

MESSAGE 2: TRUTH – BE MEN OF TRUTH

Deep relationship with God in the truth

- God is the God of truth

Psalm 31:5

Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth.

- The Lord Jesus is the way, the truth and the life
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth
- We can have deep relationship with God only in the truth

The term “truth” in biblical usage

- Biblical usage of the word truth in its wide and rich sense:
 - o What is true, factual, objective truth as opposed to what is false
 - o Positive, moral, spiritual dimension of what is good, right, constructive, what ought to be
 - o From the eternal perspective of God's kingdom and what is fitting in God's kingdom - the way and will of God
 - o e.g. 2 John 4 - walking in truth
- Supremely manifested in the being and life of the Lord Jesus Christ – John 1:14 “full of grace and truth” - grace and truth radiates from His being

Relating with God in truth

- To relate with God in truth is to relate with God in an appropriate manner:
 - o In the light of who God is and who we are
 - o In accordance with God's revelation
 - o With positive moral and spiritual reality and meaning in our heart and spirit
 - o With worshipful spirit and reverence, submitted to God's will and ways

Deep relationship with God in truth is bound up with major aspects of the Christian faith

- *True worship* - Deep relationship with God in truth is bound up with true worship
- If we want to nurture deep relationship with God, we must learn to be true worshippers

John 4:23

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth;
for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

- o God is seeking for true worshippers - Who are they? How can we be true worshippers?
- o True worshippers must worship God in spirit/Spirit and truth

- o Worshipping God in truth means worship that is acceptable to God, according to His will and revelation, fitting, appropriate for who God is - as opposed to man's own idea of worship and worshipping a God of our own imagination
- o And it must be from our heart and spirit - not merely in words or external conduct, rituals
- Truth in our being is vital
 - o Worshipping God in truth and relating with God in truth go beyond understanding how to do so but actually worshipping God and relating with Him in spirit and truth
 - o It requires truth in our being
 - o This is important to God - what He desires in man

Psalm 51:6

Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

- o It involves our character, attitude and a life of truth - reflected in daily living
- It means walking with God and serving Him in truth with all our heart, in the good and right way

1 Samuel 12:23-24

23 “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

24 “Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

- *The person and work of Christ* - Deep relationship with God in truth is bound up with the person and work of Christ
- It means knowing the Lord Jesus, abiding in Him and He in us, because He is the way, and the truth and the life

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

- o The Lord Jesus is the way to God - not only the way for our reconciliation to God but also the way to a deep relationship with God in truth - and increasing and unceasing reception of the life of God
- He is full of grace and truth and we too can and ought to grow in grace and truth in Him

John 1:14, 17

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

- o Grace and truth radiate from the being of Christ
- o Grace and truth are realised in us in and through Christ
- o This takes place in the context of transformation and growth in moral and spiritual stature

- *The ministry of the Holy Spirit* - Deep relationship with God in truth is bound up with the ministry of the Holy Spirit
- This kind of life is feasible and lived out according to the guidance and enabling of the Holy Spirit - the Spirit of truth - who guides us into all the truth

John 16:13

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

- o Deep relationship with God must be in spirit/Spirit and truth – in the realm of the spirit/Spirit and in truth
- o The role and ministry of the Holy Spirit is crucial
- o The Holy Spirit helps us understand, absorb and live out the truth

Contrast the evil one

- Nurturing deep relationship with God in truth must include learning to beware of the wiles, lies and evil influences of the evil one and how to resist and reject all that comes from him – we must learn to take our stand

John 8:44

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- The evil one does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in Him
- The evil one seeks, by all ways and means, to oppose God's intentions for mankind and wreck our lives – he is the enemy
- The aim of his attack is to oppose, hinder and destroy man's relationship with God and thereby our lives
- A major means by which he seeks to do so is to hinder us from recognising and understanding truth and living a life of truth
 - o Through deception and leading us astray
 - o Through making us feel that deeds of darkness are attractive and “good” to indulge in
- That was how the evil one tempted Eve - with the idea that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is “good for food”, “a delight to the eyes” and “desirable to make one wise”

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- A primary means of overcoming the evil one and his intentions is to be properly grounded in the truth
- Knowledge of the truth, truth in our being and a life of truth - enable us to effectively counter his lies and temptations

True fellowship with God only in the light and truth

- True fellowship with the Lord can only be in light and truth - never in darkness and sin

1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Longing for the truth

- Those who truly long for deep, meaningful relationship with God must truly long for truth
- They must be eager to know the truth in order to absorb it, live by it, and be moulded and transformed by it
- Such an attitude and spirit is reflected in the words of the psalmist

Psalm 43:3-4

3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your dwelling places.

4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.

- If we lack such an attitude and spirit, our expressions of love for God and longing for deep relationship with Him will be deficient
- This eagerness to know the truth and live by it includes eagerness to understand ourselves including knowing our deficiencies, so that we can take corrective measures
- Do we respond well to opportunities provided by God to help us know ourselves? Are we receptive? Or do we reject, resist and harden our hearts when the truth is unpleasant?

Learning from the apostle Paul

- Let us learn from the apostle Paul who is deeply concerned about the truth - in his own life and in the lives of others

2 Corinthians 7:14

For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth.

o “In truth” here includes not only speaking words of truth, but also having the attitude, motivation and spirit of truth

- Paul would persist in this path even if it results in others viewing him unfavourably

2 Corinthians 13:7-8

7 Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

- Like Paul, we must learn to wear the badge of “manifestation of truth” in our daily lives

2 Corinthians 4:2

but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

- Paul emphasises very strongly truth and love - both must go together

Ephesians 4:15

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

- o "speaking the truth in love" can be translated "be truthful in love"
 - o Context: process of growth unto maturity in Christ – in truth – leading to deep fellowship with God
 - o God is a God of truth and love. To have a deep and rich relationship with God, we need to be committed to and work out our lives within the framework of truth and love
- This is the most meaningful and effective way we can live - but it may not always be well received by others
 - This meaning comes through in Paul's question to the Galatians:

Galatians 4:16

So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

- o Context: Paul was trying to help them in love and truth - but he knew it may not be well received
- o Though men may be upset with him, Paul knew that this approach to life is pleasing to the Lord and he must persist in it

True Freedom – in the truth

- We want to be true disciples of the Lord and live a life of true freedom in the Lord:
 - o free from bondage to sin and to the evil one
 - o free to know and relate with God in increasing depth and meaning
 - o free to work out God's plans and purposes together with Him
- To experience true freedom we must know the truth and abide in it

John 8:31-32, 36

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

- o Must pay heed to what the Lord has to say - abide in His will and ways
- o We will then be true disciples - will know the truth
- o We will have freedom in the Lord and in the truth

Be men of truth

- We can be men of truth only by the grace of God and the enabling of the Holy Spirit
- Moses' father-in-law advising Moses:

Exodus 18:21-22

21 “Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

22 Let them judge the people at all times...

- o Men of truth are reliable and honest, faithful, men of integrity
- o Men who will walk with God and serve Him in sincerity and truth
- Joshua exhorting the Israelites on how they are to live their lives, shortly before his departure from this earth:

Joshua 24:14

“Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

- Likewise, David's charge to Solomon, just before his death:
 - o To exercise care to walk before God in truth with all his heart and with all his soul, walking in the ways of God and keeping His commandments
 - o If he does so, he would succeed in all he does and wherever he turns

1 Kings 2:1-4

1 As David’s time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 “I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man.

3 “Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn,

4 so that the Lord may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’

- If we want to nurture a deep relationship with God and live a successful life, we must do likewise - exercise care to walk before God in truth with all our heart and with all our soul, walking in the ways of God and keeping His commandments
- There may be weaknesses and deficiencies in our lives - but if there is a deep love for the truth, eagerness to know the truth, absorb it, walk in it - we will be able to make good progress in dealing with our weaknesses and deficiencies and in deepening our relationship with the God of truth, in truth

Be receptive to truth and what God has to say

- The Lord Jesus tells us this is the way to ensure:
 - o we live fruitful lives
 - o we are truly wise - in the eyes of the Lord
 - o we are stable, with strong foundation
- Fruitful: Seed sown on good soil

Luke 8:15

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

- o Vs 12-14 - Unlike seed sown beside the road, on rocky soil, among the thorns
- A wise man who builds his house on the rock
 - Matthew 7:24–25**
 - 24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.
 - 25 “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.
- o V 26 - The foolish man does not act on the words of Jesus
- In whatever way God sees fit to speak to us, we must gladly receive into our hearts
 - o God may speak through the Scriptures, people or situations
 - o We must not be selective
 - Matthew 4:4** (Jesus quoting from Deut. 8:3)
 - But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’
 - o Physical food is needful for our physical health and nourishment – likewise, God’s instructions and words are vital for our spiritual health and nourishment – latter of greater importance
 - o Context: the Lord Jesus rejected the temptation to command the stones to become bread even though He was hungry – because it was not the will of God the Father for Him to do so
- It is proper to have greater confidence in those we find more reliable in helping us know God and truth
- Be careful not to be negatively influenced by those whose lives and teaching are unreliable when we have good grounds and proper basis
- But we should not be prejudiced against any person or source so that we are hindered from learning and receiving what the Lord desires to teach us and say to us
- Do not be indiscriminately receptive to any person or source so that we simply receive whatever comes from the person or source as truth - except God and the Scriptures

Knowledge of the truth is vital

- Knowledge of truth is the basis for true faith
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:13**
 - But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.
- Why regular quiet time is very important
 - o Time with God and reading of the Scriptures
 - o The Scriptures is inspired by God
 - 2 Timothy 3:16–17**
 - 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate,
equipped for every good work.

- o Regular quiet time must be complemented by a positive sense of God consciousness at all times
- In all contexts, be attentive to what the Lord desires to teach us
 - o Do not only hear what we like to hear
 - o Some of the things we do not like to hear or have difficulty hearing are very relevant and important
 - o They may help us recognise areas of deficiencies in our lives so we can take corrective measures and make progress
- It is crucial we make good use of all opportunities and all that the Lord makes available to us that can help us deepen our knowledge of God and truth and our relationship with Him
 - o This includes reading helpful materials

1 Timothy 4:6

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

Concluding remarks

- The strength and quality of our personal life and ministry is directly related to:
 - o The quality of our knowledge of God, our relationship with God, our walk with Him
 - o The breadth and depth of our understanding, absorption and outworking of truth and what God has revealed in the Scriptures
- In our personal lives and ministry, we must focus on *God and truth*
- The *basis* of our lives and convictions in every aspect must be *God and truth*
- Inadequate/false basis:
 - o Popular opinion
 - o Own feelings, desires or inclinations
 - o What we think is expedient
 - o People we admire and respect (pay due attention to what they have to say – but only God and truth can be the basis)