

“The Need for Truth in Confusing Times”

McCall

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THE NEED FOR TRUTH

Tom Trevethan told a student gathering: **“The heart will not long rejoice in what the mind knows is not true.”** It is indeed a dangerous thing to drive a wedge between the heart and the mind.

Truth is the very ground we can never give up. It is the domain that is necessary for survival itself. No person or nation can long continue without truth. It is the DNA of the OT and NT revelation of God. The currency that God deals with is Truth. Because He is the Unchanging I AM, the Holy Holy Holy, - there is one thing the omnipotent One Cannot do: **He cannot lie.** To do so would be a violation of His very Nature. So because God exists eternally as the Unchanging One, He is Truth Itself and His revelation is truth. He doesn't need our approval or acceptance to be Truth Itself.

God never asks us to believe in non-sense. Faith didn't precede knowledge and facts. It always follows. God gives us reason to believe. We must never give up this ground regardless of the intellectual insanity of our age!

We don't relegate truth to any human. Truth is. What we defer to is someone who must have Absolute knowledge. No human fits that criteria. But there is a Person who does. Since causality is related to this matter of truth, then the Self-existing Person from whom all personhood comes from is the one who defines reality and truth. Nothing has happened by random “chance” or force.

One Christian lecturer agreed to give a presentation at Harvard. In advance, the Harvard Christians placed posters around the campus asking “Why should anyone believe anything at all?” This was not simply posing the question about whether Christianity is rational and makes sense at all, it was asking whether it is worthy of belief, but for that matter whether anything is worthy of belief.

So I simply want to begin with the Author (God) who as the only Author thereby holds the right to Authority (power and design). Postmodern thought is absurd, illogical and is destined to burn out. But while it rages in our nation, I want to remind all present of this fact: God was there before the postmodern skepticism took hold of this present age.

JESUS ENGAGES THE MIND IN HIS SUMMARY OF THE GREATEST TRUTH

Mark 12:28-30 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, **“Which commandment is the most important of all?”**²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’³⁰ **And you shall**

love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Mark 12:30³⁰ και ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου και ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου και ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας **σου** και ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου.

.= **the faculty of thinking, comprehending, and reasoning, understanding, intelligence, mind** as the organ of **νοεῖν**, (**noein** is the mind, **dia** is through, it is a word picture, the process of the mind thinking through, reasoning out. This how the person processes data, comes to understanding, makes meaningful choices of the heart.

So in the context of “commandment” (moral and transcendent absolutes) the mind is to be disciplined and trained in reasoning which requires knowing truth. Period.

- The goal of campuses today is social and sexual indoctrination is indicated by a teacher who travels all over college campuses speaking on worldview issues
- Self fulfillment and self exploration have replaced a serious academic study of history and of its impact this kind of academic approach to life can only flourish if the concept of absolute truth is eradicated.

In the book “I don’t have enough faith to be an atheist”, Geistler and Turek refer to a the movie “A Few Good Men”

Tom **Cruise** plays a **Navy lawyer** who **questions a Marine colonel, played by Jack Nicholson, about the murder of one of Nicholson’s men.** The dramatic courtroom scene turns into a shouting match as Cruise accuses Nicholson of being complicit in the murder:

Cruise: “Colonel, did you order the Code Red!”

Judge: “You don’t have to answer that question!”

Nicholson: “I’ll answer the question . . . you want answers?”

Cruise: “I think I’m entitled to them.”

Nicholson: “You want answers!”

Cruise: “I want the truth!”

Nicholson: “You can’t handle the truth!”

Nicholson might as well have been yelling at all of America rather than Cruise because it seems that many in our country can’t handle the truth.

On one hand, we demand truth in virtually every area of our lives.

For example; we demand the truth from:

loved ones (no one wants lies from a spouse or a child)

doctors (we want the right medicine prescribed and the right operations performed)

stock brokers (we demand that they tell us the truth about companies they recommend)

courts (we want them to convict only the truly guilty)

employers (we want them to tell us the truth and pay us fairly)

airlines (we demand truly safe planes and truly sober pilots)

We also expect to be told the truth when we pick up a reference book, read an article, or watch a news story;

we want the truth from advertisers, teachers, and politicians;

we assume road signs, medicine bottles, and food labels reveal the truth.

In fact, we demand the truth for almost every facet of life that affects our money, relationships, safety, or health.

On the other hand, despite our unwavering demands for truth in those areas, many of us say we aren't interested in truth when it comes to morality or religion. In fact, many downright reject the idea that any religion can be true. As we're sure you've noticed, there's a huge contradiction here.

Why do we demand truth in everything but morality and religion? Why do we say, "That's true for you but not for me," when we're talking about morality or religion, but we never even think of such nonsense when we're talking to a stock broker about our money or a doctor about our health?

Although few would admit it, our rejection of religious and moral truth is often on volitional rather than intellectual grounds— we just don't want to be held accountable to any moral standards or religious doctrine.

So we blindly accept the self-defeating truth claims of politically correct intellectuals who tell us that truth does not exist; everything is relative; there are no absolutes; it's all a matter of opinion; you ought not judge; religion is about faith, not facts! Perhaps Augustine was right when he

said that we love the truth when it enlightens us, but we hate it when it convicts us.

Maybe we can't handle the truth...

What is truth?

- Truth is that which conforms to reality, it is what is real
- Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held. (Someone can sincerely believe the world is flat, but that only makes that person sincerely mistaken.)
- Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it. (An arrogant person does not make the truth he professes false. A humble person does not make the error he professes true.)
- **Beware of self-defeating statements! Example...**

“one that fails to meet its own standard. As we’re sure you realize, the caller’s statement “there is no truth” claims to be true and thus defeats itself. It’s like saying, “I can’t speak a word in English.” If someone ever said that, you obviously would respond, “Wait a minute! Your statement must be false because you just uttered it in English!”

Truth vs. Tolerance

Truth and tolerance are not the same. We should be tolerant in a pluralistic society like ours. But tolerance doesn't imply that all claims are equally valid in terms of truth. H

**The real question is this: Who are you going to trust? And why?
Now God steps up to the microphone...**

GOD'S UNIVERSAL COURTROOM SUMMONS

HEAR THE OLD TESTAMENT!

Consider the times this was communicated:

1. International political intrigue and threat (Assyria)
2. Nation that had left its Revealed God and Truth (OT)
3. Syncretism: “Co-Exist Signs on the chariots”...
4. Widespread immorality (Heterosexual and homosexual practices)
5. Oppression, Violence and Corruption in government and business.

- **Isaiah 41:1 Listen to me in silence (accused is judicially silenced), O coastlands;** let the peoples renew their strength; let them **approach**, then let them speak; let us together draw near for **judgment**.
- **Isaiah 41:5** The **coastlands** have seen and are **afraid**; the ends of the earth **tremble**; they have **drawn near and come**.
- **Isaiah 41:21-23 Set forth your case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.** ²² **Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen.** Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or **declare to us the things to come.** ²³ Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified.

קָרְבוּ רִיבְכֶם יְהוָה הַגִּישׁוּ עֲצָמוֹתֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר מֶלֶךְ יִצְחָק: ^{WTT} Isaiah 41:21
(Isa 41:21 WTT)

FOUR DISTINCT WORDS

- = Draw near, present as used in legal context...similar to approach the bench of the judge...
- = legal controversy, contention, case at law, lawsuit
- = Press it, drive it by force...force what???
- = Legal defense, strong argument

All taken together, God is challenging the nations and Israel to **give Him their best shot. Make the best case you can for your current beliefs and behavior.**

It is not God that is being called into the courts of man, it is humanity that is Summoned to the Courtroom of Almighty God.

- Does God here need to be defended? I would just as soon defend a lion with my bare hands as to defend God. He can and will take care of Himself! That is what He does here so well.
- It is rather man who needs a defense. Indeed, he needs an Advocate. But right here there is none because humanity has a bad defense. Not just weak, it lacks any evidence. The case crumbles upon examination.

Now God makes His case for His Authority and for His Absolute Truth

- **Isaiah 41:25-26 I stirred up one from the north**, and he has come, from the rising of the sun, and he shall call upon my name; **he shall trample on rulers as on mortar, as the potter treads clay.** ²⁶ **Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforehand, that we might say, "He is right"?** **There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed, none who heard your words.**

אֶף אִין מִשְׁמִיעַ אֶף אִין־שֹׁמֵעַ אֲמַרְיָכֶם: ^{WTT} Isaiah 41:26
וְנִדְעָה וּמִלְפָּנַיִם וְנֹאמֶר צִדִּיק אֶף אִין־מֵיִד

Who is this that is stirred up? Run your eyes north on the map and it becomes clear...

Isaiah 45:1 Thus says **the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations** before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:...

..... כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְכוֹרֶשׁ ^{WTT} Isaiah 45:1

= 100+ yrs Isaiah said these words before Cyrus!!!!

= just, lawful, righteous...the norm...measuring standard, refers to a moral ethical standard. The function of judges is to rule based upon the lawful, evidential standard. This is legal and evidential vindication of God Himself by God Himself.

Isaiah 45:4-7 For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, ⁶ that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

Rest assured everyone: **There is Absolute Truth because there is a Sovereign God who is in possession of Absolute power. Why what is up with the moral and intellectual chaos of our age????**

PEOPLE CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH BUT WHY?

HEAR THE NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 1:18-32

Humanity suffers from confusion due not to the lack of proofs and evidences for Truth and God, no, it is because man has a moral problem, not an intellectual one. THIS IS WHY EVERYONE NEEDS THE GOSPEL!

HE IS THE GOD WHO IS THERE AND WON'T GO AWAY

HE ABSOLUTELY EXISTS (1:18-23)

Romans 1: God's Moral Law Is Plain to All In Romans 1, Paul charges that, because God's eternal power and divine nature are clearly perceived in the things he has

made, **all people are without excuse when it comes to acknowledging the Creator God.**

“It is a short step from the reality of a self-existent eternal being to a self-existent eternal personal being who designs the universe by his own mind and will. But it is precisely because God is personal and has a mind and will that his very existence is attacked.

If God were conceived of as an amorphous, undefined “higher power” or impersonal force, there would be little theological fuss about him.

No one fears judgment at the hands of cosmic dust. Who is called to repent before an impersonal force?

The ungodly seek an impersonal and ignorant God precisely because we are personal beings and we know we are ultimately accountable to our Creator for our behavior.”

HIS ETHICAL TRUTHS ABSOLUTELY EXIST (1:24-32)

- V. 26-27 Rejection of God and resulting action of giving people up to their choices, man becomes enslaved to self-love, self-worship, and distorted passions (sex drive).
- V. 28-31 People begin doing what they shouldn't do. People now violate each other in multiple ways. Humanity is no longer able to think ethically. No more meaningful dialogue over ethics or morals (explain difference). Note the implosion of attitudes and behaviors.
- V 32 is final step:
- **While this list is not exhaustive, it does catalog some of the main ways humans violate each other through immoral behavior. Sin, unbridled, carries with it a hatred for absolute moral values. The crux of the matter comes, however, in verse 32: Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Who are “they” that “know God's decree”? They are the very people who practice the sins previously listed.**

It is as if Paul is saying, “Given that God has clearly revealed himself (including his holy character) in the things he has made, we humans know of God's righteousness and what that demands of our behavior.” **In other words, every one of us knows the difference between right and wrong.** We know how we ought to act, Paul argues (vv.28, 32), because the absolute, infinite, and almighty God is holy. People know they ought not do each of the sins Paul names. Regardless of having this sense of **oughtness, however, we not only chase after such sins and approve of them in others, we actually enlist the support of other people and encourage them to participate in the same devious acts.** This is the essence of sin:

direct rebellion in the face of the living God. Having refused to acknowledge God's goodness to us (Rom.1:21, 28), we ignore what we ought to do and focus exclusively on what we want to do. Further on in Romans, Paul's indictment against humanity becomes clearly inescapable.

- **No one can escape the moral law of a righteous God.** Non-Christians often assert that our consciences are simply a result of societal taboos or cultural conventions. Yet even though we may debate what belongs to custom and what belongs to absolute law, we cannot eradicate the conscience. **No culture is devoid of an ethical structure, because if it were, it would cease to be a viable culture. Social interaction would be all but impossible in a society that has no ability to determine right from wrong. As much as naïve utopianism desires it, if man had no God, and subsequently no morality from which he could borrow, the last thing there would be is peace.** Our relativistic culture today attempts to get around the need for a moral law by declaring that there is no right or wrong at all, that every act is amoral (neither moral nor immoral). This is nothing more than an educated barbarism; and despite its efforts to the contrary, the conscience cannot be eradicated.

Sproul, R.C. (2003-09-01). Defending Your Faith: An Introduction (p. 148). Good News Publishers. Kindle Edition.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Ravi Zacharius: One of the greatest apologists for Christianity in our time, said the following to us as believers:

Where is the point of relevance in our time? I believe it is the hunger for love. Even one as cerebrally intimidating as Bertrand Russell said that love was an unsatisfied hunger in his life. Bear in mind that as I say this, my ministry often takes me into the arena of argumentation. **I am often forced to deal with arguments and counterarguments. But now, after two and a half decades in the ministry, there are some truths that emerge more clearly, more beautifully, more persuasively in my own mind. We as Christians make a staggering claim: we lay claim to truth that is exclusive. In a society that not only does not believe in a metanarrative or in exclusivity but also rejects the notion of objective truth, ours is a monumental claim. We proclaim one way to God—Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When we lay claim to truth in such radical terms, it is imperative that such truth be undergirded by love. If it is not undergirded by love, it makes the possessor of that truth obnoxious and the dogma repulsive. I believe it is vital that we understand this.**

Carson, D. A. (2009-09-01). Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns (p. 22). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

JESUS CHRIST

John 18:37-38 Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. **For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world-- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.**" ³⁸
Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

Trust me on this...Pilate wishes to this day that he would have bowed the knee to Incarnate Truth that day. He lives with eternal regret for his immoral failure to embrace the truth of Christ.

IN ALL OF HISTORY, THERE IS NOT ONE WHO HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER THESE TWO ESSENTIALS FOR ALL HUMANITY: LOVE AND TRUTH!

PAUL: Repentance:

Acts 17:30-31. "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."