

26-0426a Transcript

26-0426a - Truth on Trial, Tom Freed

Bible Readers: John Nousek and Roger Raines

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Truth on Trial

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 1:17): John Nousek

John 18:36-38: (0:04) This morning's first reading comes to us straight from the mouth of God, (0:10) which is in the Book of John, the Gospel of John, chapter 18, verses 36 through 38, which reads, (0:20) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, (0:27) then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, (0:35) my kingdom is not of this realm. Therefore Pilate said to him, So you are a king. (0:45) Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, (0:53) and for this I have come into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who is

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of the truth (1:01) hears my voice. Pilate said to him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to (1:13) the Jews and said to them, I find no guilt in him. (1:17)

2nd Reading (1:22 - 1:50): Roger Raines

John 14:5-6: (1:22) Good morning. We will stay in the Book of John, (1:26) chapter 14, verses 5 through 6, Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. (1:35) How do we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. (1:44) No one comes to the Father but through me. This concludes this reading. (1:50)

Transcript (0:04 - 20:17), Preacher: Tom Freed

(1:55) Good morning. Good to see everybody.

Like Roger said, I was getting a tea while Wally was singing. (2:02) He's still got it. Hopefully he'll be able to do the whole service soon. Give Scott a break.

(2:09) My sermon is called Truth on Trial. (2:13) Imagine the scene, the cold polished stone floors of the Roman (2:19) Praetorium, armed guards at every door and an angry mob shouting for blood just outside.

(2:27) A bound Jewish prisoner, bloodied, silent, majestic, stands before the most powerful (2:35) man in Judea. Conscious pilot leans forward, looks Jesus in the eye and asks the question (2:46) that has echoed through every generation since. What is truth? Today we call this message Truth (2:55) on Trial because truth itself was placed on trial that day.

And it remains on trial right now in our (3:04) culture, our courts, our classrooms, our logarithms, and our own divided hearts. People (3:13) casually say, that's your truth. Live your truth.

For truth is just a social construct. (3:25) You ever hear that before? No, your truth is not my truth. But Jesus never shrugged at this question.

(3:35) He answered it with his life, his blood, and his resurrection. Look at John 18, 33 through 38.

(3:52) Pilate went back inside his palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, are you king of the Jews?
(4:03) Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world.

You say that I'm a king. In fact, (4:10) the reason I was born and came into this world is to testify to the truth. (4:17) Everyone on this side of the truth listens to me.

Pilate retorted, what is truth? (4:29) This question strikes at the heart of our existence. (4:33) In a world awash with information, opinions, and alternative facts, (4:39) we have to ask ourselves the same thing. What is truth? Is it relative and subjective? (4:51) Or is there an absolute truth that anchors the souls? We hear it's hard to find the truth nowadays.

(4:59) Is it true that everybody's truth is their own and it doesn't matter? (5:04) Or is there a real truth we should be following? (5:10) Pilate lived in a world much like ours. Pragmatic, cynical, and power-driven. (5:18) Truth for him was whatever kept Rome happy and his career safe.

(5:24) Sounds like our politicians today, it's kind of exactly the same as it is now. (5:33) You know, our politicians did whatever they could to, and do whatever they can to please the people. (5:41) He was surrounded by competing philosophies.

Stoics, Epicureans, skeptics, (5:50) all claiming their own version of truth. Does that sound familiar? (5:59) We're a lot like Rome. Look at all these competing ideas that (6:05) are trying to say they're right, that they have the truth.

We swim in an ocean of information, (6:13) disinformation, deep fakes, and personalized echo chambers that constantly blur the line (6:20) between fact and fiction. If you try to listen to the news or social media, (6:28) could you ever find the truth today? It'd be impossible. (6:35) Yet Jesus does not engage in debate.

He embodies truth. His presence forces Pilate and us (6:45) to confront whether truth is merely a construct or something divine and unchanging. (6:53) As we turn the page of our exploration, let's consider the biblical foundation of truth.

(7:02) What is truth? The Bible doesn't leave us guessing. (7:09) In Hebrew, truth is emeth, firmness, reliability, and faithfulness. In Greek, (7:18) aletheia means unhidden reality.

What is actually there is stripped of illusion. Truth flows from (7:28) every character of God. He is the rock.

His works are perfect, and all his ways are just. (7:37) A faithful God who does no wrong, Deuteronomy 32.4. God cannot lie, Titus 1.2. And Jesus as a (7:50) Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Truth is not a concept.

Truth is a person. (8:02) Jesus declared, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through (8:09) me, John 14.6. When you seek truth, you are ultimately seeking him.

That's a great way to (8:19) look at it. If you want the truth, you got to go directly to Jesus. He embodies truth.

(8:28) He's the ultimate truth. He cannot lie. Human truth shifts with culture and feeling.

(8:37) We've watched ideologies rise and collapse, leaving mountains of bodies in their wake. (8:45)

The Nazis and communists sincerely believed they were doing the right thing, (8:51) and yet hundreds of millions died. Proverbs 14.12 still rings true.

(9:00) There is a way that appears right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. (9:08) How many people think they're doing the right thing, think they're following the right path, (9:15) but they're headed for destruction? The Nazis believed that they were in the right and that (9:21) they were doing good, and the communists do as well. But look at all the death and destruction (9:28) they bring.

Yet God's truth stands firm like a lighthouse in the storm, (9:37) unchanging, reliable, and anchored in his unchanging character. Why do we resist the truth? (9:48) Because truth demands accountability. Jesus explains this is the verdict.

(9:57) Light has come into the world, but people love darkness instead of the light because their deeds (10:05) were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light. They will not come into the light for fear (10:12) their deeds will be exposed.

John 3.19-20. How true is that? A lot of people don't want to become (10:21) Christian because they'll be held accountable for how they live their lives. A lot of people (10:28) don't want to answer to God. They don't want to be called out for their sins and that they're (10:33) doing wrong.

Satan is the father of lies, and his strategy is deception. From the Garden of Eden, (10:47) did God really say Genesis 3.1? In modern skepticism, he twists the truth. (10:57) All he needs is a little seed of doubt.

God didn't really say that, did he? That's all it took. (11:05) That's still all it takes today. Think of the prosperity gospel, promising health and wealth (11:15) without the cross.

Look at Joel Osteen and some of these preachers. You know, I think he's a good (11:22) preacher, but I don't think he preaches the truth. But he's got a stadium full of people (11:29) every day that follow him.

Or we can look at secular humanism, elevating man as a measure (11:38) of all things. Today the same voice whispers through screams, slogans, and ideologies that (11:48) redefine marriage, gender, life, and morality according to personal desire rather than divine (11:55) design. How many people just do stuff because it feels right to them? If it feels good, do it.

(12:05) We want to go what we think is right, not what God thinks is right. (12:10) The result is confusion, brokenness, and spiritual bondage. Look at this country.

Look at this world (12:18) we live in. It's gone insane, and mainly because people are doing their own thing. (12:26) 60 years in this country, people follow the Bible a lot more closely.

(12:32) Do you think we're better off now, you know, morality-wise, and where we're headed than back (12:40) then? But God has not left us defenseless. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. (12:51) He convicts, illuminates, and leads us to freedom.

Knowing the truth is one thing, (13:00) and living it is another. James 1.22 urges, do not merely listen to the word, (13:07) and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

(13:13) Truth transforms. You know, a lot of us know the Bible in and out, but if we don't (13:20) do

what it says and take action, it doesn't mean anything. You can have all the knowledge in the (13:27) world, but if you don't put it to use, you know, it's not going to serve any purpose.

(13:36) The early church understood this. Peter and John stood before the same religious leaders (13:43) who killed Jesus and declared, salvation is found in no one else, Acts 4.12. (13:51) They paid a price, and so will we. Truth requires integrity in our words, (13:59) honesty in our business, fidelity in our marriages, and courage to share the gospel.

(14:06) It sets us free, John 8.32, free from sin's chains, guilt to weight, and culture's approval. (14:18) It also requires discernment. Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirit to see whether (14:27) they are from God, 1 John 4.1. In age of spiritual noise, scriptures are filtered.

(14:39) Let's be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was (14:45) true. Like preachers have said before, don't take my word for it. Look at the Bible.

I know (14:54) you guys probably do this too. If you ever hear something that you question, (14:59) look and see what the Bible says about it. You have to discern right from wrong.

(15:06) I think we do a good job of that. Everything that we say for salvation, for worship, for anything, (15:16) we most of the time have a scripture to back it up 99% of the time, and that's how it should be. (15:25) Pilate knew Jesus was innocent.

He even declared it three times. Yet he washed his hands and handed (15:33) truth over to be crucified because the crowd was louder than his conscience. (15:40) Rejecting truth always costs eternity.

Embracing it may cost comfort, reputation, relationships, (15:49) or safety in this life. Jesus was clear. In this world you will have trouble, (15:58) but take heart.

I have overcome the world. The reward he said surpasses understanding, (16:09) joy unspeakable, and the assurance of salvation. (16:16) I've watched it happen.

A young man raised in the church drifted into relativism during (16:22) college. He kept hearing, live your truth, and your truth isn't my truth. (16:30) But then he encountered the living truth in scripture.

It cost him some friends, (16:36) but it gave him purpose, freedom, and a life that now points others to Christ. (16:44) Truth is not meant to be lived alone. The church is a pillar and foundation of truth, (16:50) 1 Timothy 3.15. Here we proclaim it, protect it, and practice it together.

(17:01) We worship God in spirit and in truth, John 4.24, through song, the Lord's Supper, (17:09) and the preaching of his word. In worship, God is the audience. We're not the audience.

(17:21) We're not here to be entertained. We're here to worship God. (17:24) So if we worship God, we should do it how God wants to be worshiped.

(17:30) You know, we might want a big band. We might want, you know, something flashy. (17:38) It's not about us.

That's what I tell people. They're looking to worship. Just don't go where, (17:46) you know, you feel entertained or feel happy.

It's about do what God wants. Find a church (17:54) that you do as close as you can to what the scripture says. (18:00) In teaching and fellowship, we encourage one another to stand firm in the truth.

(18:08) We speak the truth in love, Ephesians 4.15. Never harsh, never sentimental. (18:17) We must hold fast the biblical teaching on sexuality, the sanctity of life, (18:23) the exclusivity of Christ, and the authority of scripture, even when culture calls it hate speech. (18:33) So I think hate speech is just another tactic of the devil to silence us.

(18:39) You know, if you speak against certain things in the Bible, they call it hate speech or hateful. (18:45) That's just a way to keep you from preaching the truth, from following God. (18:52) This world is starving for truth.

We are ambassadors of the King, 2 Corinthians 5.20, (19:00) a mission to make disciples and teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded. (19:08) Harlot's question still hangs in the air. What is truth? (19:15) Jesus answered, not with words alone, but with a cross and an empty tomb.

(19:22) Truth bled and died for you. Truth rose victorious. Truth is alive today, (19:30) seated at the right hand of God.

If you've been living your own truth, (19:37) wandering in doubt, or hiding from the light, come home. Jesus is the truth. (19:46) Repent, believe, be baptized, receive forgiveness and a new life.

(19:52) If you already belong to him, stand up, recommit today to live, speak and love the truth boldly, (20:01) for the glory of the one who is the truth incarnate. (20:06) As we stand and sing, if you have any need of the congregation, (20:11) whether it be baptized and added to the church, or you need our prayers, please come forward.