

The Truth about God
John 16:5-26

The truth reveals many things including a new perspective of what is important compared to what was thought to be important. Our trek to worship and Bible study each week is intended to reveal to us the truth about God and how we respond to the new lesson we learn about God. The expectation is that we will listen to a different interpretation and then apply that new understanding to our daily lives. The joy I have as Pastor is discovering the unusual insight that fits with what is happening in our lives today. When my attempt of explanation is successful, you should leave with a different thought to ponder and something new to try in your life. My goal is to unveil an idea that would cause you to say, "That changes my understanding" allowing God's truth to become part of you. It is then your responsibility to use this new understanding to change how you reprioritize your life. This task is easier said than done. The truth about God is very difficult to discern and accept.

In our text today, Jesus has just ate the last meal with the disciples and is now preparing them for the changes that are about to occur for the disciples future. Their grief of knowing Jesus will be leaving them has limited their ability to listen and understand Jesus' words. Therefore, Jesus

gives them the hope of the Holy Spirit that will guide them in truth. The disciples are in a very unique situation of understanding God's power in three very distinct and powerful ways. As children, they learned about the Jewish God who lived in the Temple and the special offerings given by the people. Whether they were Jews or not, they heard, the Torah read in public and learned the story of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, David, and other prophets. They knew this was a God to be feared or they would suffer God's rath. As young adults, they were called to follow Jesus learning how to love others as God loved them. Jesus also taught them the simple interpretation of the ten laws for Jews to obey. He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and your neighbor as yourself." Now we learn, after Jesus' ascension, the Disciples experienced the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Jesus also shares with them that his departure is for their own good. If Jesus does not leave, they will not have the truth revealed to them. This bodes the question for me, what is the purpose of the Holy Spirit? What are we to do with it once we have it? Jesus answers this question also. Jesus tells the disciples that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give them the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is through the Holy

Spirit that we are given a God's definition of these three concepts.

According to Jesus, how the world understands sin will condemn him to the cross, but that same act is what God deems acceptable and welcomes Jesus home. The Religious leaders have allowed the center of the world to focus on what is best for themselves and the church building. This leads to their false power of interpreting God's words and instructing the people. When Jesus failed to comply, he was considered a sinner and led to the cross. However, God approved of Jesus' actions and words because his focus was on telling the truth about God so others would believe and choose to believe in God.

The second concept Jesus addresses is righteousness. For the Jews, righteousness meant obedient to God and the Temple laws. The Jewish believe was the righteousness was the judgment of God's holy law. This left the power of interpreting the law to the Pharisees and the Religious leaders. The Pharisees and Religious Leaders used this power to falsely accuse Jesus sending him to his earthly death. Jesus taught the definition of righteousness was to live in a right relationship with God. This meant obedience to God's laws and keeping our focus on God's authority not manmade laws. Jesus tells the disciples that the only interpreter that we

can rely on to direct us in God's laws is the Advocate that will come only when Jesus has returned to heaven.

The third concept Jesus teaches is the understanding of God's judgment. When we think of judgment, our minds conjure up an image of God sitting on a throne casting the sentence of eternal life in heaven or hell. However, we need to remember that this concept of eternal life was foreign to the people who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah.

Therefore, God's judgment came often through mental, physical, and emotional illness like blindness, death, and demon possession. Today, there is another interpretation of God's judgment. Have you ever thought that God's judgment may be based on how we have chosen to grow in faith and true understanding of God?

As I read this passage, I understand God's judgment to come when we search for the truth. As we learn more about God and how God works in the world, our concepts change similar to how our thinking process changes. This is very similar to how our thought process changes, as we grow older. As children, we are concrete thinkers but by the time Middle School hits we begin to develop reasoning skills. It is at this age we start exploring a new world of decisions and responsibility. The same is true in

our Spiritual world. When we begin exploring God, we think in very concrete images needing proof of God's existence. However, as we learn the truth about God we grow in faith and trust allowing God to lead and we will follow. Our thought process of how God lives and works in the world changes which allows us to discern right from wrong. It is at this point that we are convicted of our sins. Repentance is our response to the realization that we have not been living in right relationship with God. God's judgment then leads us to the table of forgiveness.

The gift of God's Holy Spirit is for us to use as we search for the truth about God. John Wesley believed that once we discovered all there was to know about God and lived without sin, we have found perfection. He also believed that, even though we strive to reach this goal, there has never been a human to claim succession. We always have more to learn about the power of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus told the disciples that there was more he wanted to share but he didn't want to overload them. Therefore, Jesus sent the gift of the Holy Spirit as a way for us to receive all of what Christ has to give.

We, too, have been blessed with this gift. The question now is what will we do with it? Jesus suggests that we use it to find the truth. I have

found the Holy Spirit to be my connection with God as a power source to all I can do through Christ. This spirit gives me the courage and strength to stand before you today. I also rely on this spirit to teach me the truth about God so I can pass God's words on to you. My hope and prayer is that you are also using God's Holy Spirit to stand strong in your faith as you pray to God, live with God, use God's gifts, serve others with God's love, and tell the world how God has improved your life. I believe it is time that we lived as people of the Pentecost courageous and vocal in sharing God with the world.

Jesus said to the Disciples,

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you in all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make I known to you."

Go with the Holy Spirit of God to search for the truth. When you find the truth, continue to search deeper until you reach the core of God. It is at this core that we receive all of God. Let the search begin. Amen.