

Real Christianity Part D

Series: Real Christianity

Text: Galatians 1:6-10; 4:16

Introduction: Pilate asked the question *“what is truth?”* Scholars, philosophers, educators and men have been asking that question for centuries. At a point in human history truth was determined on the basis of God and His word, even for secular societies, then in the "enlightenment" period the foundation for truth was science, and in the mid 20th century, the foundation for truth became a matter of what one thinks is the truth. In a world of lies, the truth is always the enemy.

Point 1 - In many modern day churches the truth is whatever you deem to be right. In a church in Arkansas, a speaker for Answers In Genesis, spoke at a Baptist church as said the following *“That disbelief in the literal understanding of Genesis ultimately leads to a disbelief in other important literal doctrines, such as the resurrection and the virgin birth.”* The pastor was upset and some of the people were for his literal view of Scripture. Furthermore, the speaker made a reference to the unbiblical position of transgenderism and was scolded between services. The speaker said, *“He told me that what I said about the moral issues (especially my brief LGBT comment) was not what he wanted and that I needed to change the message before the second service and essentially replace that marriage section with comments about God’s greatness and design in creation.”* What you have here, and it’s not uncommon, is what one thinks of truth.

Point 2 - A lack of truth produces a man centered gospel (vs. 10). There’s a reason we have so many false converts in the church, the gospel message has been altered in a way to create mass numbers, big membership roles and a belief that as long as you made a decision one day, you are a Christian. This is a man centered gospel. Paul had been accused of this. However, he had said those teaching another gospel were to be accursed. And the word for accursed is *anathemas* which is a strongly used word for false teachers.

Point 3 - What is the true gospel and true conversion? And why is the gospel truth so offensive? In Galatians 4:16 *“So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?”* Why had Paul become their enemy? The only possible explanation is that he had become an offense to them through telling them the truth. Unfortunately, this is often the case for those who are faithful to Christ's teaching. Have you ever asked a spouse, friend or sibling to tell you the truth? But in fact, all you wanted to hear was what you had already settled in your heart.

Today you will likely hear something that is soothing or comforting to a sinner. Paul was confronting the Galatians for adding things like literal circumcision, keeping the laws along with the gospel. He spoke the truth. And the truth upset the apple cart.

Point 4 - The truth about the gospel, regeneration. We can define regeneration as *“an act of God which He imparts new spiritual life.”* Regeneration is like being born again. 1 Peter 1:3 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be*

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born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Cf. John 3:3-8, and we see the working of God in Ezekiel 36:26-27, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." It is only God who can make us alive. Ephesians 2:1 "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins..." Ephesians 2:4-6 "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Point 5 - How do I know that I am a Christian? That's a great question. A regenerated life does not produce works of the flesh on a consistent level. And I say that because, we all sin, but the difference in sinning now is there is conviction. Let's go back to Galatians, there's only one gospel, and trying to please men means you have to alter the true gospel. Cf. Galatians 5:16-26

Faith and repentance signify a true turning from sin to God. A biblical definition of repentance is "A heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ." Repentance is an intellectual understanding that sin is wrong. A sincere commitment to turn from sin to God will produce a pattern of holiness. To be quite frank, a truly repent person will live a changed life. We can call this the fruit of repentance.

There is a difference between being sorry for sin and truly repenting, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 "I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death." A worldly sort of grief may involve great sorrow for one's actions and probably also fear of punishment but no genuine renouncing of sin to forsake it in one's life.

There's the illustration of Esau in Hebrews 12:17 "For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears." The Expositors Commentary says, "Esau for a single meal bargained away 'his inheritance rights as the oldest son'. He could not recognize its true value. His insistence on the gratification of his immediate needs led him to overlook what was of infinitely greater worth, his rights as the firstborn."

Point 6 - Come to Christ for help. Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." To come to Him includes taking His yoke upon us, being subject to His direction and guidance,

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learning from Him and being obedient to Him. If you are unwilling to do such, make such a commitment, then you have not truly trusted in Him.

When Scripture speaks of trusting Christ it is frequently connected with genuine repentance. One of the most open and precious verses in the Scriptures is Isaiah 55:6-7, as the prophet is compelling a return to God, *“Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”*

Point 7 - Faith and repentance continue throughout life. It's not a one time and done thing. Galatians 2:20 *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”* Faith and repentance are attitudes of the heart. They are not a one time act and then back to the old way, they exist everyday as the believer seeks to live holy and righteous in this world, reflecting God in his life.