



August 14, 2022

“What is Truth”

**John 8:31-47**

Pastor Gary Hamrick

What is TRUTH? It is a question that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus before His crucifixion, and it is a question people are still asking today. There is great confusion in our world about truth. You will hear people say, “My truth vs. your truth” and “Truth is relative—it depends on the person and the situation,” but in response to Pilate’s question, Jesus said, “...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.” (John 18:37). For us to understand truth in a relative world, we must rely on God and His Word (the Bible) as the source and standard by which we evaluate what is true and what is false..

1. **John 8:1-11** *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, “You will be made free?”” Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.’ They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.’ Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

*But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”*

2. A discussion about truth
  - a. Jesus mentioned the topic of truth seven times in [John 8:31-47](#)
  - b. Though often quoted out of context, verse 32 is the most famous example: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
3. Truth under attack
  - a. The Father of Lies
    - i. Beginning in Genesis 3 and all throughout human history, Satan has lied, deceived, and caused people to doubt God’s Word
  - b. [Isaiah 59:14-15a](#) – “So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.” (1984 NIV)
  - c. In 1941, Joseph Goebbels (Hitler’s Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda) said, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.”
  - d. There is a pervasive attitude that if enough people believe something, then it must be true
4. Two important fundamental aspects for determining truth
  - a. Source/Standard
    - i. Who or what defines truth?
    - ii. If the standard is constantly changing, how do you know what is true and what is not?
    - iii. There are certain immutable things, for example,
      1. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west
      2. Water seeks its own level
      3.  $2 + 2 = 4$

iv. Truth never changes

v. God is truth and God never changes

1. **Deuteronomy 32:4** – *“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.”*

2. **Malachi 3:6** – *“I the Lord do not change.”* (1984 NIV)

3. **John 17:17** – *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*

vi. Judge truth through the lens of God and His Word

b. Terminology

i. Words matter—without common language and agreement on what words mean, we cannot have understanding about anything

ii. **Colossians 2:8-10** – *“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”*

iii. **Colossians 2:8-10** – *“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”* (1984 NIV)

iv. In response to disliking the standard of truth, people may change terminology to fit their lifestyles, narratives, choices, and agendas

5. Five facts about truth

a. Truth is objective

i. There is no “my truth” or “your truth”

1. There is “the truth” and “my/your opinion or perspective”

ii. Truth is not defined by you or me

iii. There is an objective standard, and that standard is God

b. Truth is universal

i. Truth is not selective to one group of people or doctrine

ii. Test and see whether something is true

1. Is it universally applicable?

- a. The prosperity gospel teaches that God wants all Christians to be wealthy, yet there are many places in the world where that message does not resonate as people endure poverty; it is not universally applicable
  - b. The gospel message of John 3:16 finds acceptance across all demographics – it is universally applicable
- c. Truth is absolute
  - i. Many people believe truth is relative; an easy way to debate this is to ask, “Is the statement that ‘there is no absolute truth’ absolute?”
  - ii. **Psalm 119:89** – *“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.”*
- d. Truth is eternal
  - i. God is truth and God is eternal
  - ii. **Psalm 119:160** – *“The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.”*
  - iii. **Isaiah 40:8** – *“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”*
- e. Truth is freeing
  - i. **John 8:31-36** – *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, “You will be made free?”’ Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”*
    - 1. We are all slaves to sin until Jesus sets us free
    - 2. People often miss the intention of Jesus’ statement that, “The truth shall make you free”—it is in reference to the sinful condition of the human heart
    - 3. God sent His Son to die so that we could be saved from our sinful condition and be born into God’s family
    - 4. Freedom from sin and death comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ

6. The Bible is our compass
  - a. We can politely, lovingly, and confidently walk in His truth and grace in our interactions with other people

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read **John 8:31-47** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read **Isaiah 59:14-15a**. Is truth under attack? How do we know? (See #3 above)
3. Why is Satan called the “father of lies?” (See #3a above)
4. How do we determine truth? (See #4 above)
5. Is truth subjective? Why or why not? (See #5a above)
6. Can truth be unique to individuals or groups of people? (See #5b above)
7. What is the major flaw in the idea that “there are no absolutes?” (See #5c above)
8. How does truth set us free? Discuss how this principle plays out in your life. (See # 5e above)
9. What does it look like to “lovingly and confidently” walk in God’s truth and grace when interacting with people who believe differently than we do? (See #6 above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)