



## Life Group Study Notes

### "The Proclamation: The Gift of Truth"

Dr. Rice Brooks - December 18, 2016

#### **Warm Up (10-15 minutes)**

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Did you believe in Santa when you grew up? How did you discover the truth?
- What is your main source of news information? How much do you trust that source?
- Have you or a loved one ever received a false medical diagnosis? How did it affect you?

#### **Word (10-15 minutes)**

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

John 1:14-18 ESV *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

- Through Jesus came grace *and* truth; both, not one or the other. Reconciliation with God requires both faith and repentance; not one or the other. The church was strengthened in both the comfort and the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31). Both are needed. Today we desperately need truth.

Isaiah prophesied during a time of prosperity, yet impending chaos was imminent. His time was perhaps not unlike our situation today in America. He prophesied the following...

Isaiah 59:12-15 ESV *For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: transgressing, and denying the Lord, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice.*

- The Oxford Dictionary proclaimed "post-truth" as the word of the year for 2016. Post-truth is belief or a state of mind based not on fact, but on feelings and perceptions. It is part of the post-modern paradigm of our western world. "Truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter." People today have in large part developed their own personal "truth" with a corresponding narrative to reinforce what they *want* to believe. Even when confronted with truth, people often do not want to receive it, especially if it upsets the way they see the world or if it would require them to change their lives in any meaningful way.

### What is truth?

The Roman ruler who had Jesus crucified asked him this very question.

John 18:37-38 ESV *Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."*

- Truth corresponds to and coheres with reality. One can investigate whether something is true or not. Truth is ultimately objective and is grounded in the Creator. God is truth and only speaks truth and only acts according to the truth. His declarations and his interpretation of events are true; they correspond to reality. He knows all things perfectly.
- If there were no God, there would be no Truth. There would only be the limited perceptions believed and embraced by individuals and groups of people according to their own biases. This is the worldview of post-modernism where people hold to their own version of truth, their own post-truth.

### Why does truth matter?

- If there is no truth, there is no justice. No truth, no universal morality. No truth, no boundaries. No truth, no peace. No truth, no hope. If there is no truth, there is only Nietzsche's "will to power" or Darwin's survival of the fittest as applied to the human social order. The Fascist and Communist totalitarian evils of the 20th century can be directly traced to the rejection of God, truth, and consequently, biblical morality.

### How do we acquire truth?

- We must be honest with ourselves. We must be willing to accept the pain that may come with truth. We must be willing to change in response to truth. We must commit to live in the truth. We must be willing to speak the truth in love to one another.
- Scripture, being inspired of God, reveals truth when we interpret it correctly. Reading and reflecting upon Scripture with an open heart willing to obey its teachings will lead us into the truth.

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.**

- Who do you have in your life that will tell you the truth in love?
- Have you trusted Jesus as the Truth? If so, how does that trust affect your private, professional and social life? If not, why not?
- How much do you spend time reflecting upon the great truths of Scripture? Do you have regular times set aside to read, study, and reflect upon the Scriptures?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Ask God to grant you the strength to faithfully speak and stand for the truth in love.
- Ask God to guard you by the Holy Spirit from deception and error.
- Ask God to help you surround yourself with people who love you enough to tell you the truth when you are susceptible to error and self-deception.