

Absolute Truth and Freedom: #1 Introduction

Jesus answered, "... for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked.

John 18:37-38

When Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?", he hit on a critical issue that each one of us must deal with in our own lives. Pilate did not understand the nature of the ultimate truth that Jesus was talking about, but he realized that Jesus was someone special who had done nothing wrong. Even so, Pilate was not interested enough in the truth to save Him.

He said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He also said in John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you **free**," and in The God of the Bible has been known to change His mind, but never His character. The truth that He and His Son in the flesh represent is constant; it is eternal.

Good and Evil. Inertia

The truth must promote Good!

If it doesn't produce Good, it is not meaningful, no matter how "true" it sounds.

"Truth has perished" Jer 7:28

"Truth has stumbled in the street"...

Absolute Truth and Freedom: #2 Foundation (Platform, Fulcrum)

We as Christians are to be witnesses of this word. Like Archimedes' idea, Christians could move the world spiritually if only we realized the foundation upon which we stand. If we build our spiritual house on His words, we cannot fall (Matthew 7:25-27). God has not told us everything that He knows, but He has preserved for us all that we need to know His Goodness. With it we can have the best life possible here on earth and eternal life with Him when we die.

Some say that you can do anything that you want to do as long as you can think up a way to justify it. Here there is no stable standard with which to compare our behavior. There is no solid ground to stand on; it is like building our house upon the sand. It is like standing up in a boat in heavy seas. Just as turbulence in the ocean causes you to become seasick, turmoil in life can give you the same feeling if you aren't standing on the Rock of God. And similarly, as in the sea you can get used to the constant motion of the boat, in life you can become callused to doing what is wrong.

Peter: growing foundation with living stones; 1 Peter 2:5

Snyder; The Problem of Wineskins; p.13-16; Lu 5:37-38. Jesus distinguishes here between something essential and primary (the wine) and something secondary but also necessary and useful (the wineskins)...There is that which is new and potent and essential - the gospel of Jesus Christ. And there is that which is secondary, subsidiary, man-made. These are the wineskins, and include traditions, structures and patterns of doing things which have grown up around the gospel...The wineskins are the point of contact between the wine and the world...Wineskins result when the divine gospel touches human culture...The gospel is new - always ...It seems almost a law that things initially created to aid the gospel eventually become obstacles - old wineskins...the necessity of new wineskins...As time passes they must be replaced - not because the gospel changes, but because the gospel itself demands and produces change!; structures

Christ's parable asks that we seek a certain amount of flexibility in our minds as we become filled with the new covenant. As the new wine is poured into wineskins, and closed off, it begins to produce gas which cause pressure inside the wineskin. This is what causes the old bottles to burst, but a new bottle will expand to meet its needs. Christ is talking here about the compatibility of the old law with the new as though the old law was an old bottle. Because of its nature, a code of laws and ordinances, it was rigid and generated a feeling of earning salvation. Upon this basic structure was heaped many many more human regulations in an attempt to keep the original perfectly. Christ is saying that this had become something which bound and confined man in a

way that God had not originally wanted. The old law was simply not the proper structure for the new concepts, freedom, and love of the new covenant.

We must also strive for a certain flexibility of mind in our own lives to accept this new idea. We many times become so firmly entrenched in the idea of good works and being perfect outwardly that we forget to let the new wine of the gospel and God's grace change us and expand us. We must always strive to be perfect, but understanding that we and those around us are human and weak, and that it only through the grace of God that he chooses to accept us into his fold.

When David describes God in Psalm 62:6,7, he says, "He alone is my rock and my salvation." This Rock is not some small pebble; it is gigantic, too large and heavy for even Satan to move. Such is God's absolute truth. Truth, like this Rock, is something that cannot be bent out of shape. It has a sharp, definite boundary. It is an absolute frame of reference to which we check our every single action. We create our own twilight zone between what is right and what is wrong, but God knows our hearts.

Absolute Truth and Freedom: #3 Rules / Freedom; Limiting or Empowering

Absolute truth is not a list of hundreds of rules to cover every situation (like the Pharisees). God did not want that. He wants Goodness to be absolute; we must breathe it, and live it. In deed, not just in word. How can you make doing Good a list of rules?

The Pharisee cannot comprehend how he appears to others and how he has dirtied the waters [Ezekiel], his way of reminding us; he cannot understand how he has missed the point because he is so actively pursuing the form and the legal structure; in that sense he sees the righteousness and he cannot understand that he has missed the point; you cannot convince him that it is not really what God wants; Too many times we see that structure and we are able to grab it with our hands, and we cannot let go; The idea of trying to wrap our hands around everything, as much as you possibly can; trying to carry everything without making two trips; the right tool kind of idea; the idea of trying to embrace and grab and collect everything, and it makes it impossible to do anything else except worrying about a package falling or dropping the whole wad, so your grip is so tight that you are ineffective in everything else.

For freedom, Christ set you free. Constrained; wineskins; freedom of movement. From slavery to sin (not to do anything that we want)

Absolute Truth and Freedom: #4 Transformation

Too many of us are like a simple drinking glass: we are hard and unyielding. We are too stubborn to change our way of life. We look for a religion that we can accept just the way we are now. We seek a 'liquid religion', which conforms to the shape of our container (not ours but God's), we want to adjust our 'religion' to suit our own personal needs. We all have this attitude in some degree, but some come saying, "we have received additional revelation." But this is not true freedom. We must always be on our guard. We must not let our own wishes root out the truth, and we must not listen to those who scratch our 'itching ears', telling us false doctrines that appeal to us.

God's truth (Goodness) is fundamentally and totally different. It is like a hard, dense ball. It keeps its shape under all kinds of pressure; but when it is put into the drinking glass, it can touch in only a few places. Unless we transform our lives to follow the truth, we are seldom found in contact with it. We must come to God, and bend our lives in accordance to his will.

We must stop trying to make God fit ourselves, like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. We must not 'interpret' God's word to fit our own desires. We must be as narrow as God's truth and as wide as his love. We must never give in on the truths that he has plainly stated in his Book of Life.

[Put on Love] Many people wear the truth like an ill-fitting shoe. They limp around unhappy, with blisters all over their feet, but will not change because it costs too much. We can't actually change our feet, but we can certainly change our hearts. We must gird ourselves with the truth; this implies a fitting process. But, instead of fitting the truth to us, we must change our lives to fit the truth.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

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