

## 20200524 Living in a Culture Without Truth

### Introduction

P Tony- in talking about the importance of **critical thinking**- he mentioned this verse ...

**Isaiah 59:14 Justice is turned back,  
And righteousness stands far away;  
For truth has stumbled in the street,  
And uprightness cannot enter.**

**(Anyone renouncing evil is beaten and robbed. MSG)**

True in ancient Israel and unfolding today.

Truth/righteousness- not-bulwark-justice system.

Many legal/gov't decisions not founded in reality.

There are many voices today trying to manipulate us to embrace their ideology regardless- truth.

They want to change what we think and how we behave morally, ethically, and spiritually.

1970's-rise- post-modernism-reject objective truth

We live in- post-truth culture- feelings/personal preferences- more important- facts/truth/reality.

### A Culture Without Truth

(Good book on truth- Saving Truth- Abdu Murray)

The reduction of truth takes two forms ...

>acknowledge truth but set it aside for personal preferences (Bible says, but ...)

>willing to propagate false information to serve a higher social/political agenda

**“If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.” George Goebbels**

We see this happening today-end justifies-means.

Today we use facts and statistics for our own purposes and not for finding the truth.

Put in historical context- man has a long history of falsifying facts- struggle w/truth-creation ...

#### **Genesis 2:16–17 (NASB95)**

**<sup>16</sup>The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;**

**<sup>17</sup>but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

God's commands not to keep us from something good but to protect us from harm.

Man- given incredible freedom- one restriction that God knew would lead to spiritual death ...

#### **Genesis 3:1–5 (NASB95)**

**<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”**

**<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**

**<sup>3</sup>but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ”**

**<sup>4</sup>The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!”**

**<sup>5</sup>“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

If they ate from this one tree they would know good/evil, like God, which would lead to the

desire to determine good and evil.

From the very beginning man’s desire was to be like God, to be God- usurp the power of God.

Today- man has become the arbiter of truth.

In the garden Satan appealed to man’s desire for independence/autonomy.

Autonomy- be free from external control, to live my life w/o restraints.

True freedom must have boundaries or my freedom will trample on your freedom.

True freedom requires me- restrain my behavior.

Even freedom in Christ- recognizes constraints ...

**Romans 14:7-8**

**7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;**

**8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.**

In Christ- truth sets us free- not free to do what we want to do- free to do what is right to do-

based on God’s idea of right/wrong.

Moving from the garden of Eden to Jesus day we see man’s ongoing struggle w/truth ...

**John 18:37–38 (NASB95)**

**<sup>37</sup>Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** (if interested in truth will hear what Jesus said)

**<sup>38</sup>Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, “I find no guilt in Him.”**

Pilate did not stay to hear what truth was- he did not care- walked away like many today.

Many today are unwilling to allow truth to interfere with what they feel is right or wrong.

Only truth Pilate knew was- if the Jews rebelled one more time- would lose- position of power.

**John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

How about us? Will we hear truth if it disagrees with our feelings/personal perspective/belief?

How much do we love the truth? love Jesus?

**John 8:31–32 (NASB95)**

**<sup>31</sup>So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; (remain in My Word)**

**<sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”**

First, believing lies do not set us free!

Second, what was the condition for knowing truth and experiencing freedom- continue in- Word.

If we do not read, study- Word- not know truth.

If we do not allow ourselves to ...

**Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

The will of God- which is founded on truth, will bring us into perfect/complete freedom.

Will we allow truth into every area of our lives?

### **Culture of Confusion**

Our elevation of feelings and preferences above truth has produced a culture of confusion.

Today we exalt those confused about moral issues as hero's and those who sure about right/wrong- racist/misogynist/xenophobes.

Two ways- church embraced- truth confusion ...

#### 1. Compromise truth for acceptance/avoid conflict

As people- have- strong desire- fit in/be accepted.

This often causes us to either to ...

>remain silent about truth, or

>soften the truth to make it more palatable

We can be uncompromising/show compassion.

**Truth without love is not truth, love without truth is not love.**

Too often we want to be appear tolerant/likable- In other words- how we feel over rides truth.

When we are willing to apply truth to our own lives then we can speak into today's culture.

#### 2. Vilify those we disagree with

We often fall into the same trap as those we vehemently disagree with.

We are quick to believe whatever supports our presuppositions about these people.

The Bible talks about wicked people in some pretty unedifying terms.

How do we respond to wicked people?

I struggle with this- I have some very damning thoughts towards some I consider wicked.

I feel like James/John- Samaritans ...

**Luke 9:54 When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"**

Truth is truth regardless of the messenger- because truth is objective.

We have confused- difference bet. people/ideas.

Today to disagree with a persons ideas is to show them disrespect- this shuts down all dialog.

Our goal is to win people/not arguments- we attack the argument not the person.

Remember-they need a Savior as much as I do.

**Mat 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

**Pr 29:8 Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger.**

How do-turn away anger in-culture filled w/anger?

**Pr 15:2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.**

I want to speak in a way that makes knowledge acceptable to people- give me words-heaven.

Aside: I do think Christians- withdrawn too much from politics/culture, out of either a ...  
>fear of contamination, or  
>the idea- this is not the realm of the church

John the Baptist/Jesus- spoke to secular leaders.

There is a real need for believers who are knowledgeable/know how to frame arguments.

### **In the Name of Autonomy**

When man pursues independence/autonomy, w/o regard for truth, he becomes his own law.

When my personal preferences conflict with your personal preferences ...

since- is no truth to arbitrate between them-

>it produces confusion and

>chokes out personal freedoms

In man's search- independence/autonomy- lost ...

#### 1. Our ability to reason

We choose to emote rather than seek truth- we allow our feelings to override reality.

Result- we make others subject to our personal preferences- often resulting in violence.

#### 2. Moral Accountability

Without a God/absolute truths, we turn to science and philosophy to define our values/ethics.

**Aside: Science-is not truth- method to determine truth- limited to the physical creation. Science cannot determine the truth about transcendent issues- morality, ethics, spiritual.**

Since there is no God, we, the creature, become our own source of truth/morality/ethics.

Who defines what is right/wrong? Me/you/gov't?

The only anchor society has- Living Word of God.

#### 3. Our Sense of Human Value

When we become our own law- we determine which humans are valuable and which are not.

Philosophers- suggest- human babies have no value- lack awareness to value themselves.

Therefore parents can decide to have them put to death if they are an inconvenience to them.

We become our own gods-accountable to no one.

Judges- story of- Jewish peoples quest-autonomy

**Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.** (king- authority)

Today- move to tear down all authorities- anarchy.

Personal autonomy- not- same-personal freedom.

**John 8:32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."**

Jesus- foundation for freedom is first truth.

Today's culture refuses to tie freedom to truth.

Freedom comes in two forms (Isaiah Berlin) ...

1. Negative freedom- freedom from restraint

When we talk about freedom we generally talk about negative freedom.

We need to be free from constraint- i.e. freedom from government control, oppression, etc.

2. Positive Freedom- ability to do what is right

Negative freedom is to cast off restraint, positive freedom is to do what is right w/that freedom.

The ability to do what what is right assumes there are objective moral truths.

A culture will flourish when it allows positive freedom to bring restraint to negative freedom.

If we overvalue freedom from restraint it will enslave us because we will always

>want more freedom and

>less restraint

... resulting in lawlessness/anarchy.

We see this in the sexual revolution today.

The desire for freedom from restraint without the desire to do what is right, is resulting in more

and more corrupt sexual behavior.

**Conclusion**

Let me leave you with this last verse ...

**Pr 25:28 (MSG) A person without self-control is like a house with its doors and windows knocked out.**

What is our takeaway?

Of all people we should ...

>be both seekers/purveyors of truth

>be able to present truth with compassion

>value freedom but recognize that freedom requires self control/self government

>recognize-do not have all-answers-humble

**Every person you will ever meet**

**knows something you do not know.**

>acknowledge that Christ is the source of our life, freedom, and truth