



April 8, 2007

What Is Truth?

I know why you're here. It's a really phenomenal story and well as Peter said, you know otherwise you wouldn't be here. What exactly did Peter say you know? Well, in the scripture this morning he said, "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel telling the good news of peace." Peter says you know God made promises, promises to Adam and Eve, promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, promises to Jesse and David, promises through the promise through the prophets, a promise of a Messiah who is Jesus. He continues on, "You know what has happened throughout Judea beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached. You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and Power and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil because God was with him." Very bluntly Peter is saying, "You know the prophet said the Messiah would come preach in parables, heal the sick and take on all the iniquities of our sin and you know Jesus spoke in parables, healed the sick, took on our sins the penalty of which is death." He continues, "You know that we are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen." You know he was crucified, you know he rose. He continues, "You know he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one who God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. You know that all the prophets foretold it and you know Jesus fulfilled them all." You know Jesus is the way there is no other accept no substitutes He is the original he's the one and only or in other words he is the truth. Which exactly what Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the Father except through me." It is exactly what he promised in John 14:16-17, "The

Father will give you another counselor to be with you forever the Spirit of Truth.” And it should be evident that we have that Spirit of Truth because John 4:23 Jesus says, “A time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” Truth, that’s what its all about.

The women who went to the tomb were confronted with the troubling find that first Easter morning. First of all we see in Mark 16:3 that the tomb was open. They had been worrying and asking who will roll the stone away but as they approached the stone was rolled away. The second thing that confronted them was that the guards were laying there like dead men. That’s what is recorded in Matthew 28:4. The third thing we find is recorded in Luke 24:3, they looked in and the tomb was empty. Wild thoughts must have run through their minds at the top of the list was probably, “What have they done to him now?” But God doesn’t allow their thoughts to go too far. He sends an angel with the truth. That angel says, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here He has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still with you in Galilee? Go quickly tell His disciples He is risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee there you will see. Now I have told you.” The truth is He’s alive and you must go tell the disciples, which is exactly what they do.

The result; well, the disciples have a hard time believing this but Peter and John run to the tomb. John records that he got there first not that he was Peter but he was younger is what John puts but John hesitates. He doesn’t go into the tomb it says he looked and he saw the linens in the tomb but he did not go in. You see, he’s doubting the truth, he’s afraid of what he might see. Peter the one who always acts first and thinks second gets there and just barges right into the tomb. Then John follows him and goes in and we see in John 20:8, “He saw and believed.” John saw the truth the tomb was empty, the burial cloth was folded. If the Sanhedrin had stolen the body they wouldn’t have removed the burial cloths much less folded them up. Grave robbers couldn’t have overpowered the soldiers even if grave robbers had stolen Jesus’ body they too would have just grabbed the body and gone they wouldn’t have stopped and folded the cloth. And contrary to what some people will say nowadays John knew that the disciples who were scared and ran away when Jesus was arrested

would not have stolen the body. That left only one outcome, the truth. He is risen. Think of the outcome of that truth, the disciples believed and they received the Spirit of Truth on Pentecost and they gave their lives to God and they served Him just as Jesus had said in spirit and in truth.

Those were glorious times in the early church. Glorious times because Christianity spread like wildfire even though they were under ferocious persecution. But I have to ask what in the world has happened because here is the truth of today. In America the statistics show that among the generation known as the "Greatest Generation" those people who came through WWII of that generation 65% are or were faithful churchgoers. Their children born in the late 40's to the mid 60's are known as the "Boomers", again statistically speaking we can't deny it, its the truth, 35% of them are faithful church goers. Their children, the "Busters" born between the late 60's to the mid 80's again the truth statistics show it, only 16% are faithful churchgoers. And today's generation the children born between 1985 and 2007 statistics are showing that it will be somewhere around 4% of them will be faithful churchgoers. Why? Well, lets first acknowledge that this is true and that it is scary. But lets answer the why. I think we can answer it in one of two ways.

Again in the Bible if we look to Colossians 2:8 we see that Paul writes and says, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." Did you here that? "See to it that no one takes you captive." You're taken captive if you're at war and you lose and someone takes you into captivity or if there id for instance a terrorist thing and you're hijacked on a plane or you're taken captive in a bank robbery or something. The Bible is sounding an alarm we are at war a spiritual war we are in the middle of a spiritual terrorist strike. John writes in 1 John 4:3, "This is the spirit of the Anti-Christ which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." You hear that? The Anti-Christ is here he's in the world already or his spirit is. He says, "You dear children are from God and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world and the world listens to them. We are from God whoever knows God listens to us but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Falsehood."

You see there are two sides. The truth and the falsehood, or the lie. You've heard the truth Peter said it, "You know." The lie; Colossian 2:8 says it, "Hollow", means there's nothing to it its empty, "deceptive", it leads away, "philosophy", a system of beliefs which "depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world." That's what takes us captive, "Hollow, deceptive, philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world." And that leads to point two.

People today are like John. They are standing outside the tomb their afraid to look at the truth because the truth that we take a step of faith and allow God to rule our lives. When we say rule it means God is number one. Like John it is Easter right now and right now you are right at that point, you are at the edge of the tomb. John saw linens you've heard the story its empty, you've heard Jesus rose and right now thoughts are probably going through your mind. It might be "I hope he's almost done", it might be words from one of our previous sermons on Christian living where Jesus says, "you shall be Holy as the Lord your God is Holy", or maybe right now you're thinking about the two sides, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Falsehood. That Spirit of Falsehood that's built on hollow, deceptive philosophy that depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, basically love this world and maybe you're thinking of the things you love. Things that would have to be moved off the throne of your hearts so that Jesus resides there. But right now on this Easter you can leave it all behind your worldly loves, your failures, your sin you can leave it all behind and walk into the truth of the resurrection. Or you can be like Pilot, who when Jesus said, "Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me", turned and asked Jesus, "What is truth?" The truth was right in front of Pilot Jesus is the Truth. Pilot couldn't take it He allowed Jesus to be crucified.

Right here right now you can side with the truth or you can crucify it. Last Sunday I saw someone who knew the truth, someone who was filled with the Spirit and wanted to worship the truth. It was little Sydney Reynolds. She came up to me after the church service and she said, "How old does a person have to be to read scripture in church?" I told her that there was no age requirement and asked if she was interested. She wasn't in the least bit worried about tall the people that would be here or anything that would scare the vast majority of people. She just really wanted to share the truth and read the Bible. She knows the truth just as Peter said, "You know". The

spirit of the truth is in her and she's going to worship in spirit and in truth. This Easter you have a choice be taken captive by the ways of this world go ahead go home and read Colossians 2:8 that's exactly what it says. Read 1 John 4:3-6 you'll see there are two sides, there is the truth and falsehood there is nothing in between and you're either going to be taken captive and follow the ways of the world or you're going to live the truth. May we all go home today and live the truth and change those percentages that are right now holding in our society.

In our Savior's name, Amen.