

AS BELIEVERS, WE ARE BECOMING MATURE DISCIPLES

Matthew 4:19 (NIV84) Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

- o Disciples are following Jesus, being changed by Him, and are committed to His mission—in the “four spheres.”

THE CONCEPT OF FAKE NEWS

- In our culture, we hear this term thrown around on both sides of the aisle, politically.
 - o The fact that this phrase is used by almost everyone confirms that not everything you hear should be believed.
- **What is it?**
 - o It’s when someone puts together “so called” facts to create a narrative that people will believe so that they act—or vote—in a certain way.
- **Why are we so concerned about it?**
 - o Because it’s used to move someone toward an agenda.
 - o The world is seeking to move us toward a way of believing—and a way of acting, as a result.
- **The problem we all face: What is truth?**
 - o It’s interesting that those who claim there is no absolute truth will get so upset when we don’t believe their truth.
- We all deal with misinformation and have to wade through what we see and hear to come up with a perspective—our perspective—and actions can bring life or death, or something in between.

Proverbs 18:17 In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.

THE BIG QUESTION: WHAT IS TRUTH, AND WHO GETS TO DECIDE?

- **The history of truth: the Bible reveals a story that started in the Garden of Eden (a perfect creation).**
 - o A choice is revealed.
 - o We have an enemy who has started a misinformation campaign. What are the results of it?
 - * The world is winding down. (see The Curse in **Genesis 3:14-19**)
 - o But God has been pursuing people in order to reconcile them to Himself.
 - * The world is being held together for a final purpose. (see **2 Peter 3:8**)

JESUS REVEALS THAT GOD IS TRUTH, AND GOD BRINGS THE TRUTH (See also John 1:1-4; John 8:42-47; Mark 13:31)

John 14:5-7 ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

John 17:13-19 ¹³I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴**I have given them your word and the world has hated them**, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

WARNINGS ABOUT FAKE NEWS

Kinds of misinformation we are warned about:

- There is another Messiah/Savior. (**Matthew 24:5**)
- Jesus isn’t coming back/His return was a lie. (**2 Peter 3:4**)
- Jesus’ second coming has already happened. (**1 Thessalonians 4:13**)
- That living in sin will *not* lead to judgement. (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**) Do not be deceived by this one!
- Jesus is not the sovereign Lord, and we can do what we want.

PAUL'S WARNINGS (See also Galatians 1:6-10)

2 Timothy 3:1–17 ¹But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. . . . ¹⁰You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴**But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO TRUTH

2 Timothy 4:2–5 . . . ³For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will **turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.** ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

SO WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS SUBJECT?

- **We don't believe what the world is selling.**
 - We have healthy skepticism but don't become conspiracy theorists; not *everything* is a plot or lie.
- **We know the Scriptures and where they came from.**
 - Jesus, and the Apostles through Holy Spirit
- **We know the good news—not the fake news.**
 - We are not suspicious or rebellious but confident and aware at the same time. We are loved by God. We are saved and sanctified by the truth. We have an eternal home; this world isn't our home.
- **We know how to live. We are sanctified by the truth.**
 - We are in the world but not of it. We live as wise people. We're waiting on our Lord to return.

WE KNOW HOW TO PRACTICALLY DISCERN TRUTH (see also 1 John 1:1-4; Jude 3; Jude 20)

1 John 4:1–6 ¹Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. ⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUPS AND WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Passages to consider: 2 Timothy 3:12-16; Proverbs 18:17; Psalm 1; Psalm 119:105

1. Share what challenged or inspired you from the sermon.
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:12-17 and Proverbs 18:17. What is important to know and practice from these passages?
3. What sources of information play a consistent part in shaping how you view people, situations, and events around you? A) How do you measure what you hear and believe with what God says is real and true?
4. What helps you be aware of agendas that news and media sources, and information agencies, might have? (This is not a question about what the agendas are but how you discern them.)
5. How do you seek out God's perspective and truth? You might share with each other habits and resources.
6. If you have kids, how are you helping them be shaped by God's perspective of truth and reality? A) What help and resources do you need? (*Those without kids in the home, consider your role with grandkids, nieces/nephews, friends with kids.*)

Next week: The Right Fight (Week 2): Hate Speech

Passages to prepare: Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:15-17; 1 Peter 3:15-17

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