TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Kelly McCain

#288 Fairest Lord Jesus
#539 Higher Ground

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#344 Low in the Grave He Lay
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#480 Blessed Assurance
Sermon: "Excruciating"
Mark 15:16-32

#671 Purer in Heart, O God
#712 Jesus Is Coming Soon

Closing Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee

Fifth Sunday night Prayer Service

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

August 29, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

People of Truth

Our contemporary culture has a real problem with truth. The premodern view was that all knowledge was an attempt to seek after God; the 11th century theologian Anselm's motto, "faith seeking understanding,' sums up the idea well. Then the Enlightenment came and displaced God as irrelevant to our knowledge: human inquiry for the 300 or so years leading to World War 2 was focused upon an ever-increasing discovery of facts, rooted in an unbridled optimism that we could objectively define truth based on observation. In the postwar period, the postmodern movement emerged to question the viability of the modern view: we are not neutral, objective observers, but instead bring our own preconceptions and biases to the act of observation. How can we trust that we are judging rightly? That's a valid criticism in itself, consistent with Scripture's repeated warnings against trusting in human wisdom.

But postmodernism ultimately went further, questioning not only our ability to grasp the truth, but even whether such a thing as objective truth exists. While we try to sort out what to make of that, it has left us in chaos. In 2016, the Oxford English Dictionary announced their word of the year: post-truth, an adjective "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." We see that all around us: in our news and media consumption, in our politics, even in our views of COVID. It's not that objective truth no longer exists; it's that it no longer matters.

Against this, Christians claim to believe in Jesus Christ who revealed the glory of the Father, *full of grace and truth* **(Jn 1:14).** A Jesus who prayed, in his prayer in **John 17**, that the Father might sanctify his followers in the truth. How does this happen? *Your word is truth* **(John 17:17).** Not only does truth exist, but it is knowable, in the Word of God in Scripture and the eternal Word, Jesus Christ. How do we live as a people who embrace truth in a world that has rejected it? There is a story that offers us some guidance in **1 Kings 22.**

The infamous Ahab was the king of Israel, and he decided that he would go and take back by force the city of Ramoth-gilead, his rightful possession, from the Syrian king Beh-hadad, who had refused to cede it. In making preparations, Ahab turned to Jehoshaphat, one of the handful of righteous kings of Judah, for support. Jehoshaphat agreed to go to war with him, but first requested that that they ask for a word from the Lord **(1 Kings 22:1-5).**

So Ahab called in 400 prophets who all told him exactly what he wanted to hear: *Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king*! But Jehoshaphat was skeptical, rightly concluding that

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

KaLeisha Jones has health problems.

Larry Hicks has been placed in hospice care.

Phillip Strickhausen has covid and is having gall bladder problems.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, Peggy McIntosh, Oscar Cantu, Debby McKinzie, Jo Ann Modisette

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Larry Hicks, Catherine Parker

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, Aug 30th at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 1st we will have a meal at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center before service.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Sept. 7th at 8:00 am.

Primetimers will be going to Monument Inn on Saturday, Sept. 11th at 4:00 p.m. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

We are in need of Bible class teachers for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. If you would like to help please let Bryant or one of the Elders know.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor	Phillip Strickhausen	
Robert Ward		

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these were just a bunch of yes-men. He pointedly asked for another prophet *of the Lord*. Ahab responded that there was one man, Micaiah—but Ahab hated him, because he never told him anything good. Nevertheless, they sent for him, at Jehoshaphat's insistence **(v. 6-12).**

Micaiah was warned to only tell the king that he would succeed. Instead, he responded, *As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak.* He predicted that Ahab would be killed and his armies scattered. Now Ahab knew that Micaiah had spoken the truth; he knew that his own hand-picked prophets were lying; yet he chose to go to Ramoth-gilead anyway. And he was killed, just as Micaiah prophesied **(v. 13-40).**

Some important questions about our attitude toward the truth emerge naturally from this story:

1. Do we love the truth? Ahab didn't. He loved what he *wanted* to be true. That is precisely the situation that exists in our world today, where truth is regarded as something that is felt rather than known. A 2018 survey by the Barna Group indicated 44% of Americans believe truth is relative, while only 36% believe it to be absolute. Equally alarming, when asked for credible sources of truth, 32% said they trust only their instincts In contrast, Scripture claims that it is the truth, as noted earlier. It is *breathed out by God* and thus makes us *complete for every good work* **(2 Tim 3:16).** We do not have to merely accept that; we can trust it because it has proven to be credible. Ahab, for one, discovered that the word of the Lord is truth despite his feelings, to his own regret. Our feelings about the truth are ultimately irrelevant, our instincts unreliable. It exists whether we like it or not.

2. Do we conform to the truth? Most people reading an article in a church bulletin, however, do love the truth—or, at least, we want to. But it is insufficient to love it in an idealistic sense. We must conform our lives to it. Note that Jehoshaphat, a devout man of God, in this instance actually made up his mind to go with Ahab and only THEN decided to consult God! He did what he wanted to do and then tried to shoehorn the word in somewhere to legitimate his actions. We must instead be willing to follow the truth wherever it leads us, even if it contradicts our preconceived notions.

3. Will we speak the truth? Micaiah did, even though he was under a great deal of pressure not to. *As the Lord lives, what he says, that will I speak.* Even if we are not preacher or teachers, all of us will called to speak the truth repeatedly in our lives. And in a post-Christian society, there is increasing pressure against speaking it too loudly: it's alright to be a Christian as long as you're not TOO Christian, like some sort of fanatic. We must have the courage of our convictions, to tell the truth—God's truth—in all circumstances.

How do we fare on those three questions? May God help us to be people of truth!

Bryant Perkins