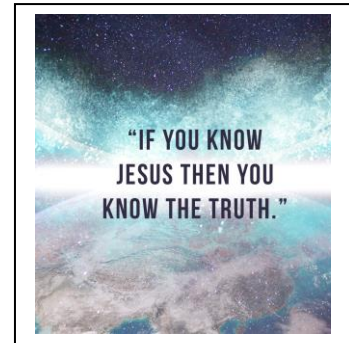


Sunday April 21st

Get the Truth

Scripture John 4:7-19 and 25-26



Truth seems in short supply within our world and people are striving and seeking truth in all the wrong places. Yet the Word of God is the only place we can find the real truth. The goal with reading the Bible is not simply to read it, but ultimately to do it. You need to feel the truth as much as you need to read the truth so that you can live the truth.

Truth in the Old Testament was a combination of intellectual true or false facts and morals – the attributes of a person. In Hebrew the word truth translates into faithfulness. It was more important for the truth seen in a reliable person than of the mere facts of the case.

In Greek truth was seen as intellectual, the real situation, denoting real events as distinct from myths.

The Christian faith is truth. Jesus claimed that – He was truth personified, He mediates the truth and the Holy Spirit leads people into it.

I'd like to explore the story of the Woman at the Well – the Samaritan woman.

We have this Samaritan woman who was living in sin, having to collect water during the hottest part of the day, because the other women shunned her. She made her way past prying eyes and nasty comments to the well. It was there that Jesus spoke to her.

The Jews hated the Samaritans because they had intermarried, and even though they knew about the coming Messiah, they had a strange mixture of religious beliefs and had no accurate knowledge about the truth.

For a Rabbi to speak to a woman in a public place was looked upon with disapproval in the Jewish culture at that time.

Can you picture yourself as this woman – she had been seeking the truth but in the wrong places. She had had 5 husbands and living with a 6th man who was not her husband, possibly seeking affirmation, acceptance, and security in the wrong places. She was shunned by the other women in her town and felt worthless and defeated.

I wonder if she hesitated to approach the well, considering she was in public, alone and here was this man, but maybe, what more wrong could she do!

Jesus maintained respect and concern for her as He asked her to give Him some water. Jesus refused to give in to racial and social prejudices, knowing the need for her to learn the truth.

Can you imagine how she must have felt when she discovered that Jesus knew all about her private life. We read that she changed the subject quickly – saying “Sir, I see you are a prophet.”

Often people become uncomfortable when the conversation hits too close to home and they try to talk about something else. Like Jesus, we should gently guide the conversation back to the truth. His presence exposes sin but only Christ can forgive sins and give new life.

The truth of the Good News is for every person, no matter what their race, social position, or past sins. We must be prepared to share it at any time, in any place. Jesus crossed all barriers to share the Good News – the truth, and we, who follow Him must do no less.

Sometimes Christians excuse themselves from witnessing by saying that their family or friends aren't ready to believe. Jesus, however, makes it clear there is a continual harvest waiting to be reaped. Don't make excuses – look around. You will find people ready to hear God's word.

When Jesus says that those who drink of the water that He gives will never be thirsty as it will become a spring of water that wells up to eternal life, the woman may have thought, if she drinks of the water Jesus offers, she will not have to return to the well each day. She would not have to bear the brunt of ostracism, peering eyes ogling at her through the windows, comments, and extreme isolation.

Jesus did not come to take away our challenges, but to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems while always being in God's presence.

When we allow other's perceptions of us or even our own perceptions of ourselves, to control how we live, we are enslaved. We become entrenched in the ways of this world and do not live as citizens of heaven, which is another kind of Kingdom altogether.

Each one of us could be the Samaritan woman. What occurs at the well of Jacob describes our own encounter with Jesus. The ways

by which Jesus leads the women to recognise and love Him, are the ways by which Jesus, step-by-step, accomplishes our own conversion.

This woman became one of Jesus' disciples as through her experience and learning the truth of the Good News, she witnessed to the others in her town, and many believed in Jesus because of her. She did not know the Scriptures fully but knew of the Messiah. She shared the truth as Jesus had told her and just that bit of information led to many believing in Jesus.

Let me share a story: one day a shoemaker in Meshed, a very religious city in Northeastern Iran, brought home for his lunch some cheese which the grocer had wrapped in a page of the New Testament, which he was using as wrapping paper. After eating his lunch, the shoemaker picked up the piece of paper and read the story of the man who hired labourers for his vineyard and at the end of the day paid all the labourers the same wage, whether they had worked 12 hours or one hour.

The shoemaker liked the story, so the next day he returned to the grocer, purchased more cheese, and asked if it could be wrapped in another page of that book. Finally, on the third day he bought what remained of the New Testament and showed it to his brother. The two of them went to a missionary, who gave them a complete copy, and gave them regular instruction in the Word of God. Both men were later baptized and were among the first believers in that city.

I don't think that Jesus expects us to stand on the side of the road, with our Bible, attempting to sell it to someone. And this

story indicates that we can all plant a seed, even with just one story from the Bible, to spark curiosity and draw people to seek the truth of the Gospel.

Maybe you are in a place where you are tempted to sell yourself short by following worldly temptations, rather than the eternal truth in the word of God. Maybe you are wrestling inside, and you need to make a choice.

Today can be the day you submit fully to God's word – the only source of true, abundant life.

Open your hearts and minds to receive the Word, pray for opportunities to share it. This is as simple as knowing what it says, living it out and sharing your story of redemption with those around you.

There is so much joy that comes from giving the gospel to someone else. It will strengthen your faith in Christ. He has called us to believe, receive and give.

Get ready for the open doors coming your way this week.

God, thank You that I am your child and that my worth comes from You. Help me to honour the truth contained in Your Word. Help me today to be defined, not by my possessions, but by my position as Your child. Amen.