

WHAT IS TRUTH

In Exodus 19 and 20, we are told how Moses went up Mount Sinai and God spoke to him. God gave Moses a wonderful gift, a view of what we now call the Kingdom of God is like. He told Moses that everyone worships only the one true God and does not make anything more important. It is a place where one day is set aside for re-creation. Those of greater years are respected. Nothing that God has created is destroyed. All commitments are honored; there is no lying or stealing or cheating on one's spouse. There is not even envy of what another has. Does that not sound like the Kingdom where God reigns? It is also called the Ten Commandments. Over time, however, people turned this picture of beauty and love into a set of strict laws that restricted people rather than setting them free.

We are told of a similar situation in Mark: 31-38 when Jesus drives the money-changes from the Temple. Now the Temple had been built as a magnificent building in which people could come and worship God. It was a noble and sacred purpose. Over many, many years, however, this purpose had gradually been corrupted, as the Ten Commandments had been corrupted. The ideal of worshipping God had become big business, with "perfect" animals, available only at the Temple at high prices to all who would come and give to God. Jesus' response to this corruption of worship was to make a whip of cords and drive the money-changes out of the Temple.

Both these Bible readings lead me to think about where we find truth in the Bible. As I get older, I have come to understand that truth is a much more elusive concept than I ever used to believe. I used to think that truth was an accumulation of facts. However, years have taught me that facts, selectively used or not used, can paint almost any picture we want. This is what happened to the Ten Commandments and the sacrificing in the Temple. Fact had become Law and truth had been lost. Much more recently, I realized that fiction can contain much truth. Jesus's parables were all fictional stories, yet they presents truths more wonderful than facts could express. That is why Jesus told parables.

So what IS the truth. Well the answer to that is certainly far beyond my simple abilities and the constraints of this article. But I think that we can look at the life of Jesus and the stories that He told and see certain markers that help us recognize truth. Jesus' whole life and all the parables that he told were meant to be challenging to the point of being outrageous. We as Christians are not

meant to live a life of comfort and conformity. If we are well accepted and life is good, we are doing something wrong. If we are satisfied with who we are and how we are treating others, we are not reaching out enough. If we feel that we worship and pray enough, we do not understand God's command to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30) We, as Christians, are called to be a little strange. We, as Christians, are called to live life a little outside the mainstream. We, as Christians, are called to be followers of THE Truth.

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