

January 03, 2010

Proclaiming the truth (of life)

(Is 56:1-8, Acts 17:16-34, John 12:20-26)

The big question which all the philosophers over the ages past struggle to find an answer is the question Pilate asked Jesus –“What is truth?” The irony was when Pilate asked this question, truth was right in front of him. It’s much the same case with the world. Truth of God is everywhere as the waters cover the sea. Some refuse to accept but many are ignorant of it even though God is not far from them. This is the biblical fact which Paul told the Athenians quoting their Greek poets in today’s epistle lesson. We, God’s people want to proclaim the truth because the love of God constrains us as it has constrained Paul (I Cor 9:16). To day God wants us to know the truth about life that is truly life and proclaim it unto the ends of the world. From to day’s epistle lesson we find the purpose and the source of life, from the gospel lesson we learn how to understand the paradox of life and from the Old Testament lesson we learn the priority of life.

By writing and publishing messages as per the almanac, I am proclaiming the truth of the God’s word. To make our quest easy, Let us ask ourselves three questions to find out what truth is and how best we can proclaim the truth.

1. What is truth?

According to the Bible truth is a person. That person is triune God who has revealed himself to humanity. God the Father is true. (A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He- Deut 32:4). God the Son is the truth (John 14:6) The embodiment of all truth – (Jn 1:1, 14). God the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth (John 14:16, 17; 16:13). The word of God is truth (John 17:17). The church is the pillar and foundation of truth(1 Tim 3:15). In stark contrast Satan is the father of lies and everything that emanates from him has nothing but a lie.

2. Why should we proclaim the truth?

Because God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth (I Tim 2:4) and Jesus consecrated himself on the cross to consecrate us in truth and has sent us into the world just as the Father

has sent Him as witness and testimony to truth (John 17:17-19). The church is the pillar and foundation of truth(1 Tim 3:15).

3. How can we proclaim the truth?

We can proclaim the truth only when we **know** the truth. Knowing the truth is not just an intellectual pursuit .It is our spiritual destiny that can be reached only when we follow Jesus as His disciples. This is today's gospel lesson.

Today God is not only asking us to proclaim the truth but also worship Him in truth and in spirit keeping His Sabbath with out desecrating it. This is today's Old Testament lesson.

The Epistle lesson: Acts 17:16-34 The Purpose of life is to know the triune God

Is truth found only in the Bible? Of course not, it is found in all most all Scriptures and in the first book God gave to humanity which is the book of nature. But men have become so foolish in their own self defined wisdom that their minds and hearts are darkened. There fore Jesus the truth has come that men may know the true God and truth about God (Romans 1:21, 22, I Jn 5:20). We are all religious like the Athenians who gathered to listen to Paul in the meeting of the Areopagus and also very much interested in listening to good sermons. The God who told them that day why they were born is telling us today the same truth. That truth is that we are born to seek and find God. God is also asking us not to be any more ignorant of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (which is his atoning death for us and his resurrection) and repent of our ignorance thus far. Other wise we can not escape the impending judgment. That day some responded to Paul's sermon and believed in the truth of the Gospel and became disciples. May that happen today also!

Unless the truth of God in His word sets us free we continue to live in the bondage that resulted from the lies we believed(That is, our own ideology). All isms have an ideology which is not true. In the garden of Eden when Adam and eve told God that they were afraid to come before him because they were naked, God asked, "Who told you that you were naked?" Late Dr.Selwin Hughes in his Everyday with Jesus called this question as the truth question or the ideological question i.e the truth we believe on which we build our lives. Like Eve many believe the lies of Satan and they are enslaved .Only when we continue in the word of Jesus we shall know the truth and that truth

only can make us free and we become the true disciples of Jesus Christ(John 8:31). Today God is telling us the most fundamental and basic truth about life .That truth is God created us from one man (Adam)all of us and the rest of the people in the world to seek and find Him. In other words God is asking us to know that the purpose of life is to know Him. In fact this is the divine definition of life given by Jesus, "This is life eternal that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."(Jn 17:3) Truth is not some new idea which Athenians love to hear. It is the age old message of God, not just to listen and appreciate but to respond and act on it.

To day God is teaching us some fundamental aspects about our life. Let me give you the answer to the question "what is life?" in the form a spiritual table which we need to memorize like the mathematical tables we have memorized in our child hood. After all are we not still in our child hood spiritually? If you want to do well in the mathematics of God you need to memorize these tables. Interestingly the word mathematics has come from "mathetes",the Greek word for the disciple.

What is life	
God is our life – Deut 30:20	2X2=4 2X3=6
Jesus is the Life –John 14:6	2X4=8
He who has the Son has life - I John 5:12	2X5=10 2X6=12
This is life eternal that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom have sent.-John 17:3	2X7=14 2X8=16 2X9=18 2X10=20
To live is Christ- Phil 1:21	2X11=22
(Bible is given that we may have this life) "..These are written that you may believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and believing you might have life " John 20:31	2x12=24

Even though we are very strong in worldly mathematics we are all weak in spiritual mathematics. So we need a tutor. With out any fees Jesus is ready to teach us and is inviting us to come for tuition to learn

to discern some of the paradoxes in life which on our own can not understand. This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson: John 12:20-26
The Paradox of Life is gaining God through losing our life.

There are people around us who are seeking the truth and want to see Jesus like the Greeks who have come to Phillip. Therefore we need to be ready to show them Jesus who is the embodiment of truth. That is what is proclaiming the truth of the Gospel. Paul calls it preaching Christ crucified. From this passage we find that Jesus was teaching his disciples about the Cross on that day; that is His death and its significance and also the paradox of the life He is promising to give. The world believes in gaining the whole world without caring for the soul. But to gain the world that is eternal we need to hate our lives in this world. This is the paradox that Jesus is teaching us today. Like a seed of wheat which has to fall to the ground to produce the bountiful harvest Jesus who has taught the disciple that day is teaching us today that He has to die so that there may be bountiful spiritual harvest. We not only should know about the Cross of Christ but we have to follow him daily carrying the cross. That means, in order to bear spiritual fruit or the fruit of the spirit in our life we need to practice daily spiritual self crucifixion and die daily by crucifying our old nature which is the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh (with all its passions and desires) and the pride of life. Following Jesus means learning the truths of the scriptures daily at his feet and crucifying our sinful self daily. Therefore true Disciples of Christ not only learn the scriptures daily, deal with their sin daily but also keep the Sabbath of the Lord without desecrating it. This is today's Old Testament lesson.

The Old Testament lesson: Isaiah 56:1-8
The Priority of life is to serve God in proclaiming the truth
(Rom 1:9)

It was God's commandment for people of Israel to observe the seventh day (Saturday) as Sabbath. That is they had to keep it as a day of rest and keep it holy by not doing any work but worship God. After the resurrection the early church had set apart Sunday (the day in which Lord Jesus rose) as a day for rest and worship (It is not keeping Sabbath). God wants us to serve Him everyday, but wants us to make one day special when we can rest and focus our thoughts on Him. That is why we come to our churches (the places where we gather for worship on Sundays) for worship. In this way the tradition of Sunday worship service has come into vogue and gradually

attending church on Sunday has become a ritual. In my ministry I find at least one or two going into sound sleep the moment I start the sermon, not on one Sunday but every time I visited that church. In some churches people sit outside while the sermon is preached. In some churches sermon time shouldn't exceed 20 minutes. So in those churches I used to give the sermon copies because I feel in 20 minutes three Scriptural texts can not be expounded. Take for example today's theme. But to my utter disappointment and pain I found many people don't even care to take the free copy of the sermon home with them.

It is the solemn responsibility of the shepherd to proclaim the truth of the Scriptures. Every time he or she preaches to the congregation an altar call should be given for people to respond. Otherwise Scriptural truths are not proclaimed in the way God wants them to be proclaimed. Whenever we dwell on passages from Prophetic books we must realize that what God has wanted to tell His people during that time, the same thing He wants to tell us now in the context of the new covenant we have made with God through Christ our Lord.

As I was preparing the sermon God has brought into mind the people group eunuchs in India whom we find asking for alms in public places and transport dressed as women. How many of them know the wonderful blessings, God has in store for them? Are we as Church proclaiming the truth to these people groups? May all those who read this, pray to God that this peoples group in India may be reached with the truth of the gospel.

May we remind ourselves every time we part take in the Lords table that all those who part take in the Holy communion have to proclaim the truth of Lord's death until He comes(I Cor 11:26). Then all the promises in this passage are ours and we will be filled with the joy of the Lord every time we come to His house of prayer.

We as Church exist not for our selves but for all nations. When we realize this truth and proclaim it in the pattern that God has given in Acts 1:8-in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the world we become great commission church fulfilling the great commission. May God help our churches to do this! Amen.

Life Application:

Only those who know the true God of the Bible can proclaim the truth of God.

