

Truth

Have a look at this! I hope it is familiar to some of you!

(Youtube video of To Tell the Truth)

The concept of truth....in life in general, and in the church specifically, is a very difficult and often slippery beast. Do you find that surprising...that the concept of truth is slippery? How much do you weigh? How much money do you make? What portion of your income do you give to the church? Sometimes the scale is a sliding one, and our truth metre slips and slides one way or the other.

Absolute truths are eternal....the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. (Slide #1) We are called to be decent, honest, loving people.

Relative Truths depend on the situation, they are contextual. (Slide #2) I am tired. It is cold outside.

Can my Truth be different from your Truth, and yet somehow both be Truth? (Slide #3) Being independent is important. Walking the journey of life with another is important.

Not to get too philosophical, but what is truth?

Think about all that stuff your parents or Sunday School teachers taught you.....is all of that your truth today?

Noah called animals of every kind and they walked onto the ark walking side by side, two by two.

Jonah lived in the belly of a whale for 3 days until the whale spit him up on a beach.

God will protect you. Nothing bad will ever happen to you.

Think about your parents' truth that they passed down to you-

No one is to be trusted

You need to be better than you are - try harder

You need to be independent

You are special

Always go with your gut

If you believe in God, God will love you

Perhaps some of these are your 'truth'. Perhaps some are the opposite of your 'truth'. Perhaps some of these were once your truth - but you have evolved from these statements.

All sorts of things have been pounded into our head, by people with the best of intentions, for our own well being. But sometimes we find ourselves having to un-learn, or at least re-frame these 'truths'.

The truth will set you free.....I believe that to be true. Sometimes in the struggle to get to the truth, to get free, we feel shame, fear, regret, guilt, overwhelmed, confused.....but if you survive the journey, you will thrive. What truths do you hold as absolute, unchanging? What is the truth about yourself....the deep truth....so deep that perhaps no one knows that truth but you? Is your truth who and how you are right now, or the person you are becoming

There are so many different denominations in Protestantism and each denomination has a slightly different truth. Do you know what the major Protestant denominations are? Have a look. Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Pentecostal.

All denominations have a great deal in common when it comes to concepts of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible. But within all of those big concepts denominations vary in their interpretation and understanding. It is not unusual for congregations within a denomination and members within a congregation to differ in their interpretation and understanding.

What is your truth when it comes to: (Slide #4)

-the role of women in the church

- the use of alcohol
- the pre-requisite to go to heaven
- medically assisted death
- abortion
- what happens when we die
- the place of gay people in our church
- how we raise our children

We did not all have the same responses to those few points, and we are a church family, we are one congregation. We worship and work together. And yet, we have different interpretations of the Bible and God's will when it comes to some of these important topics.

There are some Pentecostals that you are not a true Christian unless you speak in tongues.

Some Protestant denominations still insist on a restricted role for women in the church.

There are some Presbyterians that believe in the literal translation and application of Scripture.

There are some Christians that believe that we should never consume alcohol in any amount.

There are some Baptists that believe that full immersion is the only true baptism.

There are some brands of Presbyterianism that still believe that musical instruments have no place in worship.

What do you believe? What is your truth? How do we seek unity amid all of this diversity as the family of God?

I think it is helpful, for us to clarify, just for ourselves, what we would call Absolute Truths....non-negotiables...essential truths, eternal truths.

Today I am going to share with you some of one person's Absolute Truths. See what you think about them. Are any of these your truth too? My hope is that it will stimulate your thinking. I want you to consider this what you believe and what you don't believe. This week I want you to define God. And I want you to suggest how God is present and active in your life? This is your truth. It might evolve and change, but for today , it is your truth.

Here is one person's Absolute Truths:

1. God is Life. God is Spirit. God is Mind.
2. God lives within me.
3. God does not punish me. I punish myself with poor choices and the guilt and fear and assorted problems which follow. Sometimes I choose not to act in concert with my inherently divine nature. I choose not to act in accordance with God's will.

Whatever our truths are, it is difficult to live them consistently. We don't always live as if God lives within us. Sometimes, for a whole host of reasons, we mess up!

If one of my Absolute truths is that **God lives in me, with me, and for me**, then reminding myself of that at the beginning, middle, and end of every day is a helpful thing to do.

There have been a number of deaths in our congregation lately. Surely it causes us to consider our own mortality. I have been thinking about the notion of legacy.....what will Stuart's legacy be? What will Peter's legacy be? What will your legacy be? What will mine be?

While there is still time, we need to determine our Truth. We need to strive to live it daily. We are called to be instruments of blessing. We need to live our lives, respectful of the fact that God lives in us. It is our call. It could be our legacy.

Amen

