

Remnant Life Church
March 10, 2019
Absolute Truth: Jesus Christ
John 18:33-38

“What is truth?”

- This the question Pontius Pilate asked Jesus as recorded in John 18
- We are continuing to examine a rapidly diminishing commodity in our world today: absolute truth
 - We talked last week about absolute truth in reference to the Word of God
 - Written by 40 men under the specific influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - Proven more and more, even by the secular world’s standard of measurements, to be exactly what it says it is

But consider what some have said about absolute truth:

- Only when we realize that there is no eternal, unchanging truth or absolute truth can we arouse in ourselves a sense of intellectual responsibility. – Hu Shih (Chinese diplomat, scholar, and political rebel – 1891-1962)
- In passing we should note this curious mark of our age: The only absolute allowed is the absolute insistence that there is no absolute – Francis Schaeffer (Evangelical theologian, philosopher, and pastor of the early to mid 1900’s)
- **John 1:16-17** - *Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

The world does not believe in absolute truth – why?

- It removes the individual from having total control over their lives
 - To control the circumstances of our life has become of the highest priority
 - This is why so many people are in positions of leadership who have no business being there
- No one will accept having anyone else tell them what they should or should not do
 - This starts in the home
 - Parents today believe it is more important for their children to like them
 - My input into my grandson and son’s lives (common sense/not the internet)
 - We have and are continuing to raise generations of children who do not know how to fail, how to succeed through hard work, how to work through a problem, and how to utilize disappointment and the difficult things of life as motivation to learn, grow, and try again!
- We see this evidence in our schools, in the workplace, in the general population at large, and even in the church

But this is not what the Bible teaches or says

READ – John 18:33-38

Who was Pontius Pilate?

- Pilate was the 5th governor of Judea

- A governor was either an elected or appointed official to act as the chief administrator over a province of Rome
- When it was an occupied territory (such as Judea in the time of Jesus) the governor was appointed by Caesar
 - He was also called Proconsul or Prefect
 - He was the chief judge for the region
 - He had the military at his disposal to enforce the law
- Pilate was appointed by Emperor Tiberius and held the post for approximately ten years from 26 – 36 AD
 - Nothing is said again of Pilate in the Bible
 - Extrabiblical and historical writings tell us that he was recalled to Rome by Tiberius
 - Caligula was emperor by the time Pilate arrived
 - He took his own life after arriving back in Rome sometime within the next 5 years
- Both biblical and extrabiblical sources report him to be a man weak in moral character who vacillated in his decisions but attempted to cover those flaws through brutality
- Josephus in his book *The Antiquities of the Jews* reports several instances of his using soldiers to have dissidents and protestors killed as a way to quell their actions.
- The fact that Roman soldiers were involved in the arrest and trials of Jesus demonstrate that Pilate was very aware of Jesus and working with the Jewish leaders to placate their concerns

But Pilate was a conflicted man as evident by what we read this morning

- Knowing what he should do
- Knowing the easiest thing to do
- But still trying to set Jesus free
- No one comes into contact with Jesus without being changed
 - Three men through the time of Jesus' death were changed
 - Two I believe for sure and perhaps the third
 - The criminal who hung on the one side of Jesus believed and we will see him in heaven one day
 - The centurion who proclaimed, "*Surely this man was the Son of God!*" **Mark 15:39**
 - Perhaps even Pilate who knew that Jesus was innocent
- Pilate, for the time in his life, was encountering truth
- That truth was Jesus Christ

As we said last week, the Bible, in contrast to the world, has always maintained there is absolute truth.

- There is a standard by which all people will be judged – whether you believe that or not
- **Jer 5:1** - *Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.*
- There is a standard, a line of truth, we will be held to that line
- Since that is true how do I find, how do I know what truth is?

Studies show that most Americans believe that all religions lead to God – they are simply different paths to the same end

- That sounds very tolerant on the surface
- But it is simply a prime example of “moral relativism”
 - Relativism defined as what is true is based on what I want to believe
- The fact is, not only do they not lead to the same end (God) but they are not even alike themselves
 - Eastern religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) – believe in an impersonal god, pantheism (a piece or part of god is in everything including man, accepts all gods) with no concept of an afterlife
 - Hinduism – an impersonal god, polytheistic (worship of many, identified gods), reincarnation
 - Islam – an impersonal god, monotheistic, eternal life is based on your works and must be earned
 - Judaism – personal God, monotheistic, eternal life is based on your works and must be earned
 - Christianity – personal God, monotheistic, eternal life is a gift
- So if God reveals Himself through all of these religions we are left with 2 options concerning His character
 - Either God is a liar telling one group it is this way and another group it is a different way
 - Or He is a schizophrenic – one day he’s Shiva the destroyer, another day He is Brahma with no interest or contact with His creation, another a loving God who sent His Son to die for us
 - So the god you get is dependent on the day you bump into him
 - NO – all religions do not lead to creator God of the universe

So if not through the diversity of any religion then how do we know truth?

- Go back to what we read earlier
- **John 1:17** - *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*
 - God’s grace and truth came through Jesus
 - Jesus speaks of or refers to “the truth” over 30 times in the Gospels

So then what do we know of Jesus to believe this of Him?

- Jesus had credentials that no other religious leader has even come close to having
 - Buddha lived about 500 years before Jesus; he had some ideas that people liked, they became his followers and built a religion around his teaching but no one ever predicted his birth, what he would teach, or when he would die
 - Mohammad was born about 600 years after Jesus; had some ideas that people liked, they formed a religion around his teachings but no one ever prophesied his coming, what he would teach, and when he would die.
 - Joseph Smith claimed he had an encounter with an angel, some people liked what he said and built a religion around what he said would happen; but no one foretold his life or what he would say; and he was wrong about all the things he said would happen

- Contrast those three to Jesus and what was said about his life in the OT
 - There are over 300 prophecies proclaiming someone was coming as long as 1000 years before Jesus was born
 - The Israelites were told repeatedly – where he would be born, what he would teach, and how he would die
- Of those 300+ prophecies, it was determined the odds of just any one of 10 of those things coming to pass –
 1. Born in Bethlehem – 1 in 200
 2. Preceded by a messenger – 1 in 20
 3. Be betrayed by a friend – 1 in 10
 4. Have his hands and feet pierced – 1 in 100
 5. Be whipped or scourged – 1 in 25
 6. Be sold for 30 pieces of silver – 1 in 100
 7. Be spit on and beaten – 1 in 10
 8. Money paid to betray Him thrown in the temple and used to buy a field – 1 in 200
 9. Be silent before His accusers – 1 in 100
 10. Be crucified with thieves – 1 in 100

Those are the odds of any ONE of those happening

- To have all 10 of those fulfilled by one man the odds are 1 in 10 billion times a billion!
- This does not add the other 290+ prophecies He fulfilled – the odds are incalculable

In other words – IMPOSSIBLE

The one and only answer to the the truth of Jesus is that He is exactly who He says He was and is. The truth of Jesus is the absolute truth and why we believe in the Word of God and the promises we are given as believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

- A missionary and a follower of Mohammed were having a discussion one day. The Mohammedan wanted to impress the missionary with what he considered to be the superiority of Islam. So he said, "When we go to Mecca, we at least find a coffin, but when you Christians go to Jerusalem, your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave." At this the missionary smiled knowing that the man had unwittingly just declared the glory of God through Jesus Christ. He said, "That is exactly the difference. Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. All the founders and leaders of the other religions and philosophies are also in their coffins. But Jesus Christ is risen, and all power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him! He is alive, but they are all still dead.

What is the truth? The truth is...

- ...you and I are sinners saved by the grace of God not by our works or any other way than the shed blood of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice and atonement for you and me
- ...God created you in His image and loves you, cares about you, desires for you to walk in daily fellowship with Him
- ...God loved you so much that He sent His Son to die, just for you. All you have to do is accept Him as your Lord and Savior and He will forgive you your sins – washed away and giving you eternal life with Him in heaven.