

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

AUGUST 16 - 20, 2021



# MONDAY

## John 18:37-38

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### What is truth?

When Jesus stood before Pilate, as recorded for us in John 18, He claimed to have come into the world to “*testify to the truth*” (v. 37). Pilate responded to this by asking a question that has resonated throughout the world ever since: “*What is truth?*” It’s interesting that Jesus, even though He referred to Himself as the “*Way, the TRUTH and the Life*” (John 14:6), made no attempt to answer Pilate. That was certainly not because He didn’t have an answer, but He chose not to use that moment to develop such an important theme.

Yet any study of the Gospels shows that truth was very important to Jesus. The Gospel of John alone mentions some fifty times when Jesus referred to truth. In our devotions this week, we therefore want to look at a few of these occasions in John to see what can be learned about the topic.

Dictionary definitions of *truth* tend to be rather unsatisfying, like “the true facts about something.” Even the illustrious E J Carnell leaves us a bit in the air when he states, “Truth in its simplest dimensions is a judgment which corresponds to things as they actually are.” Yet knowing how easily our senses can be deceived, we actually need something stronger than that. It is far more compelling for us as Christians to define truth as “what God says about something,” which, of course, presupposes an accurate and inerrant Bible.

Dr Francis Schaeffer of the L'Abri Fellowship threw out a substantial challenge to the unbelieving world when he addressed the University of Notre Dame in April 1981 with these words: "Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelt with a capital 'T'. Truth about total reality, not just about religious things. Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality—and the intellectual holding of that total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth." Perhaps we should think through the implications of this statement, since it must certainly impact how we view all of life, all education, all information, all ethics, and even all decision-making.

## QUESTIONS

If we stood before Pilate today, what would be our answer to his question, "What is TRUTH?" How would we justify that answer biblically?

## PRAYERS FOR BRIAN AND ANNA KLEINSASSER—YWAM

Pray for continued unity and overall healthy relationships with co-workers in YWAM and with people in the other ministries with whom we (YWAM) are working.

# TUESDAY

John 1:14-18

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## What does it mean to be “full of truth”?

As we view the topic of truth in John’s Gospel, it’s impossible to bypass the first use of the word by John in chapter 1, verse 14. Having introduced Jesus as the “Word” who was responsible for creation, for life and for light, John states very simply that this member of the Godhead “*became flesh and lived for a while among us*” and that He was “*full of grace and truth.*” In verse 17 he repeats the statement, indicating that “*grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*”

The juxtaposition of those two verses is significant since verse 14 speaks of Jesus having these characteristics, whereas verse 17 implies that they should be evident in us, too, who have “*received one blessing after another.*” Sadly, we are all aware of people claiming to be Christians who err on one side or the other in this matter. There are those who insist that we must be gracious towards everyone (no problem there!), but then they do so at the expense of what Paul calls “*speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15) and they open the door to error through a misguided desire to be tolerant and politically correct.

On the other side there are those who have accepted fully that the Bible is ultimate *truth*, but they bash people over the head in a proof-texting frenzy instead of addressing sinners with the kind of gentleness of spirit that Jesus displayed to the woman at the well (John 4), the woman caught in adultery (John 8), or Zacchaeus, the

tax collector (Luke 19). Such people may get away with that if they lived perfect lives themselves, but because we are all “sinners saved by grace,” it is certainly wise to follow Jesus’ example of getting grace and truth into balance. No one pretends that this is easy, but it IS imperative.

The key is to ensure that any firm application of truth is done not on the basis of comparing “your actions with my actions,” but rather “comparing your actions with scriptural truth.” If this is done with a gracious spirit, it at least opens the door for discussion and interaction—not, as some would suggest, to compromise and find middle ground between two conflicting positions, but rather to stand alongside a person applying the same truths to ourselves as to him or her.

## QUESTIONS

What could I do today practically to practice truth and grace?

## PRAYERS FOR BRIAN AND ANNA KLEINSASSER—YWAM

Pray for fruitful and effective ministry to those to whom we bring food and personal items. Pray for God’s grace for people to make the changes they need in their lives and to fully know Christ as Savior and Lord.

# WEDNESDAY

**John 16:7-13**

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## Can truth change?

Anyone who is experienced in life will know that in his or her lifetime, things that were taken for granted or that were once considered undeniable fact have been proved to be in error, or at least in need of considerable adjustment. The atom, so we were told, was absolutely the smallest entity in the world ... until someone split it! For many years it was believed that the earth was flat, with the sun rotating round it, until this was comprehensively disproved. So, to answer the question, “Can truth change?” we have to say that if we are depending on something to be true just because a lot of people believe it, sooner or later this type of “truth” may have to change.

Sadly, there are many within the wider Christian community who have been making similar claims for biblical truth in recent decades. They argue that because culture has changed, the truths of the Bible must be “reinterpreted” to fit that culture. It seems strange that the omniscient God whom we serve was somehow surprised by the changes in culture and couldn’t give us “true truth” from the beginning of history!

Well, of course, no changes in the world have caught God by surprise. This is why our definition of truth (discussed in our first devotion this week) becomes so important. If truth is defined as what God says is true, then that must remain for all time since our God is unchangeable

and so is His Word. It doesn't take too much effort to see why, then, the Bible is under such enormous attack today. If it can be proved to be full of errors, or unreliable in any way, it opens the door for people to allow culture to determine current truth rather than the Word of God.

So our defense of the Scriptures is not some sort of desperate action to protect our ancient book. It is a necessary part of Christian apologetics to show that the Almighty God who was capable of inspiring the Bible by His Spirit all those centuries ago is likewise capable of preserving its truth down through the years so that its truth can be trusted as much in the 21st century as it was in the 1st century. Jesus stated so plainly in John 16:13 regarding the work of the Spirit: *“When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.”*

## QUESTIONS

What is my “measuring stick” for knowing the truth? Is Scripture my first resource when it comes to the unchanging truth?

## PRAYERS FOR BRIAN AND ANNA KLEINSASSER—YWAM

Pray for our witnessing and sharing with people we encounter formally (specific times of evangelism outreach) and informally (running into neighbors, people we encounter at stores, or people we see on walks). Pray that God will lead us to people who have open hearts.

# THURSDAY

**John 20; Genesis 1:1**

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## **Is science truth?**

Christians are often challenged by unbelievers to respond to the supposed tension between science and religion. We are told that we have to believe one or the other since they appear to be incompatible. We often hear the refrain, “But science has proved that ...” This is obviously a vast topic, but if God is the Creator of all things, then true experimental science will never be contrary to the Word of God. We need to be clear whether we are going to trust God’s truth, or what man believes to be truth at this particular moment in history—since scientists seem to change their minds quite often!

Our focus this week is on John’s Gospel, so let’s just ask ourselves whether we are prepared to accept the truth of John 1:14 that the Son of God “*became flesh and lived for a while among us*”; that He could work miracles such as changing water into wine (John 2); that He could heal a little boy (John 4) and a disabled man (John 5). Could He really feed 5,000 people from the lunchbox of a young boy (John 6) or give sight to a man who had been blind from birth (John 9)? Or, to cap it all, could He raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11), or come back to life Himself after being crucified (John 20)?



You see, these are not theoretical or philosophical discussions we are having about the nature of truth. Truth is what God says is true, whether or not there are millions of people in the world who claim that Jesus is not God, that miracles are impossible, and that dead men don't come back to life. Our huge challenge in the 21st century is to stand against postmodernism that seeks to redefine truth. We need to understand that this is an attack not just on our Bible, but on the God of the Bible. Science is a wonderful field of discovering the world that God has made for us, but we need it always to be a servant to the Creator.

When in doubt, the first verses of our Bible is the final word: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). These words don't leave much else!

## QUESTIONS

Do I really believe that God is the Creator of all things? Do I have my belief well-formulated and founded on Scripture to share this knowledge on a daily basis, and to share with others when I am convicted by the Spirit whenever apparent contradictions are discussed?

## PRAYERS FOR BRIAN AND ANNA KLEINSASSER—YWAM

Pray for good communication with potential students who are applying for the January Discipleship Training School (DTS) in Long Beach.



# FRIDAY

**John 17:17-19**

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## **Sanctified by truth.**

In Jesus' amazing prayer found in John 17 (which many argue should actually be what we should really call "The Lord's Prayer"), He prayed for Himself, then for His disciples, and finally for all believers. The climax of His prayer for the disciples is found in verse 17 where Jesus prays, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." It's interesting to note that the word translated *sanctify* in our English Bibles comes from the same root as the word *holy*, which of course means to "set apart." So we as Christians are called upon to be set apart FROM the world and set apart TO the Lord, for His use and to accomplish His purposes.

William Hendriksen states categorically, "This sanctification can take place only if the entire personality is desirous of being governed by the truth." We need to understand from this prayer that Jesus is declaring how essential truth is going to be for His disciples if they were to accomplish the tasks set before them. They were not to indulge in discussions and debates about "truths" in general, of which there were many in that day, as Paul discovered in Athens (Acts 17:21). They were to focus exclusively on the fact that "*your word is truth.*"

To be set apart means to exclude everything else. How very relevant this is in our day when truth is no longer regarded as absolute, but something that is relative and can change with changing circumstances, cultural practices, and human logic. Jesus clearly knew the challenges that were going to come the way of His followers, so He prepared them, and us, by laying down the foundation that total truth was to be found in one place only, which was in the words of Almighty God through Christ (the “Word”) written down for us in His inspired Word.

## QUESTIONS

Absolute is defined as “being viewed or existing independently and not in relation to other things, neither relative nor comparative.” Do I believe that Scripture is the absolute truth, or do I know it?

## PRAYERS FOR BRIAN AND ANNA KLEINSASSER—YWAM

Pray for our adult sons and daughters, as well as our elderly parents and ourselves, that God would draw us closer to Him and we would all follow Him and love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

## Sources

- Edward J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1966), 46.
- Nancy R. Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004), Foreword.
- William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of John* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), 361.

