because they believe they are Christians. So, I began with what I thought was a safe question, "Are you familiar with John 3:16?" They said, "No."

After our session was over, Moriah came into my office. She retrieved one of the small New Testament Bibles off my credenza and went over and sat on that same couch. At three years old, she cannot read; but, she told me that she was looking for Joseph. After a minute, she came over to my desk to show me Joseph. I played along. Then she went back and announced that she was going to find Mary. It is obvious that she has a thirst within her to know about the things of Jesus. And, she has been taught the importance of God's word. Because of her parents and because of this church, Moriah is being nurtured in the Truth.

BODY:

In Isaiah 65:16 (NIV84) we read,

16 Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth;

he who takes an oath in the land
will swear by the God of truth.

For the past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.

Yes, our God is The God of Truth!

Psalm 119:160 (NIV84) All your words are true;
all your righteous laws are eternal.

Where do we find God's words? Where do we find God's righteous laws? Obviously, in our Bibles.

John 14:6 (NIV84) which most of you know:

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Today, will we try to unpack what Jesus means, when he says that he will send the Spirit of Truth. Jesus also calls him the Counselor. You know from previous sermons this summer that this person is the Paraclete, Helper Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—, Strengtheners, Standby: None other than God the Holy Spirit. Last week's message was on The Spirit of Christ. As Christ is also The Truth, it naturally follows that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.

Notice what is implied when Jesus says, "I am going to him who sent me." It is by His choice and through his power. At the same time it demonstrates Jesus' love for humanity. It is better for us because he goes. How so? While on earth, even in His glorified body, there were limitations to what Jesus could accomplish. Now, at the right hand of the Father in heaven, his purview was fully divine. Now, all believers have all the blessings of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, while Jesus is advocating for us at the same time. Take a second and try to absorb the scope of that dual blessing. (Pause)

Listen to what Preacher Alexander Maclaren has to say about the Spirit of Truth convicting the world of sin:

The outstanding first characteristic of the whole Gospel message is the new gravity which it attaches to the fact of sin, the deeper meaning which it gives to the word, and the larger scope which it shows its blighting influences to have had in humanity. Apart from the conviction of sin by the Spirit using the word proclaimed by disciples, the world has scarcely a notion of what sin is, its inwardness, its universality, the awfulness of it as a fact affecting man's whole being and all his relations to God. All these conceptions are especially the product of Christian truth. Without it, what does the world know about the poison of sin? And what does it care about the poison until the conviction has been driven home to the reluctant consciousness of mankind by the Spirit wielding the word?

You must understand that any of our diminishing the damage of sin, diminishes the mission of Jesus the Christ and the person of the Son of God. Paul begins his definition of the gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:3 (NIV84) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Did you get that? Paul starts the gospel by saying that this is of first importance that Jesus was crucified because of sin, yours and mine. And, this we should know because it is in accordance with the Old Testament scriptures, God's word as given by the testimony of the prophets. It was part of Almighty God's plan from the beginning.

Last December, Ethan Renoe wrote an article entitled "How Hollywood Hijacked Your Mind."

"What is Colonialism? It's the invasion of Western culture into indigenous lands. It was the white man coming in and saying that they're doing things wrong and they should be done like THIS (to put it lightly). Without realizing it, Christians living in the West have become slaves to the machine of Intellectual Colonialism. We have been told that the way we have been thinking is wrong and we need to do it like THEM. We need to be sexually liberated (as long as it's safe and consensual), and we need to be tolerant

of every belief, simply because someone feels that it's true.

Problem is, feelings turn out not to be great dictators of truth.

Just today, someone commented on a YouTube video of mine saying that I shouldn't be so hard on Christians who may believe something the Bible doesn't teach. "If they believe it strongly, then it can be true for them." (pause)

In order to end with a glimmer of hope, let's remind ourselves who Jesus is. The classic verse John 14:6 states simply that He is truth. He does not simply say the occasional truism, but He is the embodiment of all that is right, straight, aligned and worth believing. He is the definition of reality.

One thing He constantly tells us to watch out for is, essentially, Soft Power [brainwashing]. When He tells us how to fight the devil, Jesus does not give some mystical sort of instruction for putting on an exorcism. He simply tells us to listen to Him because He speaks the truth and to watch out for the devil, because "when he lies, he speaks his native tongue."

Of course, the biggest sin is not believing in Jesus and why he was sent by God the Father. People say they believe in Jesus, but it is a Jesus of their imagination. It is not the Jesus of the Bible. They don't know their Bibles; so, unless they have had a personal encounter like Paul on the Damascus Road, they cannot know the true Jesus.

The Spirit of Truth will champion the righteousness of Jesus because Jesus is the champion of righteousness. He is the coeternal Son of God, perfect in every way, and he humbled himself by taking on human flesh. Then Jesus lived the sinless, obedient, perfect human life. Then He satisfied the wrath of God the Father because our holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty can have no countenance with sinful creatures. Now, through our faith in Jesus, we have been reconciled to our Holy Father in Heaven.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NIV84) It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Make no mistake about it, there is judgment. When Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished," he meant several things. One of them is that the prince of this world now stands condemned. Satan has been defeated. If you read Revelation, you will hear the death sentence. He will be thrown in the lake of burning sulfur. He will be tormented day and night for ever.

Did you catch the "all truth?" But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. Everything of the Son's and everything of the Father's can be made known to us. John 14:26 (NIV84) But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Do you have a teachable spirit? If yes, this is evidence that the Spirit of Truth is within you. This week, a woman was very pleased to tell me how much she liked one of the slides on our programmable LED sign. "Don't go to church. Become the Church." Because she refuses to go to church, she felt justified by the sign. The Enemy has darkened her understanding. Certainly the sign means, "don't ONLY go to church; become part of something bigger than yourself."

I sympathized with her that it was unfortunate that she had had bad experiences at a couple of churches. Then I went on to explain that the scriptures say we should not forsake assembling together. She responded, "It doesn't matter what you say. You cannot convince me." She actually said she thought she was part of the Church even though she never attends a church. Can this be true?

One of the great blessings of the Spirit of Truth was the inspiration of our New Testament.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV84) 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

I love the way Paul put it to Timothy, scripture is God-breathed. Breath and spirit are the same word in

many languages. Without breath there is no life. Without spirit there is no life. Our Bible was breathed into our New Testament authors by the Spirit of Truth. Jesus said in John 6:63 (NIV84), The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

CONCLUSION:

In our NIV translation, Jesus says, "I tell you the truth," 78 times. Some of these verses are the same, repeated in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the synoptic gospels. During Pilate's interrogation of Jesus just prior to Jesus' crucifixion, the Apostle John records this exchange: John 18:37 (NIV84)

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Yes, Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of truth. He came to establish truth. He made a way for us to live in the kingdom; to live in truth. And, at minimum, we should know the truths that Jesus specified.

During Children's Chat, I gave each child a deck of eight flash cards. I actually created a pack of 40 flashcards with Jesus' proclamation, "I tell you the truth." Right now, I am going to ask you to take out your cell phones. As noted in the bulletin, you can also do this from your home computer. I created this tool so that every one of us can learn, to memorize Jesus' words of truth. May the Spirit of Truth guide you into all truth. Let's practice with some of these flashcards now.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.