

Seeking Biblical Authority, Lesson 6:
Seeking Biblical Authority in a Post-Modern World
John 8:31-36

Theme: Truth

Aim: To show that God's word is truth and in it we can have supreme confidence.

1. What do you believe about the assassination of John Kennedy? Have you ever discussed those events with someone who believes their government lied to them?
 2. No one likes to be deceived. We want truth. In fact we have folks take an oath in court "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."
 3. Men have for generations sought truth.
- I. Notice an exchange between Pontius Pilate and Jesus, John 18:35-38.
- A. Was Pilate just being skeptical or was he uttering a common feeling of the day?
 1. The search for truth is as old as man himself.
 2. Just a casual study of Acts 17:1-4, 10-12, 16-21 shows it was a thing of interest in the Apostolic days.
 3. As the wise man Solomon wrote hundreds of years before: "There is nothing new under the sun..." Ecclesiastes 1:9
 - B. It is of no less interest today.
 1. We seek truth. We want to believe the truth.
 2. But our culture seems to say with Pilate, "What is truth?"

II. Where are we today in our search for truth? Many think we have transitioned from a Modernist into a Post-Modern culture (and therefore a Post-Christian culture). What do we mean by that?

- A. First must understand Modernism which has been the "world view" of many for nearly a century.
 1. Read description from: "Meeting the Needs of the 21st Century Family." A sermon by Professor Rich Gurgel, presented in Florida, September, 1999, pg. 2:

"Modernism was the illegitimate child born to the unholy marriage of anti-supernatural rationalism and proud humanism. Modernism was the belief that man's unlimited gift of reason applied to the scientific method would continue to unlock more and more of the secrets of the universe. This application of reason with sound scientific methodology would enable mankind to solve the world's problems. Advances on medicine and other sciences would ease human suffering and make the tasks of life more manageable. Better and better educational opportunities would free man from his problems and prejudices. To this optimistic view of life with itself and brimming with confidence, it appeared that soon nothing would be impossible."
 2. The consequence of modernism is that science replaced God.

B. What is Post-modernism?

1. Read description from Gurgel's sermon, pg 3:

"What is postmodernism? It is hard to describe in any detail since those who are it "leaders" seem to delight in speaking in vague and confusing jargon. In fact, at times it is their stated purpose to confuse and bewilder. As we will see in a moment, they want people to despair of ever being able to claim they "understand" anything "objectively." But allow this author to attempt a brief definition. Modernism was an optimistic confidence that human reason would solve man's problems. Postmodernism is a pessimistic cynicism that is convinced that reason itself is a "fiction" by which man fools himself into thinking that there is some kind of order to the chaos of the universe. Postmodernism is convinced that the objective truths on which modernism was built were nothing but the imagined creations of those who painted their own version of order over the chaos of the universe. Postmodernism is convinced that objective truths do not exist. Truth is nothing but a fiction! Truth is nothing more than a "construct" which cultures create in order to fool themselves into thinking that there is some rational explanation for all that happens. Objective truth (including all moral absolutes and religious dogma) is only a self-deception. Each culture constructs its own truth by which it justifies its

ways and purpose. While that construction of reality may “work” for them, there is no objective truth behind the values of “right” or “wrong,” “good” or “bad.” That culture has just defined its own perception of truth for their own advantage. In other words, all “truth” is really nothing more than a ploy by a culture to either keep or gain power by which that culture can dominate. You design your “truth” to keep control and others down. Male culture arbitrarily subjugates women. White culture writes its rules to dominate those of other races. Heterosexual culture arbitrarily make the rules that make social outcast of gays. Postmodernism’s cynicism Has concluded that every claim to truth is just a mask for some political or social power play. Everything is political. Everything is a power play.”

2. The consequence is a rejection of Biblical truth because it claims to be truth.

C. Makes some believe we are in a Post-Christian culture.

1. There was a time when most folks in our country had a least a passing knowledge of the Bible.
2. But as more and more “post-moderns” come to dominate our culture in the arts, literature, universities, etc more and more people are rejecting Christianity and the Bible.
3. Thus truth becomes whatever one wants it to be, whatever the “construct” of whatever culture one finds oneself in.

D. Now lest you think this is just a problem among the elite or those who dwell in the ivory towers of academia and have no relation to real life...

1. We see this mindset demonstrated frequently with such statements as “Well, that is truth to you, but not to me.”
2. Just the other day I heard a lawyer, in a very high profile case, on television talks show say: “My witnesses will take the stand and give their truth. Their witnesses will tell their truth, and the jury will decide which to believe.”
3. Oprah Winfrey recently rebuked a woman who was defending Jesus’ claim to be the only way to heaven by saying “How dare you claim to have the only way to God.”

E. And that is where we leave this part of the discussion and return to the Word.

1. Some would say: “If there is a God, no one has exclusive claim on His truth.”
2. “Each is free to follow truth as he discovers and understands it.”

III. But one of Jesus’ gracious words is that we can know the truth.

A. Look again at Jesus’ statement.

B. Note some other words of Jesus: John 14:6, 15-18, 16:12-15, 17:17. Note: the word “truth” occurs 115 times in the New Testament.

C. Why is God’s word truth? See Hebrews 6:18.

1. Modern arguments and musing aside, God has given us truth.
2. It came in the person of Jesus (John 1:14) and continues in His story, the gospel as recorded in the New Testament.
3. Let us develop a love of the truth which God has revealed to us.
4. Let us obey the truth.

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