

Fear, Faith and the Future

“Live According to Truth”

Week of March 14-20, 2021

Memorize

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31-32

Open.

Which member of your family is most ready and willing to admit when something they believed or said proves to be wrong?

Study.

If you happened to hear Pastor Jim’s message on Sunday, what stood out to you? What questions do you have?

Read John 8:31-32. What authenticating mark of a Christian does Jesus identify here? What do you think it means to “abide” in Jesus’ word?

The last six words of verse 32 are well-known and are applied to all kinds of things by all kinds of people. What did Jesus actually have in mind when he spoke them? Where does true freedom begin?

A national research study revealed that the beliefs of most religious people in America could be expressed by these five statements that were summarized as, “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism”:

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most of the religions of the world.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God doesn’t need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when he is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

In what ways is this religious perspective moralistic? Therapeutic? Deistic?

How does this religious perspective compare to biblical Christianity?

Read John 17:17-19. This verse is part of a larger recorded prayer of Jesus. He is praying for his followers. What does Jesus name as the exclusive source of truth? What essential roles does truth play in the life of discipleship?

Read Ephesians 6:4. Why is it so essential that truth be transmitted from parents to children in the home?

Read Ephesians 4:11-16, 25. What role does the church play in teaching the truth? What important outcomes of that ministry of teaching does Paul anticipate? What consequences might we anticipate if parents and church leaders fail in this responsibility?

Read Philippians 1:29. What reasonable outcome of the choice to believe in Jesus does Paul identify here? Why will this outcome be inevitable at some level for every believer?

Can you see the prospect of increased opposition to Christians and Christian faith on the horizon? If so, do you think we’re ready? Why or why not? What additional questions do you have?