

JESUS BRINGS REAL TRUTH

Intro - The post truth world

In 2016, The Oxford dictionary declared 'Post-truth' as the word of the year.

The word 'Post truth' means – relating to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

Put simply, Post-truth is the idea that a person's truth is shaped not by admissible facts but by an emotion, a belief or even by a bias towards something.

Now the post truth era that we live in is having some real effects on us.

Fact checking is a real career and fake news is something we are more aware as we watch or read anything on the tele.

Even our politicians have problems with post truth, we trust them less and less and scrutinise their words and actions more and more because they have a long reputation for telling us what our itching ears want to hear, even if the information is clearly manipulative or un factual.

And politicians are not the only ones playing to our weakness for truth without facts, social media platforms are the leaders when it comes to telling you what you want to hear.

They use sophisticated algorithms to work out how they can further bombard you with things you are interested in.

They do this because they know people who live in this post truth era, would much prefer to see and hear the ideas that match their own version of truth.

Now what's good about this efficient process of information sharing, is that I never get posts about scrapbooking, knitting or kittens being cute, I just get fed a smorgasbord of information that's relevant and true for me.

The negative of course is that we all miss out on the real facts and even other people's opinions about stuff we might not generally agree with.

Which ends up meaning, that we rarely have our own ideas and truths challenged and this just adds to the problem in a post truth era.

Now the cynical side of me thinks that this post truth era might have some positives for us, I mean if we all just agree to stick to our own truths and if we all just promise to never try and argue or convert each the other to the other way of thinking, then no one gets hurt.

Maybe if Israel Falau had this kind of 'Live and let live' attitude, he would still be playing rugby for the wallabies and Australia would have won the world cup.

It's a nice idea, but that's not how the world works, our world runs better on truth.

Imagine, if companies listed on the stock market were not truthful about their reporting on sales and profits, the stock market would most likely crash if companies weren't truthful.

Take your relationship with the person sitting next to you right now, what would it be like if there was no truth in it? It would suffer wouldn't it. Suffer because at the heart of our relationships with each other, truth must be present.

To live in this world we rely on it being mostly truthful, when it's not, people become very untrusting and suspicious and they stop functioning well in the world

And so, because real truth is important to us, we should see what the bible says about searching for truth and where it is found, which brings me to my first point this morning, 'that we can seek truth from the world!

Point 1 – Seeking truth from the world- Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

Now King Solomon who wrote the passage from Ecclesiastes that Pam just read to us this morning was a man that searched high and low for truth and knowledge in this world.

The 9th century BC king says in verse 13, that he devoted himself to study and to explore, by wisdom, everything done under Heaven.

In other words Solomon searched out meaning and truth in every area of life on this earth that he could find.

His Grande conclusion after all of his extensive years of hard work was this.

Verse 18

With much wisdom comes much sorrow, the more knowledge the more grief.

That's a sad but very familiar conclusion from one of the world's most famous authors on Wisdom, truth and knowledge.

In essence, Solomon's conclusion is that, when he searched for earthly truth and knowledge it only lead to grief and sorrow.

It's a conclusion that certainly resonates with what we looked at with our post truth world that we live in now.

A world that seems to have gone to a new level of crazy when it comes to finding truth.

Solomon's final word is that seeking earthly truth is just like chasing after the wind, its' meaningless he says.

And so because searching for truth in this world is hopeless, we need to find another place to search for it.

Which brings me to my second point, that we can seek real truth from God.

Point 2 – Seeking truth from God – Proverbs 1:7

To do that lets look at what, Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7 says.

'The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge'.

When you think of fearing something, you may be thinking about the fear of swimming in a shark infested ocean, or walking down a dark alley at night.

These kinds of fears are good because they motivate us to respond to those kinds of fears by fleeing from them or by taking a different route away from them.

For example, if I fear walking down a dark alley in the middle of the night then I will most likely flee or move myself to safer place.

Again if I am swimming in the ocean and the shark alarm goes off, my fear of being eaten alive will force me out of the water.

These fears are useful for keeping us safe but this isn't the kind of fear that the author of Proverbs is trying to convey.

When the author talks about 'the fear of God' he is talking about reverence which is a different kind of fear, it's a fear of facing judgment or punishment.

This kind of reverence is not dis-similar to the reverence a normal person might show towards a policeman, reverence that means that the person would be happy to place themselves underneath the policeman's authority and respond in a generally positive way of changing their behaviour whenever they receive a caution or a fine.

Reverence is the kind of fear the author is conveying when he says that 'the fear of God is the beginning of all knowledge'.

It's a reverence that allows a person to humbly place themselves under the creator of the world, who has real authority over everything.

A reverence that motivates a person to live in line with and by the law that God has set out for them, because they know that God has their best interest in mind.

And this reverence to God that does not mean that the person will avoid God like they would a spider or snake, but instead means that the person is drawn to God, they will want to be closer to him.

Closer to him because they are enthralled by his awesome power, fascinated by his complete authority and grateful because he offers salvation at no charge through his sons death on the cross.

The fear of God through reverence leads his people to want to know the real God. And it's the invitation that Jesus gives his readers in John 14 which will be my final point this morning.

Point 3 – Jesus the King of Truth – John 14:1-6

In John 14 the author tells us what the few hours before Jesus arrest in the garden of Gethsemane looked like.

The passages say that while Jesus was eating his last meal with his disciples, he explained to them that soon he would be taken away from them, to a place he said, they could not go to.

At hearing this, the disciple Thomas asks Jesus. 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'

I wonder if you can hear in Thomas' question to Jesus, the uncertainty he had about his own and the future of the other disciples once Jesus was gone from them.

Remember, Jesus has just spent the last 3 years with them, they have seen him heal the sick and raise the dead, have witnessed his power over nature and demons, they have listened carefully to his wise words and for 24 hours a day for 3 years they have been transformed by their close relationship with him.

Imagine how hard this new truth, Jesus was conveying to them must have been, that he was going to be taken from them and that they could not follow him where he was going.

All that they believed to be true about his and their future up to this point was not only being challenged but virtually taken away.

Now we had some bad news this morning didn't we?

Tom and Dani leaving, having to move on from the building we've been at for 11 years.

Both of these things were hard news to hear and I can only imagine how this news must have challenged the truth that you may have had about our future, maybe a truth that we'd be here another 11 years.

I want you to notice, how uncertain that news left you after hearing it, because that's exactly how the disciples felt.

Their King, their Lord, their spiritual guide and best friend is going to be killed and they will be alone. The disciples would have been feeling very uncertain.

But Jesus doesn't leave them in their uncertainty, he soothes them when they ask, how they might find their way to him, by saying.

I am the way, the Truth and life, no-one comes to the Father except through me.

These are re-assuring words for the disciples but what does Jesus mean when he says that he is the way the truth and the life and how can we know that what he is saying is true?

Now to work out what Jesus means when he says that I am the way, the truth and life.

It may help for us, if I move his words around to say, he is the true way to life. He backs that same idea up in the last part of the verse we read when he says, No one comes to the Father except through me.

What Jesus is claiming, is that he is the only way to the Father, the only way to enter heaven and the only way to have eternal life is with him.

What he means when he says that he is the way, the truth and life is that only through believing in him, only through making him King and only through following him can anyone get into the Kingdom of God and be in his Father's presence.

Jesus is debunking the claim that all roads lead to Rome, which is the idea that all faiths lead to the one true God.

He is saying that no matter how good a person you are, how much volunteering you do, how much money you give to the poor or time you give to serving the needy, no one will get into the Father's presence without Jesus.

Jesus is saying that he is the only true way to eternal life.

At this point we need to back up Jesus' claim with fact, he has just claimed to his disciples and to us that he is the only way to get to the Father. Jesus has just claimed to be God himself

To believe him and trust that his words are true we need to see the evidence that shows us he is qualified.

To see that Jesus is qualified we can only go off his track record, his curriculum vitae so to speak. We need to see the evidence from the Gospel eyewitnesses that knew him and lived alongside of him, so that we can see that his claim of being God's son, is true

If Jesus claim is inaccurate and there is no proof to be found, then Jesus is no more than just a crazy man.

Now if Jesus claims that he is God son, then we should see that he has inherited the same kinds of attributes as his Father. In short we should be able to see the Father through the son.

A Father that we know has Power over death, A Father that we know is Holy and a Father that shows Grace to his people.

So where do we see Gods power displayed in Jesus, well we see it in his ability to bring the dead back to life in the gospel of Luke.

Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

So what about Holiness, where in the bible do we see the proof that Jesus was Holy like his Father, without blemish or sin, where do we see a claim of Jesus holiness?

Well in Luke chapter 4, we see that even the demons proclaim Jesus as Holy. When they say

What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are- the Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34).

The last attribute of God that we should see in Jesus is The Fathers Grace towards people, Grace which means that the innocent life is given for the sins of his people. It's the perfect example of undeserved favour.

Luke tells us what happened at the Cross as Jesus gave up his life so that we might be forgiven

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was an innocent man."

We could be here all day working out other ways in which Gods attributes are seen in Jesus.

And if you are keen to know more about this, can I invite you to Christianity explored which starts this Thursday evening.

There, we will be able to investigate more of the proof found in the bible that shows that Jesus Christ is the son of God as he has claimed.

So what does this all mean for us, how are we to live or respond to Jesus claim that he is the only true way to life, what are we to do with the evidence that shows us Jesus does have the same characteristics and power as God himself and so is qualified to be called the son of God.

Well if you are here today and are still investigating who Jesus is, can I also invite you to remember what we have learnt today.

That we and this world are really quite hopeless when it comes to improving what God has already given us.

Look at what we have done to truth, instead of making it more accurate and trustworthy we have instead taken truth and made a fool of it.

We have reduced truth to its lowest common denominator, and said that now every ones truth is real truth.

That's what we do when we are put in charge, when we take control of Gods good world, we break it, we over-consume it, we vandalise it and pollute it.

And it's not just the world we do that with, we do it with our own lives, we take charge and as King Solomon says, life and everything we do becomes meaningless a chasing after the wind.

But there is hope, as Proverbs says, The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge.

It's the beginning of understanding truth in how we should live.

And so when we revere the creator of the universe and acknowledge that he will judge everything, including us, then we are able to lower ourselves before him, we will be able to come to him in humility knowing we have not lived according to his law.

Only then will we be able to know real truth.

Truth that helps us see that we do have a heart problem, a problem of sinful rebellion against God that is unfixable without a saviour.

Truth that helps us to see that Jesus is that saviour, who is able to save us from our own destruction, a saviour who gave up everything, even his life so that we can live.

You know Jesus didn't come to earth to run behaviour management classes for a few years and then send himself to the cross.

He came to bring people back to eternal life with the Father and creator of all.

He comes to be the truth for people who are seeking truth, he is the truth and his invitation to know more about him is free, you just have to ask him.

For those here that already trust in Jesus, my hope is that you have been reminded this morning that we have been given a wonderful gift from God in his son Jesus.

He brings truth like the world can't. truth when it comes to the meaning of life or what love should be like.

Truth in what it means to be a servant to others, truth that helps us to deal with pain and struggle when it comes to our lives.

And because we have been given this gift of truth in Jesus, we hopefully will remember that our response should be of reverence to God.

Reverence that is shown by bringing every part of our lives to his feet. Reverence that means we daily take the crown that we are desperate to wear ourselves and place it at his feet.

As if we are offering everything we had to the majestic King that we can't take our eyes away from.

Friends we have a Great King that gave up everything for us, his most prized possession his son, was given so that we might know him.

In response he desires the crown of glory that is owed to Jesus, a crown that we often try and wear on our own heads.

My hope today is that you are more secure in your understanding That Jesus brings and is the real truth. And that because of your understanding that your life would reflect that through your reverence for him.