

Middle School & High School Sunday School Lesson September 6, 2020

Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith

What is
truth?

Unit 1 - Back to Basics

What do you
mean "Born
Again"?

Unit Aim

- Our society questions the necessity and possibility of moral absolutes. As Apostolics, we believe in the existence of truth—that God and His Word are real and without fail—and we must act on that truth to work out our own salvation.

Who are you,
Lord?

Born Again, Now What?

Lesson I – What is Truth?



Bible Point:

Absolute truth exists and is available to anyone willing to search the Scriptures.

Scripture

John 18:33-38

Explore



Our Twenty-First Century Attitude about Truth

- Our culture today is reshaping the definition of truth. In the twenty-first century, it seems truth has become an endangered species.
- We begrudgingly accept the fact that many political candidates lie while on the campaign trail, and we are not surprised when they continue the process after the election.
- When it comes to religious matters, some Christians are compromising doctrine, adopting an “agree to disagree” mentality. They say principles don’t matter so much, preferring rather to accept and tolerate people who seem sincere.

Many people question whether truth even exists.

Pilate: A Brief History

- While the number of people who question whether truth exists is alarming, it is not entirely new. Allow me to introduce you to a historical figure who had the same attitude toward truth thousands of years ago.
- Likely he would have been forgotten by nearly everyone had he not been involved in the most significant trial in all human history.
- This man, whom we refer to as **Pilate**, held the title prefect in the Jewish province of Judea from AD 26–36. He was equal in authority to a Roman governor. Pilate's primary **function would have been to serve as a military leader, having three thousand troops at his disposal.**
- He also would have been responsible for the joyous task of collecting taxes. He served in an important role in the court system, which is what he is remembered for today.
- We have archaeological proof that Pilate existed. In 1961, archaeologists discovered the Pilate stone—a pillar of limestone found at a Roman theater in the capital of Judea. This pillar bears an inscription dedicated to the Roman emperor from Pilate.
- We know Pilate best for his role in Jesus' trial. Everyone involved knew Jesus had done nothing worthy of a death sentence. Pilate was not a Jewish sympathizer, and He was not a secret follower of Jesus. He was not even a man concerned with justice.

The Illegal Trial

- Pilate was in a situation where the easiest thing was to sentence Jesus to die to avoid another clash with what he may have called the “superstitious Jews.” Yet he did not immediately take that course of action; he even tried several times to avoid the decision he ultimately made.
- When Pilate first became involved in the trial of Jesus, the law had already been violated. This case could have been immediately dismissed. The interaction between Pilate and Jesus’ Jewish accusers was marked with crazy arguments that demonstrate no real courtroom process was followed (John 18).
- Once this circus trial ended and Jesus was sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin, the next step was turning Him over to the Roman authorities—it was a violation of Roman law for the Jews to carry out a death sentence. The Roman government was the only authority allowed to execute criminals (John 18:31). Ironically, the law was not followed until Jesus was turned over to the Roman government.
- Pilate was the appropriate person to hear the charges against Jesus. Initially Pilate properly denied the case because of the vague charges (John 18:29–31). It was common practice for him to receive counsel from a neighboring governor, and Pilate was correct to personally question Jesus to determine his opinion about the charges against Jesus.

The Ultimate Question



Read John 18:33–37.

- What an interesting conversation. Pilate asked Jesus who He was and what He had done. When Jesus responded, He was not trying to avoid the question. He did not deny being the King of kings; rather, He acknowledged that what Pilate had said was true.
- In John 18:37, Pilate was confronted with the most important truth he would ever hear in his life. Jesus stood before him and plainly explained who He was.

Read John 18:38.

- Pilate was not asking this question out of a desire to have an answer. He was not asking Jesus to explain truth to him; rather, he was somewhat flippantly saying, “Truth, ha! What is truth anyway?” He was not expressing a desire to know truth; he was questioning if truth really can exist.
- This interaction is why Pilate felt it was acceptable to sentence Jesus to die, while at the same time admitting Jesus was innocent. **The man who questioned the existence of truth did what so many people do when faced with a tough situation: he made up his own truth.** He placed himself not only in the role as judge of Jesus, but as the judge of himself. He felt justified sending an innocent man to die.

Moral Relativism

- We live in a society that constantly bombards us with a message of moral relativism. Moral relativism is the idea that there is no definite standard of right and wrong because the definitions of those terms change depending upon each situation and each individual.
- Others may say it is not wrong to lie if the truth might offend someone.
- We may face questions and even resistance to absolute truths in the Bible. People may say:
 - What is truth?
 - Why is everything black and white?
 - Can't you see that people make decisions based on their cultures, their backgrounds, and their personalities?
 - How can you say that what is truth for you is truth for me?
 - You don't have the right to judge me because what I decide to do is up to me and what I believe is true.
- **The drumbeat of our world today is moral relativism.**



Biblical Truth

- As people who believe the Bible is the Word of God, we reject the idea that there is no moral standard of right and wrong. We refuse to believe that what is truth for me is different from truth for someone else.
- Pilate, you had it all wrong. Truth does exist, and we all have an obligation to respond to that truth. We cannot make up our own rules.
- Just because you believe something does not make it true. You can believe with all your heart it is not going to rain, and you can walk out in faith, not taking an umbrella when you leave the house, but if it rains, you will still get wet. Our faith must be grounded in truth—not truth we invent, but the truth found in the Word of God.
- **It is very important that we, the people of God, understand two things: (1) we must know truth does exist, and (2) we must know and proclaim what that truth is, even if it risks offending others.**

The Role of the Church in Instilling Truth

One of the most important functions of the church is to help in still truth. Allow the church family and its leaders to speak into your life.

Read Ephesians 4:11–12.

- To reap the full benefits of being associated with the church, we must be willing to accept the variety of personalities and methods of those who minister.
- Some say when a person is engaged in ministry, it is not what happens within the one-hour time frame of a service or a gathering; rather, ministry is the outflow of that person's life. Who we are will be a factor in how effectively we minister to others.
- People who receive the five-fold ministry are those who faithfully read their Bibles, have a prayer life, and diligently seek God.
- One may wonder how long it will take. How long will I need to continue coming to church and receiving ministry?



The Role of the Church in Instilling Truth

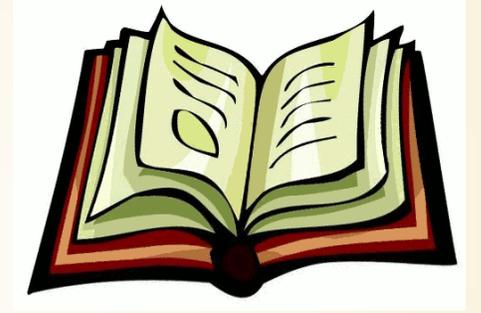


Read Ephesians 4:13–16

- I don't know about you, but I don't think we are quite there yet. I still have some room to grow to match up to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ, so I still need the ministry to speak into my life.
- We still need to be engaged in worship to our God. We still need to be in an atmosphere where our voices join in the prayers of faith being sent up by God's people. We still need to hear the Word of God expounded upon, and we need to apply it to our lives.
- One of the pieces of evidence Paul gave of a person who is becoming spiritually mature was "speaking the truth in love."
- **We cannot speak truth if we don't know truth.** We cannot speak truth in love if we do not have a love for Jesus that causes us to also have a love for people.



Life: An Open Book Test



When was the last time you took an open-book test? What about an open-notes test or an open-phone test? What did you think about that process?

Many people feel a test is much easier when they have something they can refer to when faced with a tough question.

Life can be like that. **Thankfully, life is an open-book test. Answers to the questions posed in life can be found in the Word of God.**

Read II Timothy 3:16 (*Doctrine-Teaching, Reproof-Explaining what action the person should take instead, Instruction in righteousness-Teaching principles that if followed will eliminate future mistakes.*)



Truth is different than opinion. Opinion is based on your own personal desires, but truth is found in the bible. What are some important truths in the Bible?

Have you ever heard the saying, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”? What one person considers beautiful; another considers ugly. If you have ever walked through an art museum, you know this for a fact. Some would argue that truth, similarly, is the eye of the beholder. We each have a responsibility to live our truth,” they may argue. However, if there is truth, then, by definition, there are lies. If everyone’s idea of truth is equally valid, then truth loses its meaning. What value is truth if people can just do what they want to do anyway?

As Christians we know there is one source of truth: Jesus Christ. He described Himself in John’s Gospel as “the way, the truth, and the life” ([John 4:16](#)).

The truth shows the way, and the way leads to life.