

Chapter 4: Proclaiming the Truth

Matthew 28: 20 teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you ...

There is a saying that goes ... if you don't stand for something then you might fall for anything. More than ever the disciples of the Lord need to stand for the Truth, and they need to uphold the Truth, defend the Truth and proclaim nothing but the Truth of the Lord. This is a time that people fall for all and anything which is unnatural, immoral and deceitful, for they know not what to stand for. The disciples need to therefore show what to stand for.

The Truth of God, no matter the times we live in, will always shine like a screaming siren in the night. It is that lighthouse on the seashore that desperately shines its light as we navigate through the storms of life, enduring wave upon wave and storm upon storm. The Truth of the Lord never changes, and it never alters – it is constant.

Take note of verse 20 in the above verse - *teaching them to observe everything*. The Lord has not called us as His disciples to preach or teach or proclaim some of the truth, but all the truth as led by the Spirit and as established in the Scriptures. We as disciples of the Lord have been called not only to set the captive free, but to stand for the Truth of the Lord, declare the Truth and teaching all the Truth of the Lord. For this reason the Holy Spirit was poured out according to John 16 to lead us in the complete Truth.

After all, a disciple cannot walk in any deception or lie, for a disciple is the one who follows Jesus and Jesus is the Word and the Word is the Truth. We cannot be disciples if we do not follow the Truth and therefore speak it and teach it and declare it!

In this postmodern world of shifting sands and leaders who are but wolfs in sheep clothing, in this world where truth finds itself at the mercy of the godless, it has become imperative to urgently find spiritual truth that grounds us. Mankind also finds itself at the mercy of an existentialist journey, enduring an ever increasing angst over the meaning of life, his purpose, global warming, political upheavals, death and personal loss. However, when done against a background of trying on their own to create the meaning and essence of their lives, as opposed to deities or authorities creating it for them, poses further challenges to the quest for truth.

Truth. Such a simple word. Such a simple concept, yet so complex with a myriad of connotations. What is truth? After all, this is the postmodern world of pluralism. This world will simply say your truth and my truth do not need to clash and conflict. My truth in this age is said to be my space and in my time is the truth. Whatever I deem the truth to be is the truth after all for it only applies to me and is therefore beneficial to me. This is

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pluralism. Fear and loathing, intolerance, supremacy and elitism have driven mankind to this intersection of rather seeking a contextualized truth rather than a universal one. Yet a contextualized one radically influences our search for meaning and spiritual truths as compared to that of a universal option.

Truth more than ever is under attack. You may wonder what is then so special about these days. Wars and conflict is after all nothing new. Natural disasters and plagues are old. Kingdoms still rise and fall. Leaders still come and go. Indeed, we find history repeating itself, therefore life continues as is. The answer is therefore not in this natural world, but in the spiritual. It is within the hearts and mind of man where things have changed. The wiles and schemes of man in his quest for truth have actually led him along a path of spiritual self-destruction, simply because absolutes have been eradicated. Uncertainty is the order of the day and with uncertainty comes greater confusion and fear. Fear breeds insecurity, which leads us to an emotional and spiritual vulnerable state.

Sordid events in politics, philosophy, arts and religion have also blurred the lines of universal rights and wrongs. Man in the post-modern world is in effect spiritually impoverished, holding on to false comforts and placing his love, faith and hope solely in the perishable, not tangible. Whereas man in the past found his solace in divinity, now man lives in a state of constant emotional and intellectual hype, devoid of divinity.

Fate a

It is a world of smoke and mirrors, as man is lured by illusions of truth and enlightenment. Mankind has systematically become to believe in his own mortal powers and that they have become more powerful than divinity. History attests to man placing so much faith and trust in philosophies or dreams of grandeur only to come to the realization it is void of true power or hope. This process of seeking and finding answers beyond the realm of divinity has intensified to a point of concern. More than ever the disciples of the Lord therefore need to preach and teach the Truth of the Lord.

The Hebrew word most used for truth is *emeth*, which implies certainty and trustworthiness. For the truth we adhere to and fight for must be certain and must be trustworthy. The truth that we seek and the truth we seek to share is not some temporary knowledge, yet it is something eternal and which gives eternal life. It is a truth that abounds with possibilities where the secrets of the supernatural realm are unlocked to be manifested in the natural realm.

Why is the Truth so important: *John 8: 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

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If we walk in Truth, we are the disciples of God. And the Truth makes us free. Free from what? Free from the lies, the deceptions, the bondages, the spiritual prisons and being held captive to the fallen ways.

For this reason the devil seeks to destroy God's Truth in the heart of man, even in churches, because freedom lies in Truth, because life, light, hope, power and restoration rests in Truth.

We live in a world of mixed generations, consisting of people known as the baby boomers (born out of 1950's and 1960s), Generation X (1970s and 1980s, X referring to the variable, thus times of constant change) and the New Millennium babies (1980s and 1990s). Each generation, as generations gone by, are faced with the challenges of finding truths and answers. Yet, the modern world is one of progression and changing values. As long as man seeks the truths in technology and science instead of the divine, then the truth will be hidden among the folds of darkness.

It is the mandate and the task of the disciple to constantly guide people along the right path of Truth, because it is so easy these days to get lost in this age of so much spiritual darkness. It is the mandate of the disciple to keep on teaching all to observe everything Jesus taught, because the Truth truly sets free while anything else outside the truth only enslaves.

Never before has mankind lived in such a false sense of spirituality. Never before has man been so spiritually impoverished, holding on to false comforts and placing his love, faith and hope solely in the perishable. Yet, the deceit of the world tells a sordid tale of fulfilment. The world lives in a state of emotional and intellectual hype. The world lives in a time of smoke and mirrors, being deceived with a false sense of the power and peace. These are indeed days of false spirituality and great illusions. The voice of the false prophet and the false teachers have for some time now replaced the true voice of the Father in the hearts and minds of many. Never before has mankind lived in such deceptive times, being exposed to so much falseness.

Humanity continues to strive to seek the meaning to life, even looking to the stars, yet so often have placed their trust in vain philosophies or hopeless dreams. This process of seeking and finding answers beyond the realm of the Lord has intensified to a point of great concern. Once again, the events of the last 2500 years have driven man to this point of total spiritual ignorance and blindness.

We are reminded of 1 Corinthians 1: 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

You see, all the wisdom of this age does not lead someone to salvation, to joy, to fulfilment and to peace. Only the truth of God remains our true beacon to find a state of rest and spiritual hope and fulfilment.

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In Christian circles, since the early struggle between the disciples and Pharisees, to the threat of the Gnostics to the birth of Islam and from the struggles of the mystics and scholars has this battle for spiritual truth waged. It has been carried forth by the struggle between Catholic and Protestant, between philosopher and the carrier of the cross. The Ages of Rationalism and Enlightenment, along with the storms of Romanticism, have opened new doors for alternating truths of enlightenment. Jesus was attacked by the traditionalists for claiming that He was the truth, while the early disciples were constantly under attack for defending the truth against the truth as proclaimed through myths, legends and philosophies of the Romans and Greeks. During the early and high Middle Ages the monks retracted from the world to find the truth in the monasteries. Philosophers of the ages have sowed a theory in terms of the universe, man, destiny, substance and matter, sometimes beyond the realm of divinity.

There is a warning sounded by Paul hundreds of years ago ... It says in 2 Timothy 4: *I charge [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom: 2 Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, 4 And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions. 5 As for you, be calm and cool and steady, accept and suffer unflinchingly every hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry.*

This warning by Paul is surely more than ever for this time and season. There has been a lot of false doctrine and gospels being preached over the last 2000 years, but nothing is more scarier than what is a happening in this day and age. Now, we have thousands of different denominations, with thousands of teachers and preachers sharing their own brand of truth. Some of these doctrines may be closer to the Truth than other, but any doctrine which is not 100% in alignment with God is still deception and false.

Life death

The Truth is constantly twisted, manipulated, exploited and falsely interpreted for the single purpose of 'selling' it to a mass audience. A true disciple is a follower of Jesus, who is the Truth and the Truth sets you free. We must preach and teach nothing else but the Truth of the Lord.

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We read of the first believers in Acts 2 that they steadfastly persevered, devoting themselves constantly to the instruction and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread [including the Lord's Supper] and prayers. There is only one TRUTH and that is the truth of God. There are no other shades or interpretations. We are so involved in mythology, methodology, programmes and philosophies that Jesus Christ is no longer the focal point of our Salvation and existence.

And the reason why 'believers' can gather to them so many teachers to please their itching ears, is because there are so many flavours of truth. Yet a disciple has a mandate to hear the Truth from the Lord and to walk in such Truth.

In the seven letters to the seven Churches, every letter begins with the reminder that they who has an ear then listen to what the Spirit of the Lord is saying. We cannot walk in God's victory, triumph, hope or glory if we do not listen to the Holy Spirit. That is simply rebellion if we tune ourselves not in to God but to man. We will then never grow spiritually, and we will remain in bondage, susceptible to the attacks and deceptions of the Devil. Unless we listen to God and heed His Word, we will continually walk in idolatry and rebellion.

The Kings James Version of 2 Timothy 4 verse 4 reads as follows: *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* The Greek word used for fable is *muthos*, which suggests something which is a story, or an invention, thus a falsehood. Paul makes it clear that people are teaching doctrines which are but an invention of the mind and it is a story invented by man. A disciple is never called to speak fables, myths or imaginations, but only the pure truth of the Lord.

We find Paul warning countless of times in his epistles to Timothy and Titus, and also the assembly in Thessalonica of those who will come and teach doctrines which are false and that resembles fables.

We read for example in *1 Timothy 6: 3 But if anyone teaches otherwise and does not assent to the sound and wholesome messages of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and the teaching which is in agreement with godliness (piety toward God), 4 He is puffed up with pride and stupefied with conceit, [although he is] woefully ignorant. He has a morbid fondness for controversy and disputes and strife about words, which result in (produce) envy and jealousy, quarrels and dissension, abuse and insults and slander, and base suspicions, 5 And protracted wrangling and wearing discussion and perpetual friction among men who are corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, who imagine that godliness or righteousness is a source of profit [a moneymaking business, a means of livelihood]. From such withdraw.*

And also ... *1 Thessalonians 1: 16 But avoid all empty (vain, useless, idle) talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness. 17 And their teaching [will devour; it] will eat its way like cancer or spread like gangrene. So it is with Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 Who have missed the mark and*

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swerved from the truth by arguing that the resurrection has already taken place. They are undermining the faith of some. 19 But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names [himself by] the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.

Paul reminds us in 1 Timothy 4 of the following: *But the [Holy] Spirit distinctly and expressly declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach.*

Thus, at the end of days, we will have to deal with a lot of fallacy, fables, deceptions and lies. This is because Satan drives this agenda. He is the Father of lies. His mission, from the days of Adam and Eve, is to deceive and to steal and to destroy. Satan wishes to destroy the Church through sowing deception, and when we act upon deception, we reap deception. And such deception takes us further away from God and His Truth. We therefore need to remain in Truth by remaining in the Lord. After all, we are disciples because we remain and dwell in our Lord Jesus.

It says in 2 Peter 2 of the false teachers who sow discord: *20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through [the full, personal] knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them and are overcome, their last condition is worse [for them] than the first. 21 For never to have obtained a [full, personal] knowledge of the way of righteousness would have been better for them than, having obtained [such knowledge], to turn back from the holy commandment which was [verbally] delivered to them.*

This Scripture out of 2 Peter 2 sums up Satan's ploy. He wants the believers to become entangled in all kinds of deceptions, traditions and fables. Once this happens, then we will drift further away from the Lord, for we give the devil a foothold to act and to influence our lives.

It is time we turn our ear back to God. It is time we listen and we obey. It is time we stop running after man and start running after the Lord. It is time that put an end to fables and deceptions and walk in truth.

For the truth we adhere to and fight for must be certain and must be trustworthy. The truth that we seek and the truth we seek to share is surely not some temporary knowledge, yet it is something eternal and which gives eternal life. It is a truth that abounds with possibilities where the secrets of the supernatural realm are unlocked to be manifested in the natural realm.

As disciples it is our mandate to therefore go and teach all truth, for again, it is the truth that sets us free. It is the truth that leads us to the Lord. It is the truth that leads to a relationship with true divinity and therefore everlasting hope on earth and in heaven. In a world of so much confusion and deceit and lies, we as disciples of the Lord need to declare the Truth so

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that a broken world can truly know the Lord and be led out of captivity in the light of His Glorious Presence.

Indeed, let us stand firm on the truth of the Lord, for Jesus who is the Truth is the hope of our glory, the hope of the world and the hope of the lost.