

This Is How We Know: Truth
March 4, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. (1 John 2:20-21 NLT)

We live in a culture where truth is hard to discover and discern. We can't even agree on what truth is. More often than not, the "truth" as we know it today is disseminated according to how the topic being discussed makes us feel, rather than its factual validity. So how can we make a wise assessment of what is true in this modern era of fake news and hot-button topics? This week we will talk about how we can know the real truth as we dig deeper into the scripture of 1 John.

Digging Deeper

We know the truth when we...

ACKNOWLEDGE Jesus as God's Son.

- Knowing the truth is not so much about knowing the right things as it is about knowing the right person – Jesus Christ. So how do we get to know the Truth? We place our trust in Him and believe He is who He says He is, and He can do what He says He can do. Once we do those things we become open to receive all the illumination that His truth provides. What runs through your head when you are asked to determine if something is true or false? What tools can be used to verify that what you are being told is legitimate?
- There are many biblical reasons why we should believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Have you taken the time to memorize the verses that mean the most to you so you can speak to this fact? A few to look at: Luke 1:35 (the angel told of His coming and what He would be called), Matthew 8:28-29 (even the demons know who He is), 1 John 4:14-16 (an eyewitness to His life), Mark 15:39 (a centurion's eyewitness to His death).

BELONG to and are guided by God's Spirit.

- Read 1 John 2:27 (NLT). The Holy Spirit will teach us what is true. He dwells within and will show us the way if we only yield to His direction. If we want to know the truth about any situation, we simply need to consult what Scripture has to say about it and then ask the Spirit to guide our thinking. Do you use your Bible as a tool to guide your life in this way? Have you clearly felt the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life when you were struggling with a decision or circumstance? If so, consider sharing your testimony with someone as a means of faith development. Believers and non-believers alike are thirsty for evidence of God working in the lives of His people. Your story might be the one God uses to lead someone toward exploring a relationship with Him!
- In J.D. Walt's book "This is How We Know" (the basis for our current sermon series) he states on page 38 that, "The anointing [is] the illuminated intersection of the Word of God and the Spirit of God within the life of the believer." Do you know anyone whom you might describe as being anointed? What attributes might constitute such a description?

CHOOSE to obey God's commandments.

- Would you say you obey God in the seemingly insignificant things as well as the bigger ones? Especially when the people around you are saying, "What's the big deal?!" The scary part about that kind of thinking is that if you let that line in the sand shift depending on your circumstances, before you know it you won't be able to see the line at all anymore. No matter the size of the decision, if we trust God has our best interest in mind, we must offer our obedience. When we do this others will see our love for God and will be blessed by the glimpse of godliness that we show through that obedience. And that is one way we can help the Kingdom grow.
- What is your motivation for keeping God's commands? How can obedience be viewed as a sign of love? What are the spiritual benefits of obedience?

Conclusion

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32 NLT)

This is how we know truth: we acknowledge Jesus as God's Son and believe in Him, we belong to and are guided by God's Spirit, and we commit to obey God's commandments. Can you handle the truth?