

# Authentic Truth

## SESSION 4



### BIG IDEA

The only foundation for truth is God's Word (the Bible).  
We must abide in it to have authentic faith.

### KEY SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 4:2-4 (NKJV) — *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

### MESSAGE SUMMARY

This week, Pastor Mark traced the breaking down of truth across history from Christendom through modernism, postmodernism, and now the post-truth era. We are called as believers to hold to the standard of God's Word as the foundation for authentic truth. The sermon challenged us to commit to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in every area of life.

#### 1) The Truth

- The familiar phrase "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32) is frequently quoted out of context. Reading it along with the verse that precedes it makes it clear that knowing truth is inseparable from abiding in God's Word.
- Paul warns Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-4 about a time to come when people will not endure sound doctrine and will seek teachers who tell them only

what their “itching ears” want to hear, and this seems to be the time we are living in now.

- Western culture has moved through distinct phases in its understanding of truth— Christendom, modernism, postmodernism, and post-truth—each one further eroding the foundation of absolute moral truth.
- Today, the loss of our shared metanarrative (the Bible) has left people constructing their own personal “truths,” leading to confusion and moral ambiguity.

## 2) *The Whole Truth*

- Satan's primary tool has always been the half-truth. Deception rarely looks like an outright lie. It usually contains just enough truth to be convincing.
- In his book *The Honesty Crisis*, author Christian Miller argues that you cannot have an authentic relationship without honesty. Honesty is the number one quality people look for in potential friends, spouse, employees, etc.
- Telling the whole truth, even when it is personally costly, is a mark of authentic Christian character.

## 3) *And Nothing But the Truth*

- It is distressing when Christian leaders promote only the Bible’s teachings on blessing, prosperity, and success without also helping us to have a theology that includes adversity, tribulation, suffering and perseverance.
- At the end of the day, everything must stand up to the Word of God

## ICEBREAKER

### **Have you ever been caught in a white lie?**

(e.g. How do you answer questions like “Do I look good in this?” “Does my cooking taste ok?” “Did you hear what I asked you?”)

AND/OR

**Which Bible translations, audio Bibles, apps, study helps, etc. do you enjoy using, and why?**

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

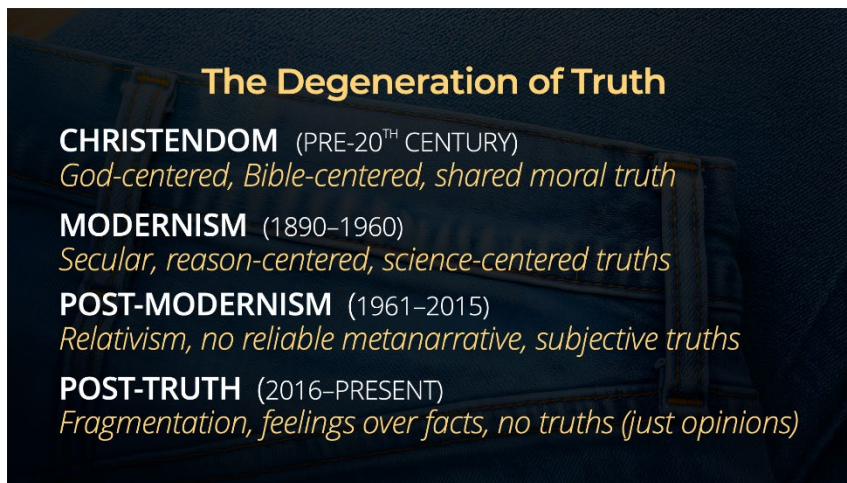
1. People use the saying, “The truth shall set you free” all the time without realizing they are quoting Jesus! The context of this quote, though, changes the meaning of this statement:

<sup>31</sup> *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* John 8:3–32 (NIV)

**How does this context affect what “the truth shall set you free” means?**

**What is the difference between “knowing” the truth and “holding to” Jesus’ teaching?**

2. Pastor Mark outlined the history of how we have gone from a Christian view of truth to a culture that is post-truth.



**Have you noticed a decline in the role of truth in your lifetime?**

**Where have you seen this affect your own life? Can you sense how it may have infiltrated your own thinking, attitudes, emotions, etc. in certain areas?**

3. In our post-truth culture saying like “this is my truth” or “everything is relative” have become commonplace.

**What do you feel is the intent of these sayings? What might be the dangers?**

**What are the advantages, if any, when sharing your faith in a context where everybody’s truth is seen as valid?**

4. God’s secret weapon is Scripture. All of it. Psalm 119:160 says, *“The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.”*

And yet, many times in history people have disregarded parts of the Bible. For example, Thomas Jefferson made his own personal version of the New Testament by cutting out all accounts of miracles.

**Why is it important to believe that the entirety of God’s Word is true?**

5. Satan is the master of the half truth. We see that in the garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:4-5 – *“Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

It was true that Eve would know good and evil from eating the fruit of that tree, but it was a lie that she would not die.

**Why could half-truths like this be considered more dangerous than outright lies?**

**Can you think of examples in your life where you have been told a half-truth? What were the consequences?**

6. Pastor Mark expressed concern about churches that preach only the parts of the Bible people want to hear—blessing, prosperity, and success—while avoiding harder truths about suffering, perseverance, and accountability.

**How do you guard yourself against only receiving the parts of Scripture that are comfortable?**

## ACTIVATION – PSALM 119

We can grow in our love and trust of God’s Word. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible and it provides us with an excellent example of a person’s love and trust in God’s Word.

### 1. EXERCISE

It is natural to have many different words for the things we love. Similarly the writer of Psalm 119 uses a variety of words to describe Scripture and how he is impacted by it.

As a group, read the first few sections from Psalm 119, and

- Circle the different words & phrases used for Scripture
- Star the words that describe how the person is interacting with Scripture
- Underline the different outcomes of abiding in God’s Word

<sup>1</sup> Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,  
who walk\* according to the law of the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep\* his statutes  
and seek\* him with all their heart—

<sup>3</sup> they do no wrong  
but follow\* his ways.

<sup>4</sup> You have laid down precepts  
that are to be fully obeyed.

<sup>5</sup> Oh, that my ways were steadfast  
in obeying your decrees!

<sup>6</sup> Then I would not be put to shame  
when I consider all your commands.

<sup>7</sup> I will praise you with an upright heart  
as I learn your righteous laws.

<sup>8</sup> I will obey your decrees;  
do not utterly forsake me.

- <sup>9</sup> *How can a young person stay on the path of  
purity?  
By living according to your word.*
- <sup>10</sup> *I seek you with all my heart;  
do not let me stray from your commands.*
- <sup>11</sup> *I have hidden your word in my heart  
that I might not sin against you.*
- <sup>12</sup> *Praise be to you, Lord;  
teach me your decrees.*
- <sup>13</sup> *With my lips I recount  
all the laws that come from your mouth.*
- <sup>14</sup> *I rejoice in following your statutes  
as one rejoices in great riches.*
- <sup>15</sup> *I meditate on your precepts  
and consider your ways.*
- <sup>16</sup> *I delight in your decrees;  
I will not neglect your word.*
- <sup>25</sup> *I am laid low in the dust;  
preserve my life according to your word.*
- <sup>26</sup> *I gave an account of my ways and you answered me;  
teach me your decrees.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Cause me to understand the way of your precepts,  
that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.*
- <sup>28</sup> *My soul is weary with sorrow;  
strengthen me according to your word.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Keep me from deceitful ways;  
be gracious to me and teach me your law.*
- <sup>30</sup> *I have chosen the way of faithfulness;  
I have set my heart on your laws.*
- <sup>31</sup> *I hold fast to your statutes, Lord;  
do not let me be put to shame.*
- <sup>32</sup> *I run in the path of your commands,  
for you have broadened my understanding.*

- 2. Have each person in your group share a phrase or verse from Psalm 119 that stands out to them personally as either a challenge or an encouragement.**

## TAKE IT HOME

### **Personal Reflection: “Is there a lie in my life?”**

The way to break free of lies is to confess our sins to God and/or each other.

- 1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (NKJV)
- James 5:16 – *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* (NIV)

In your prayer time this week, ask God to highlight for you if there is an area of your life in which you have held onto either a lie or a half-lie, and write it here below (or in your regular journal). If you wish, share with a trusted friend and then pray together, knowing that God has forgiven and cleansed you.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

Here are a few examples of resources that can aid your study of God’s Word.

### *Bible websites and apps:*

- Blue Letter Bible, Bible Hub, Bible Gateway
- Lectio 365, Soul Space, Abide
- YouVersion (the Bible App)

### *Devotional readings:*

- *Our Daily Bread, My Utmost for His Highest* (also available online and as apps)

### *Audio Bibles:*

- Different translations may have unique narrator voices – e.g. NIV UK narrator in the YouVersion Bible app
- Streetlights Audio Bible
- Daily Audio Bible

### *Other Helps:*

- Scripture set to music
- *The Bible Project* videos
- Study Bibles include helpful notes, maps, and tools like concordances