

“Stand Up for Truth”

Isaiah 59:14 - 19

Big Idea – We need to always stand on God’s truth whether popular or not.

Isaiah 59:14 Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, what is honest is not allowed to enter the city.

15 Truth cannot be found anywhere, and people who refuse to do evil are attacked. The LORD looked and could not find any justice, and he was displeased.

16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

17 He covered himself with goodness like armor. He put the helmet of salvation on his head. He put on the clothes of punishment and wrapped himself in the coat of his strong love.

18 The LORD will pay back his enemies for what they have done. He will show his anger to those who were against him; he will punish the people in faraway places as they deserve.

19 So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Modern thinkers have rejected the very idea of objective morality: Darwin reduced morals to an extension of animal instincts; Freud, regarded repression of impulses as the source of neurosis; Marx, scorned morality as an expression of self-interest.

Charles Colson, Christianity Today, March 7, 1994, p. 80

In 1996, just twenty-seven percent of Americans told Gallup that same-sex marriage should be valid; today that number has doubled to fifty-five percent. As Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg noted, “The change in people’s attitudes on that issue has been enormous.”

Now that same-sex marriage is legal, a focused effort is being waged

to legalize polygamy. Euthanasia is legal in more states than ever. The California legislature is considering a bill that would remove government funding for any religious school that affirms biblical morality with regard to homosexuality, since such a stance is considered to “discriminate” against LGBTQ people. Only seminaries (so far) would be exempt.

Only thirty-five percent of Americans believe that moral truth is

absolute. The vast majority are convinced that truth is what we believe it to be. As a result, tolerance is the guiding principle of our day, whether the issue is same-sex marriage, transgender bathrooms, euthanasia, or another moral issue.

Moral relativism is affecting Christians as well as the larger culture. Rod Dreher, one of my favorite cultural analysts, claims that “moralistic therapeutic deism” (MTD) is replacing biblical Christianity across our society and even in our churches. MTD can be summarized as: God exists, and he wants us to be nice to each other, and to be happy and successful.

There was a time when most Americans respected the Bible, and could quote it with authority. In 1963, according to Gallup, 65% believed the Bible literally; today the number is only 32%.

There was a time when most Americans accepted absolute standards. They might disagree on what those absolutes were, but they knew that some things are really right or wrong. Today 70% reject moral absolutes. Chuck Colson, Christianity Today, November 9, 1992, p. 112

Is There Absolute Truth?

A recent Barna Research Group survey on what Americans believe confirms what this brief scenario illustrates: we are in danger of becoming a nation of relativists. The Barna survey asked, "Is there absolute truth?" Amazingly, 66 percent of American adults responded that they believe that "there is no such thing as absolute truth; different people can define truth in conflicting ways and still be correct." The figure rises to 72 percent when it comes to those between the ages of 18 and 25. Christianity Today, October 26, 1992, p. 30

1. What is the Truth?

The essential idea of truth in the Bible is not conformity to some external standard but faithfulness or reliability. In the case of God, of course, faithfulness or reliability is not measured by any external standard. God is the standard. God's truth (faithfulness or reliability) is the truth that is basic for all other truth.

Men Have Forgotten God

In his 1983 acceptance speech for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn] recalled the words he heard as a child, when his elders sought to explain the ruinous upheavals in Russia: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened." He added, "If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, here too I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: 'men have forgotten God.'"

Truth is presented in Scripture as a chief element in the nature of God

Deuteronomy 7:9 So know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God. He will keep his agreement of love for a thousand lifetimes for people who love him and obey his commands.

When God is spoken of as the true God or the God of truth 2 Chron. 15:3; Jer. 10:10) the idea is that God is reliable God "keeps truth for ever" (Ps. 146:6)

Psalm 31:5 I give you my life. Save me, LORD, God of truth.

Isaiah 65:16 People in the land who ask for blessings will ask for them from the faithful God. And people in the land who make a promise will promise in the name of the faithful God, because the troubles of the past will be forgotten. I will make those troubles go away.

It is a guarantee of God's constancy

Deuteronomy 32:3 For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.

James 1:17, 18 Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows. 18 God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things he made.

It gives us confidence in His promises Exodus 34:6; Psalm 91:4; Psalm 146:6

of right dealing with men (Psalm 85:11; Psalm 89:14);

God's truth is especially noteworthy as a guarantee of merciful consideration of men.

The most important uses of the word "truth" in the N.T. are to be found in Paul and writings of John.

In testimony before Pilate, Jesus declared: "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37).

God is the truth; and since Christ shares in the truth of God, He is full of grace and truth. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6);

In the Gospel of John, the activity of the Holy Spirit is associated with the activity of Jesus so far as truth is concerned.

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf." (John 15:26)

2. Where is the Truth found?

Truth is reality in relation to the vital interests of the soul. It is primarily something to be realized and done, rather than something to be learned or known.

Found in God, God's Word, God's Son, God's Spirit, and God's church. John 1:14, 17;

In the largest aspect it is God's nature finding expression in His creation, in revelation, in Jesus Christ in whom "grace and truth came" and finally in man apprehending, accepting and practically realizing the values of life, which are the will of God (John 1:14; John 8:32; John 17:19;

Truth is personalized in Jesus Christ. He truly expresses God, presents the true ideal of man, in Himself summarizes the harmony of existence and becomes the agent for unifying the disordered world. Hence, He is the Truth (John 14:6), the true expression (Logos, John 1:1) of God.

Similarly, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth because His function is to guide into all truth

John 16:13 But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you into all truth. He will not speak his own words, but he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is to come.

1 John 5:6 "It is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is Truth.

in James, Peter, Hebrews, and possibly the Pastoral Epistles, the term connotes "the body of Christian teaching"

James 1:17 Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows. 18 God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things he made.

1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

3. How do the Truth and love fit together?

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

19 Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.

1 Peter 1:21 Through Christ you believe in God, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory. So your faith and your hope are in God. 22 Now that you have made your souls pure by obeying the truth, you can have true love for your Christian brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply with all your heart.

