

OBEY GOD-DEFY TYRANTS #19

The 7 Sins of Sodom

Before we begin our message, I want to encourage everyone to watch Steve Berger's message on 'The 7 Sins of Sodom'. Steve is one of my heroes because he has the courage to speak a word of correction to a sinful culture and do it with grace I often lack. Preaching like this is not I really identified with him when he asked a key question..

Steve Berger

There's just one thing harder than listening to a sermon like this. Do know what it is? Preaching a sermon like this.

I get it. And let's pray for more of it!

With that in mind I'd like to move on to teach Part 2 on my title...

"How the Church Will Win" Part 2

!. Introduction

In his 1st book, published in 1968, Francis Schaeffer proved to be a prophet in predicting the nature of the spiritual warfare for the soul of America.

Francis Schaeffer, "The God Who Is There", 1968

The present chasms between the generations has been brought about almost entirely by a change in the concept of truth. The way we come to knowledge about truth is the most crucial problem facing Christianity today.

Francis Schaeffer

It is a conflict between complete moral perversion and chaos versus God's absolute truth.

Schaeffer foresaw the assault on our national soul would be an attack on truth; not subjective truth; but absolute truth; objective truth.

Truth

Objective truth is something that is true for everyone, whether they agree with it or not; corresponding to reality, independent of anyone's feelings or biases.

Schaeffer coined a phrase to define it; he called it 'true truth'; truth not based upon popularity or man's opinion

Os Guinness

The truth is still the truth even if no one believes it. A lie is still a lie even if everyone believes it.

Last week we looked at the most overlooked cause for Christ's coming into the world...

John 18:37

"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."

The Biblical Illustrator

He said that His kingdom was truth, and that its establishment was by bearing witness to the truth. Our Lord, in effect, tells us that truth is the pre-eminent characteristic of His kingdom, and that His royal power over men's hearts is through the truth.

John 14:6

I am...the Truth.

Jesus came into the world to bear witness to the truth; but when He went out of the world He entrusted the truth to His people...

1 Timothy 3:15

The church of the living God (is) the pillar and foundation of the truth.

God has set the Church into the earth to faithfully bear witness to the truth!

Albert Barnes

The stability of the truth on earth is dependent on the church.

This is a staggering statement.

It is the total responsibility of the people of God to speak the truth on earth.

Theme

The church on earth wins or loses according to our faithfulness in bearing witness to the truth.

Before we look at how we can win, we need to consider why we are losing.

II. How We Will Win/Why We Are Losing

A. Why We Are Losing

Francis Schaeffer

The great evangelical disaster is the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth.

1. He said this in 1968. And we've been losing ground since then. But something super-sinister has been going in the past 3 years; and it can't be blamed on President Biden.

The Christian Post

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, church attendance has dropped by some 15 million people weekly, according to a new study from George Barna's Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University.

a. This refers to research from 'The American Worldview Inventory 2023' study earlier this year (2023).

2. Let me give you some of the findings so you can see how the current condition of the culture is related to the Church's failure to bear witness to the truth...

George Barna, The American Worldview Inventory 2023

While born-again Christians make up about one-third of all U.S. adults, the study shows that between 2020 and 2023, *the share of those who say they believe Jesus did not commit sins during his lifetime on Earth fell from 58% to 44%.*

a. The very heart of the Gospel is Christ was qualified to be the sacrifice for our sin on the basis of His sinless life.

1 Peter 2:22

Christ committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.

b. If Jesus was not sinless, there is no sacrifice for sin. But today, less than half who call themselves Christians believe Jesus committed no sin!

George Barna, The American Worldview Inventory 2023

Fewer than half of born-again Christians now believe they have a unique, God-given calling or purpose. The share of those who held that belief fell from 88% to 46% during the pandemic.

(No wonder so many Christian kids are killing themselves!)

The Christian Post

Barna also found that only 33% of adults now say they attend church service during a typical week which shows “a decline representing the loss of about 15 million churchgoing adults each week.”

George Barna, The American Worldview Inventory 2023

The share of born-again believers who say they are deeply committed to practicing their religious faith fell from 85% to 50%, while the share of those who say they read or study the Bible at least once a week fell from 60% to 55%.

George Barna, The American Worldview Inventory 2023

A downward trend was also observed among those who say the Bible is clear in its teaching about abortion. That belief fell from 58% to 44%. Those who say human life is sacred fell from 60% to 48%.

George Barna

The number of born-again Christians who say God is the basis of all truth fell from 69% to 63% over the period.

George Barna, The American Worldview Inventory 2023

58% of Americans do not believe in objective truth; 46% of evangelicals do not believe in objective truth.

3. I'm not trying to smother you with statistics. But If the church is responsible for the truth on earth, and ½ of us don't even believe in objective truth...it's no wonder we aren't winning the war over truth in the culture!

a. I continue to encounter Christians who cannot cope with the concept of unchanging, objective truth; that God's truth doesn't change with times.

Matt Walsh, "Church of Cowards"

Times change. But the truth does not change along with the time, because the truth stands outside of time. What was good and holy 2,000 years ago is good and holy now.

Matt Walsh

What was debased and evil 2,000 years ago is debased and evil now. Our ability or willingness to discern one from the other may have changed but the truth has not.

4. We are witnessing once again what happens when a generation of Americans see themselves as morally superior to, and wiser than, their Christian forefathers; people C.S. Lewis described this condition it as 'chronological snobbery'; that we are wiser than those who came before us.

C.S. Lewis

"Chronological snobbery is the uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate of our own age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that count discredited."

Casey Chalk, The Federalist

C.S. Lewis called chronological snobbery the tendency to view ourselves as morally superior to our forebears and thus prohibit the full existence of their personhood to weigh upon us.

5. Christians have caved into the culture on the truths of biblical morality and left the field wide open for those who see themselves as morally superior to those who hold outdated ideas of the Christian faith.

a. We have allowed the chronological snobs to redefine marriage and morality.

b. For 6,000 years the human race has universally acknowledged 2 genders, male and female; and marriage as between a man and a woman. But this generation of chronological snobs sees itself smarter; so wise and so advanced as to redefine truth.

c. We have so-called Christian pastors, and entire Christian denominations ordaining homosexual ministers and performing gay marriages.

c. Here is a video clip of President Joe Biden, who calls himself a Christian, pontificating on moral issues like gay marriage and transgender rights in an interview with homosexual host Kal Penn on the Daily Show, which has over 10 million subscribers...

Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwJbNK_XU8

00:00-2:32

6. Who appointed this President as a Pastor to preach moral values to the American people?

a. Surveys show this President with the lowest approval rating in American history—about 37%. My question is, *who are the 37%*? Why isn't *everyone* outraged at his socialist policies? Where is the church? Instead of confronting the culture we are accommodating the culture...even in our pulpits.

Leonard Ravenhill

If Jesus preached the same message ministers preach today, He would never have been crucified.

b. We sit by silent when they offend us at the same time we sit by silent for fear of offending them. What's wrong with this picture?

c. We allow ourselves to be offended by their 'truth' for fear of offending them with our truth...but our truth is THE TRUTH!

Dr. Donald T. Williams

Are robust truth claims offensive to our generation? No one can doubt that they are. So should the soldiers of Christ then tiptoe away from that breach in our battle lines, or should they flood into it lest the entire phalanx of the Gospel message advancing into our culture be subverted and swept away?

B. The Truth is That We Cannot Bear Witness to the Truth Without Offence

Laurence Overmire, Poet

Whenever you speak the truth, someone will be offended.

1. We may wish it wouldn't be so; but it is.

SpiritAndTruth.org

Some people are offended by truth because of its very nature— it is exclusive and it is absolute, not relative. The absolute nature of truth means that it does not depend on, nor is it changed by, people's opinions.

a. Truth tolerates no opinions; it declines all debates; it cannot compromise.

SpiritAndTruth.org

Truth is also exclusive, meaning that it is "narrow" because it excludes anything contrary to it. Unfortunately, in the spiritual world, some people view the narrow nature of truth as "narrow mindedness."

2. Jesus said He was THE way, THE truth, and THE life and that 'no one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)

a. This offends the ears of our current culture; it sounds 'narrow-minded' because it excludes any alternatives; no syncretism allowed; no mixture of belief.

b. But they miss the point: What IF this is the truth? What IF Jesus Christ is the only way to God? Wouldn't He be less than loving to tell them a lie?

3. The Apostle Paul wrote of ‘the offence of the cross’; the truth of God that has always offended the world.

Dr. Donald T. Williams

There is a Scandal (offence) of the Cross for each generation and each people, but it changes as the shifting stratagems of the Enemy vary.

- For the Greeks it was the resurrection of the body
- For the Jews it was the loss of their status as God’s exclusive people
- In all times, it is our absolute dependence on God’s grace to be saved

Dr. Donald T. Williams

The specific sticking point for our own time is the existence of objective truth, or, more subtly, the ability of human beings to know objective truth, and hence to be held responsible for knowing it and being accountable to God for what they do about it.

4. In Romans 1, the Apostle Paul speaks of people of perversion as those who ‘suppress the truth in unrighteousness’; they don’t want accept the truth about their sin because then they must accept truth about the consequences... judgment.

Psalm 10:13 NLT

Why do the wicked get away with despising God? They think, "God will never call us to account."

5. The way of the wicked will always be at war with the way of the truth.

Francis Schaeffer, “The Great Evangelical Disaster”

If the truth of the Christian faith, is in fact *the truth*, then it stands in antithesis to the ideas and the immorality of our age, and it must be *practiced* both in teaching and practical action.

C. Summing Up What We Have Said

Alisa Childers, “Live Your Truth—And Other Lies”

Christianity is a belief system that stands or falls on objective truth.

Francis Schaeffer

We are the people who believe in true truth.

Rev. Al Mohler, Jr.

He meant that when we talk about truth, we don't merely claim it is *our* truth but that it is *the* truth, an *objective* truth, a truth grounded in reality, it is truth that is unchanged and unchanging.

1. Jesus came into the world to bear witness to the truth.
2. When He departed this world He commissioned the Church to bear witness to the truth.

Theme

The church on earth wins or loses according to our faithfulness in bearing witness to the truth.

3. We have been losing because we've not been bearing witness to the truth; but this is how we will win...

John MacArthur

The only times the Church has made any significant impact on the world are when the people of God have stood firm, refused to compromise, and boldly proclaimed the truth despite the world's hostility.

The Biblical Illustrator

Bearing witness to the truth is the way in which Christ's kingdom is to be set up in the world. For this cause Christ was born. For this cause was the Church born, and for this end She came into the world; that She might set up Christ's kingdom by bearing witness to the truth.

4. This is so simple yet so profound; and when you're living in a culture of lies and liars, it's where each one of us must begin.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

The simple step of a courageous individual is not to partake in the lie. One word of Truth outweighs the world.

5. Truth is not only worth living for, it is worth dying for; in the words of one minister who changed American culture forever...

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I still believe that standing up for truth is the greatest thing in the world. This is the end-purpose in life. The end of life is not to be happy...to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God, come what may.

6. This is not time to cave in to culture!

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Stand up for justice; stand up for truth; and God will be at your side forever.

Closing Prayer

Title