

Framing our Worldview
What is Truth?
John 1:1-14
October 20, 2019

This is the second in a series of sermons on the topic: **Wide Angle: Framing your Worldview**. Too often we in the church have too narrowly focused on matters relating to salvation. Central as that subject is, the biblical writers provide a much broader range of topics for us to adopt within our worldview. So from our worldview flows how we think the world works and how we fit into it. And such a worldview is about all of life!

Hence, the idea of a “worldview” is not merely an academic inquiry that some professor might engage in. But as Scripture reminds us in many places, we are to love God with our hearts and *minds*. As the Canadian theologian, Clark Pinnock, said, “we ought not leave our minds outside when we enter church.”

There are many worldviews. For the reality is that everyone has a worldview. Everyone asks the question: where did I come from and how do I live? And there is a biblical worldview based on the truth claims of scripture. Moreover, our worldview is fundamental to who we are. It has been shaped by all our experiences in life: our parents, our background, our education, our faith, our friends, and our jobs.

So we are talking in this series about framing our worldview. Yes, everyone has a worldview, but not everyone has thought through what it is. Buddhists have a worldview, Muslims have one, Secular Humanism has one, Atheists have one, Post Modernism has one and the Judeo-Christian tradition has a worldview.

Which worldview works? Which one fits with the reality of the universe we live in? A worldview is simply how you view the world and how you fit into it. For the next couple of weeks we are going to explore the subject of truth, whether there is such a thing as objective truth and whether or not one can know it. We are talking about truth with a capital T, not about opinion. We are talking about truth that is

not relative to situations or times or places. We are talking about truth that applies to every human being.

Do we remember Pilate's response to Jesus statement in John's Gospel that "he came into the world to testify to the truth"? Pilate said: *What is truth!*

In Mel Gibson's movie, ***The Passion of Christ*** he got the correct tone of voice for Pilate. Pilate was not asking a question as if he was a seeker after truth. Rather it was a shrug and tone of voice that said there is no such thing as Truth with a capital T. Not unlike, I may add, what many today would say about Jesus' claim to be the truth. Truth for many today is relative. What is true for you is not necessarily true for me. In a post-Christian, post-Modern, society truth is restricted to scientific, rational facts based on investigation and experiment. Faith claims are not accepted as truth.

John records that Jesus claimed this: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)*

This is a huge truth claims. Jesus proclaims that he is the truth with a capital T. He doesn't say that he points to the truth, or that he suggests a way to find the truth, or that he has an idea of how to find the truth. No, he is the Truth. Truth is a person.

That is a huge difference for world religions. In Islam the prophet Muhammad points to the truth of God as God's messenger. In Buddhism it is a search for the truth; Buddha's last words were that he was still seeking the truth. In Hinduism truth cannot be found in any creedal formulation. Truth within Hinduism is always conditional by time, gender, multiple sources, social setting and geography. Tolerance is therefore prized. So Christianity stands apart from all world religions.

If we accept the claims of Scripture to be truth for everyone, then we encounter the challenge of the different worldviews that compete for our minds and hearts. If we do adopt the biblical worldview, namely that God has spoken in Christ to the whole world, then obviously we will approach the following questions with very different eyes from the prevailing wisdom in our society.

Where did I come from?

Why is the world in such a mess?

Is there a solution?

What is my purpose within this solution? (Slide 6)

The bible makes many truth claims. It makes claims about the origin of life; about the mess we are in that we call sin, about its impact on us personally and globally, about God's solution in Jesus Christ for the world, and about God's plan for the future. These claims are the revealed truth we discover in Scripture and which are the foundation of a biblical worldview. Truth, as it is presenting in the bible and the Christian tradition, is not optional for the human family. The Christian claim is that to adopt a contrary view is deemed foolhardy and destructive. These are not claims that are only true for people of faith, but are true for everyone in the human family. The biblical worldview teaches us that there is truth that it is knowable and compelling about our world, our salvation, and ourselves. It is, if you like, God's blueprint for life.

Listen again to the reading from John, chapter one:

The word became flesh and blood and moved into our world and we have seen his glory...full of grace and truth...We got the law through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:14)

This claims that ultimate truth for every person is found in the person of Jesus Christ. The reality today, however, is that the many contrary worldviews that have claimed first place in our society have had deleterious consequences. It may be popular and seemingly liberating to adopt a secular worldview. But the reality is that it encloses my hopes and dreams within a materialistic, consumerist vision which never has and never will satisfy my deepest yearnings. Indeed, I would argue that such a worldview has been destructive of civic life and of individual well being.

These worldviews promise much, but do they meet the deep longing of our hearts? Instead what we see around us in Western society is people imprisoned by addictions, by destructive relationships, and by

the false promises of happiness. Indeed you can almost feel the emptiness and the spiritual yearning that lies just below the surface of our lives. For most of us in the West consumerism, materialism and hedonism have claimed the hearts of an entire generation in the West. These now form the heart of the modern, western worldview and the filter through which we view reality. But what remains is the hunger for meaning, spirituality, purpose and peace.

So when Jesus says in John 8: *If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free...So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.* (John 8:32; 36)

I believe this to be true for you, for me, and indeed for every person in the world.

We with Wesley sing: *Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night; thine eye diffused a quickening ray; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off; my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed thee.*

If you are one today who feels imprisoned and who would like to embrace this truth as it is found in Jesus Christ, I ask you to pray quietly and ask God for grace to believe. The promise is found right in our reading this morning in John:

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12,13)

Amen

