

## TRUTH MATTERS

2 John

3/25/07

When Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) he reflected the view of many today.

Postmodernism views the concept of truth with skepticism.

They doubt that there is absolute truth and if there is, there is no way of knowing for sure what it is.

Many members of the new emerging church movement have bought into postmodern philosophy hook, line, and sinker.

Rob and Kristen Bell founded the Mars Hill Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Bells started questioning their assumptions about the Bible itself- “discovering the Bible as a human product” rather than divine fiat.

Rob says, “The Bible is still in the center for us, but it’s a different kind of center. We want to embrace mystery, rather than conquer it.”

Kristin says, “I grew up thinking that we’ve figured out our Bible, that we know what it means. *Now I have no idea what most of it means.* And yet I feel like life is big again- like life used to be black and white, and now it’s in color.”

Brian Maclaren- questions that after 2000 years we really can say with certainty what the gospel is.

He also says that he is not sure “what we should think about homosexuality.”

He has called for a five-year moratorium on making any pronouncements about whether homosexuality is a sin or not.

Certainty is regarded as inherently arrogant, elitist, intolerant, oppressive, and therefore always wrong.

The emerging church movements act as if their demise of certainty is a dramatic new intellectual development.

In reality it is old unbelief cloak in a religious disguise and calling itself merely a humbler kind of faith.

Is there such a thing as absolute truth?

Can we know anything for certain?

Is doctrine all that important?

In 1,2,3 John the Apostle teaches that **Truth Matters**.

**1 John 2:21-23** I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.<sup>22</sup> Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.<sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

**The Bible teaches that:**

God is the God of truth Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16

The Bible is the Word of truth John 17:17

Christ is the embodiment of truth John 14:6

We are saved through faith in the truth 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Believers are sanctified by the truth John 17:17

We are set free by the truth John 8:32

Truth is understandable because of the Spirit of truth who enables us to know the truth. John 16:13

**In contrast the Bible teaches that:**

We are in a world influenced by Satan, the “father of lies” John 8:44

He seeks to blind the minds of unbelievers 2 Corinthians 4:4

Unbelievers are depraved of mind and deprived of the truth  
1 Timothy 6:5

Unbelievers oppose the truth 2 Timothy 3:8

Unbelievers turn away their ears from the truth 2 Timothy  
4:4

Unbelievers exchange the truth of God for a lie Romans  
1:25

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup> *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ

The apostle John tells us that truth does matter and that it is knowable.

John uses the word **truth**:

9 times in 1 John

5 times in the first four verses of 2 John

John says that he wrote 2 John “for the sake of the truth” v. 2a

6 times in the 14 verses that comprise 3 John

John teaches that there can be no fellowship with God or among Christians without adherence to the truth.

## 1. We Must Know The Truth. 1-3

### a. The truth unites believers. v. 1

John opens his letter with this emphasis on **truth** because there were false teachers around who were spreading errors.

Not all religious teachings are true.

Not everyone’s ideas are right.

The difference between the true and the false is ultimately the difference between heaven and hell.

It is truth that unites believers.

Not a putting away of truth for the sake of external unity.

**b. The truth abides in believers. v. 2**

The Spirit of truth has come to abide in us.

**John 14:17** *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.*

**John 16:13a** "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth;

**c. The truth blesses believers v. 3**

God's grace, mercy, and love come to us through God's truth and love.

God expects us to know the truth.

*But God doesn't want us just to know the truth; He wants us to walk the truth.*

**2. We Must Walk In The Truth 4-6**

**4, 6 Walking in the truth means walking in accordance with God's commandments.**

It means obeying God in every area of our lives.

It was the Apostle's joy that some of the believers there were walking their talk.

**5 Walking in the truth includes loving one another.**

This love is a choice not a feeling.

This love is choosing to treat others the same way God treats you.

You can choose to do good for those who mistreat you.

*We are to love one another, but biblical love does not imply a naïve acceptance of anyone who claims to represent Jesus Christ.*

**3. We Must Abide In The Truth 7-11**

**a. Be on guard against false teachers 7-9**

**7 There are many**

Jesus warned about them. Matthew 24:24

Most of the NT epistles deal with them.

The seven churches in Revelation were being bombarded by them.

Why do we avoid recognizing that they are among us today?

**They are deceivers**

Jesus calls them wolves in sheep's clothing. Matthew 7:15

**They have a different Jesus**

Some deny His humanity, others deny His full deity.

**They are antichrists**

Anti- against or in place of

They teach a different Jesus in place of the biblical one.

Many false teachers argue that Jesus is the 'son of God' in the same way all of us are God's sons.

Yet the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is God.

**John 8:23** And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you shall die in your sins."

**Hebrews 1:3,8** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; . . . **8** . . . of the Son *He says*, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever . . .

False teachers may also be identified by:

Teaching a different god Deuteronomy 13:1-5

False prophecies Deuteronomy 18:20-22

Contradicting the scriptures Isaiah 8:20

A different gospel Galatians 1:6-9

A different Jesus 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

A different spirit 2 Corinthians 11:4

**8 If you follow them or help them you will lose your reward**

This is not talking about losing your salvation, but of losing your heavenly reward. Cf 1 Corinthians 3:15

**9 These false teachers are not saved. Cf 1 John 2:19**

**b. Do not fellowship with false teachers 10-11**

**10 Do not receive him into your house**

This passage *does not* forbid having unbelievers into your home.

It forbids housing and providing for false preachers.

We are not to encourage them or financially underwrite their ministries.

It likewise forbids welcoming false teachers into a church and allowing them to speak.

We are in no way to make give them impression that we are endorsing their ministry by associating with them.

False teachers must be exposed and shunned, not welcomed and affirmed.

### **Do not give him a greeting**

What does this mean?

**Romans 16:17** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and *turn away from them.*

**1 Corinthians 5:11-13** . . . I wrote to you *not to associate* with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler -- *not even to eat with such a one.* 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:6** Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you *keep away from* every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

**2 Thessalonians 3:14** If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and *do not associate with him*, so that he will be put to shame.

**2 Timothy 3:5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; **Avoid** such men as these.

**Titus 3:10** *Reject* a factious man after a first and second warning,

Tradition tells us that when the Apostle John was living in Ephesus he saw the leader of a Gnostic cult by the name of Cerinthus in a public bath.

Cerinthus taught that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, not God come in the flesh.

When John saw him we are told that he ran from the building.

**11 The one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds**

**Truth matters.**

There is truth and there is error and they can be known.

Your salvation depends upon it.

**1 John 5:11-13** And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. <sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.