

THE TROUBLE WITH TRUTH

Joe Slater

Some wise-guy said that truth is so valuable most people economize when they use it! In all seriousness, we hear much more today about toleration than we hear about truth. Such was not the case with godly prophets like Amos, and it ought not to be so with us.

God's man may have to say some things that upset sinful people. Paul told Timothy to preach the word urgently whether in season (when people like it) or out of season (when they don't, 2 Tim. 4:2). For Amos, it was definitely out of season as he warned the arrogant king and immoral people of their impending doom. Amaziah, the golden-calf-worshipping priest of Bethel, ordered Amos to hush up and go home:

“Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy. But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is the royal residence” (Amos 7:12-13). Amaziah's modern counterparts still want to regulate where truth may be spoken. “Say what you wish in your church buildings, but keep it out of the public square!”

Courageous Amos rejected Amaziah's gag order. *“I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheep-breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel’”* (7:14-15). He then pronounced further doom upon Amaziah and all Israel (vv. 16-17).

If Amos were with us today, he would be censured for being negative, intolerant, judgmental, and narrow-minded. “You think you're right and everyone else is wrong!” But the fact is, truth had nothing to do with what Amos thought, and it has nothing to do with what we think. It has every-thing to do with what God says!

The trouble with truth is simply that man's think-so isn't the same as God's say-so. The trouble isn't really with truth; it's with us!

Nothing Has Changed

Lawrence Rast is President of Concordia Theological Seminary. In a recent alumni newsletter, he reflected on the 172 year history of that institution. He wrote, “In the intervening 172 years, the world has seen war and peace, famine and plenty, disease and medicinal advances. Yet in all this historical change, theologically nothing has changed. Our Lord Jesus Christ remains the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8).”

While we would disagree rather sharply with Dr. Rast on many points, he is certainly right on this. Our Lord, and therefore our message, is changeless. Jesus is still *“the way, the truth, the life”* (Jn. 14:6). There is still *“no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). We must reject any other gospel than the one then proclaimed, for any other message is a false gospel and not really good news (Gal. 1:6-9).

There are many things in life that are both/and rather than either/or propositions. One can like green and also like blue. One can enjoy both baseball and football. We should eat vegetables, grains, and meats (all within moderation, of course).

But there are a few things that are either/or propositions. There are some questions in life where trying to take the both/and approach is illogical in the extreme. There are some matters in life where moderation is worse than foolhardy. If a gun is pointed at your head, don't pull the trigger — not even moderately. In fact, get your finger off of the trigger and out of the trigger guard.

Jesus went to the cross because there was no other way for us to be saved (Matt. 26:39). That being true, legalism cannot be true; secularism cannot be true; Islam cannot be true. Either Jesus is the only way or He is nothing at all. Those who know his word know that He is something, in fact, that He is everything. A lot has changed in the last 172 years; but, spiritually speaking *“there is nothing new under the sun”* (Eccl. 1:9). We are still great sinners; but we have a greater savior. Let us cling to Him.

Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)

THE HEART IS WHERE HOME IS

It was Paul's wish for all Christians “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17).

The word “dwell” in this verse brings forth a powerful concept concerning our relationship with Christ. According to Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, the root of the word in the Greek means “to make one's home, to be at home.” Isn't that interesting! Jesus is not only to make His home in our hearts, He is to be at home there as well.

The question to ask ourselves in light of this is: “Is Jesus ‘at home’ in my heart?” Some people only want Jesus in their hearts as a visitor. But Jesus wants to dwell in our hearts and “be at home” with all we feel, say, and do. This brings a whole different perspective into the picture.

Our whole lives extend from what our heart desires. We must keep our hearts pure and sincere. Jesus will then “be at home there” and many good things will come to our lives as a result. How do we make our heart so that Jesus feels at home? The text tells us: “through faith.”

-- Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)

“My heart rejoices in the LORD...” (1 Sam. 2:1)

“Blessed is the man who fears the LORD... His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.”

(Psa. 112:1, 7) “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” (Psa. 119:10)

“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8)

“...though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.” (Rom. 6:17)

“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...” (Heb. 10:22)