



The Dead Truth?

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The title of this sermon is "The Dead Truth?" It is in the first place incredible that in our church that there would have ever been the need to discuss this problem. There might have been a justification for discussing it as a phenomena that was occurring out there some place, but sadly it is occurring more and more often in more and more places right in our midst.

More and more we are hearing less and less reference being made to the "Truth". In fact some are even objecting to our use of the word. Some individuals are advocating that we need to put less emphasis on "truth" and more emphasis on "people". That is funny. Since when is the truth against people? We need to get it straight. The truth is never against people. It is always for people. It is error that is against people. Please let me repeat that. Truth is never against people, it is error that puts people down. The problems that we are having in our society today do not result from knowing the "truth" but rather they are the result of believing lies.

You can tell that in certain places the attitude of many people is turning against the truth. They don't say it that way exactly. That is, they don't say, "I am against the truth". Rather you are more likely to hear them say that they are tired of hearing about "doctrine". They want to only hear the "gospel".

I can't hardly believe it. It doesn't make any sense to me. A person who understood Greek would know

that what is being said makes no sense. You may remember that the word "doctrine" in Greek means the teaching.

I looked it up in the Greek. Listen to this. The Greek word is didache {did-akh-ay'} It means **1)1a)** that which is taught; **1b)** doctrine, teaching, concerning something; **2)** the act of teaching, instruction; **2a)** in religious assemblies of the Christians, to speak in the way of teaching, in distinction from other modes of speaking in public.

Remember what we are doing now. We are trying to understand how it is that people say that they don't want to hear the doctrines, they want to hear the "gospel". While I was at it I looked up the word "**Gospel**". It is the word euaggelion {yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on} It means **1)** a reward for good tidings; **2)** good tidings **2a)** the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God; **2b)** the glad tidings of salvation through Christ; **2c)** the proclamation of the grace of God manifest and pledged in Christ; **2d)** as the messianic rank of Jesus was proved by his words, his deeds, and his death, the narrative of the sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be called the gospel or glad tidings.

So then the word "Gospel" means the "Good news". Lets put it all together now. This means then that the "doctrines" make us understand what the "gospel" is all about. To put it another way, without "doctrines", the "gospel" wouldn't make any sense. If it hadn't been for the doctrine of the Messiah as they had been given in the ancient scriptures, the apostles would never have been able to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Promised One, the Son of God.

A friend of mine has a mother who is not an Adventist. She was complaining to him one day about the Adventist Church. She was telling him that the church is into "doctrine" when it ought to be into the "gospel". She said that her church was into the "gospel".

My friend asked his mother if she believed in the Trinity. She said that she did, He said, mother that is a doctrine. He asked her if she believed that when Jesus died on the cross he did so to save us from our sin. She said that she did, He said, " Mother that is a doctrine too!"

Come on, ladies and gentlemen, when a person comes to us and seems to be attacking the doctrines we should kindly tell them to back off, if you know what I mean.

When you hear in our Adventist circles someone say that we ought not to emphasis the doctrines, what they very well could be trying to say is that we should stop teaching those things which make us Adventist. There is a mind set out there, which is trying consciously or unconsciously to emasculate our distinctive doctrines and throw us back into the evangelical basket with the other isms.

I don't know if you are aware of it or not my friends, but there are forces out their that would give anything to do away the Adventist doctrine of the Investigative Judgment and to completely discredit the Spirit of Prophecy.

I can see how this would be because it is precisely the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment and the Spirit of Prophecy that were given to this church to be shared with the world that would be what God would use to prepare a living generation of faithful to be translated alive without seeing death. You may disagree with me with all your heart but the gospel that is being preached by most churches does not and I repeat does not prepare you to be translated without seeing death. It will get you to heaven provided that you die in the meantime, but definitely it will not get you through the close of probation and the time of trouble.

Is it any wonder then that there would not only be forces on the outside that would seek to emasculate our message but forces on the inside as well?

Make no mistake, my friends, but the message that God gave to that small group of Methodists, Baptists and the others over 160 years ago, is a message that is calculated to not only save the lost but to keep God's children who are in all the denominations from losing their salvation when the great deception comes upon the world, which by the way is getting well under way at this time.

Contrary to popular belief, the Seventh-day Adventist church is not a sheep-stealing church but rather a sheep-saving church!

We seem to be living in a time in which truth is out and tolerance is in. In the past, intolerance meant bigotry or prejudice. That is judging someone or excluding them because of the color of their skin or their country of origin. It also usually implied a desire to use force to oppose other points of view.

Intolerance in the old sense, is offensive to most of us. Bible believing Christians have suffered bitterly from intolerance in the past and continue to be at the present time in some places. Unfortunately there were times when even Bible-believing Christians have persecuted others.

But what I am leading up to is not the matter of persecution per se, rather than to point out that the word "intolerance" has recently come to mean simply disagreeing with anyone else's beliefs. To disagree with someone is now off limits. It is seen as being arrogant.

And so "intolerance" is no longer tolerated. Toleration is now the rule of thumb. I must say, however, that there is one exception to that rule.

As strange as it may seem the modern example will grant one exception to intolerance and that is for some reason it is ok to question and even denounce the religious views that have been labeled as fundamentalism or even as conservative.

Today, when people refer to fundamentalists and conservatives they no longer just mean religious extremists, like the Shiites waging holy war against the West. Today a fundamentalist and in our circles a conservative is anyone who claims to know truth or who charges another religion as being in error.

The current belief in the world today is that truth is what a person believes. Therefore when we challenge the truth claims of another persons religion, or religious point of view, we are seen as devaluing the person who is the source of his or her own truth. It is seen then, that when we reject the content of belief that a person may have, we are in fact rejecting the person.

We have seen this happen so many times. We begin to discuss truth and error. As soon as someone points out the error in the thinking of the other person, someone will often say "that is judging", and the Bible tells us not to judge each other and besides Jesus accepts us just the way that we are.

It has gotten to the point in some places that we can't discuss the truth anymore. To do so is quickly pointed out as being an attack on the other person and voila, the search for truth is aborted.

The early church did not teach that anything and everything was true, neither did the Reformation fathers. Neither Paul nor the Reformers believed that truth was whatever a person believed. On the contrary, they lived and died for a single truth and that truth was the Word of God.

Those who believe that the Bible is a revelation of the Truth must rise up and reject the view that would seem to teach that anything and everything is true just as long as a person sees it that way and their heart is right.

Come on now. If something is true, we cannot believe that its opposite can be true at the same time, regardless of what a person believes. Unfortunately the modern mind set in this respect is not against religion. It is only against religious teaching that holds that Truth is found only in the Word of God. But let us never forget, friends, that God calls us to reason, the invitation is "Come let us reason together".

The concept out there that Truth is how you see it or interpret it is ridiculous and cannot be true any more than a person can say that one is the same as one million.

We need to be aware that the modern thinking has lead to absurd conclusions. You must also have heard by now that the new age consciousness is an effort to affirm the good parts of all religions. New age philosophy believes that we are the ultimate deciders of what is true. It is no surprise then that they have come to the conclusion that we are all gods. And this should come as no surprise either because the center of the emotional focus for the generation of the beginning of the 21st Century is self, is self, is self!

As a result of our rejection of The Absolute truth and our turning inward to find ultimate truth much of what we call our worship of God is more likely to be only a worship of self.

In this age, though some would argue to the contrary, God tends not to be the center of our worship, rather we are the center. When this is the case, authentic worship ends up being self-worship and self-empowerment. The self also becomes the integration point for spiritual truth. Another words, It is true for me because I believe it. And so organized religion with its creeds and statements of faith are out and vague, individualistic spirituality is in.

There is an attack being made these days too on "Religion". "Spirituality" is preferred over religion. You may have even heard a person say, "I am not religious, I am spiritual."

The word "Religion" refers to formal religious doctrines and institutions. The word "Spirituality" exists primarily for the purposes of lets say "recovery". A personal kind of "spirituality" then becomes a means to an end and this end may well be to accomplish what the person themselves wants or needs. "Religion" tends to be about us, while "spirituality" can be about "me". This is why a person can say that

they are spiritual and quit coming to church. They say that they have rejected religion in favor of spirituality. Don't forget, my friends, Jesus and the apostles established a religion that it is called Christianity. What I am saying is that if we made a mistake in the past of being religious and not spiritual, we could make another mistake that is just as bad and that would be to throw out religion in favor of being spiritual.

I mentioned that the new agers are trying to unite all religions. We should not be surprised that this philosophy might leak into the church. I don't need to tell you that there is a movement out there to unite the Christian churches. You have already been exposed to it. There is the call to put away our differences and to unite on the essentials.

Bill McCartney, the founder of the Promise Keepers, once said, "So what if you are a Methodist or a Baptist or a Catholic. Cut them a little slack. You believe in Jesus don't you?" So they are telling us to forget our doctrinal differences and agree on the essentials.

They call on us to agree on the essentials? This has a confusing effect on the multitudes. There are people who say that if we all agree on the cross that is all that matters. These same people say that our doctrinal differences must be put aside. Many believe that doctrines are not important. Is it possible to disagree on the doctrines and agree on the essentials?

I am convinced that if we differ on the details it will be very difficult to agree on the essentials. I believe this because the Truth, when rightly understood, demands certain conclusions as to the details.

Let me explain what I mean. This may shock you. A person who says that they believe in the cross like I do, yet goes on to say that they believe in once saved always saved, I'm sorry, but that person doesn't believe in the cross like I do.

A person who says that they believe in the cross like I do and goes on to say that they believe that keeping the Ten Commandments is an option, I'm sorry, but they don't believe in the cross like I do.

Please excuse me for what I am about to say. But I think that you must be aware by now that there seems to be an increasing number of Christian science teachers and even theologians who no longer believe that the earth was created in seven days. Some of these same people will tell you that it makes no difference. The important thing is that we believe that Jesus died to save us.

I'm sorry. The cross has no importance unless you believe that Jesus create the world in six days. If God did not create the earth in six days and rest the seventh day, and saw that all that he had made was very good, then the whole problem of sin is out the window.

You had might as well put the Bible through your office shredding machine as to blaspheme the Word. Are we lamenting the sad situation that some who are more educated than we are, are systematically dismembering the Word of God! Have we been sitting too long? It is time that we stood up and took up the Word of God and with the strength of our convictions say, enough is enough!

I do not think it is ethical for me to come into your house and systematical tear it up, by the same token I don't think it is ethical for a person to come into an Adventist center of learning and say that God did not

create the world in seven days. God gives them the freedom to believe that if they wish, but we do not have the right to teach anything that conflicts with what God has said! What God hath joined together let no man put asunder!

Should we be surprised? Men of God prophesied of our day when they said that that day would come when and I read from **Isaiah 59:4 "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity."** And again in **Isaiah 59:14 and 15, " 14. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." 15. "Yea, truth faileth; and he[that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment."**

And listen to these texts: **Isaiah 61:8 "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."** This text is saying that if you are not into truth you can't do business with God. Amen?

Isaiah 65:16 says "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes."

Well it could be said of our generation **Jeremiah 7:28 "But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth."**

And again in **Jeremiah 9:3 "And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord."**

Listen brothers, listen sisters, we are in the final hours. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The scripture is unequivocal when it says in **2 Thessalonians 2:8-12: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."**

Are we besides ourselves these days by the attitudes that are manifesting themselves all around us? I know what some people say. They say, "Don't worry, God is in control". I have no problem with that. He is indeed in control. Truth will in the end triumph, but I don't need to remind you that unless we are very careful we may not triumph with it.

What are we going to do? When will this all stop? The scripture is clear. Our war is not to be against each other. **Ephesians 6:12** says "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

So then when we seem to disagree with each other, contrary to popular belief we are not putting each other down. A person who puts forth a philosophy and then cries foul when someone disagrees is not doing right.

In matters of faith and morals, my friends, this must not be. We are called on to contend for the faith, we are called upon to search the scriptures. **Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."**

There is something out there these days that is suggesting that belief is all-important but that somehow the content of belief is unimportant or irrelevant. There is a mind set that suggests that we are the source of truth rather than the discoverers of truth.

The following story illustrates so well what is going on in so many places:

There was a rural area that had a lot of barns. These were not just any barns. These barns had targets painted on them. The interesting thing was that there was a bullet hole in the bulls-eye of all of the targets.

All the neighbors knew that this had to be some pretty good shootin'. They also knew who it had to be. It had to be Zeek. Zeek's fame went far and wide as the best sharp shooter in the valley. One day someone was congratulating him and asking him how he managed to hit the bulls-eye every time.

"It ain't hard," he said. "I jus shoot the barn and then I paint a circle around the bullet hole!"

Do I need to explain that one? What is happening to truth is not hard to see! We just shoot the barn and then paint a circle around the bullet hole.

When are we going to understand? How much and how long will we have to suffer? Jesus prayed for us. He prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth, Thy Word is Truth." God's Word is the bulls-eye. It was there before we got here and indeed it will stand for ever and ever.

Those of us who have been privileged to live our lives in this country have been blessed.

I thank God for the freedom that we have enjoyed. I don't need to tell you though that freedom is an effect and not a cause. In this country we have long enjoyed freedom. But if freedom is going to endure it must be based on truth. Freedom that is not based on truth will not last. It will rather lead to a loss of freedom.

That means that a person could use freedom to actually promote slavery and, of course, needless to say, when the people buy into slavery they at once lose their freedom.

This is what is going on in our present culture. In the United States the founding Fathers designed a country built on the principles of truth. As a result there was freedom. There is no doubt that they built a country based on Christian principles. And the same could basically be said for Canada. Obviously, even though a country was founded on Christian principles was everyone in the country a Christian?

What is happening now is that the forces of evil in our present society are doing exactly what Lucifer did in heaven. Lucifer used freedom based on truth to promote lies and as a result lost his freedom.

There are forces of evil in our society today who are using the freedom that we have in this country that was based on truth to promote and practice evil. I don't need to tell you that the end result will be the loss of freedom.

We know that there will be laws that will take away our religious freedom one day in the future but the forces of evil will have caused us to lose our freedom to live and enjoy long before the Sunday law. In fact, they already have. Our children are in danger. Drugs are destroying the culture and our lives are being more and more filled with fear. Perversions are destroying families and making a commitment to God impossible.

Do you know where this is leading? While the forces of evil are using freedom to destroy our freedom, our current concept of what is truth will provide the death-blow to what little freedom is left.

As an example, what is the difference between the Pope saying that he is infallible, which is publicly verified by the Catholic Church, and a person saying that something is right if it seems right? Like the person who says that they don't believe it is right to live with a girl before they get married and the friend replies, "Well if you think it is wrong, it would be wrong for you!"

Oh, my friends, can't you see the danger that we have put ourselves in? Can't you see that when freedom is not based on truth it will be used by the forces of evil to actually destroy?

Have you thought that the greatest enemy we have, is the growing refusal to accept the truth of the Word of God as the guide for our own lives, and our persistence that we should be free to interpret truth as we have decided that it should be?

The handwriting is on the wall. The forces of evil are using freedom to destroy our freedom and to institute in the place of the truth, lies. We try to hold it back, but it will happen.

What difference will it make when the persecution comes if we will have already thrown in the towel of truth, because we thought we didn't want to be religious but spiritual and in effect every person became a law unto themselves?

We must reject the concept that anything or everything is true. We must categorically reject the concept that would try to abort our attempts to discover and evaluate claims of truth by saying that when we do we are not being respectful of someone or we are putting someone down.

Friends, there is no such thing as new truth to God. Truth is eternal because God is the truth and he is from everlasting to everlasting. However, there is such a thing as new discovery of eternal truth!

The current attitude against eternal truth and the current tendency to create truth out of thin air or to measure the validity of truth by our own ignorance is a dead-end street and will result in disappointment and finally in eternal loss.

I plead with you don't fight against truth. Don't hang around in environments that are trying to put it down or to wash it out.

There is a beautiful text that fits in right here. It can be a comfort to us. It can bring us comfort at a time of distress. It can bring us peace when all around things seem to be tumbling down.

Jeremiah 15:16 , "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

I want to close this by reading some very important counsel from the writings of E.G. White:

"We are warned that heresy of every kind will be brought in among the people of God in these last days. One heresy leads to many other heresies in the explanation of the Word of God and in departing from the Lord's designs and Plans". MR 760

Listen to this: "God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies, will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His Word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures, and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold. God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the Word of God so that when the testing time shall come they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is within them with meekness and fear." 5T 707.

"Satan has sown plentifully the seed of dangerous heresies that will produce a harvest of corruption and will be as tares among the wheat. He is tilling the hearts and minds of men with fables, and causing them to turn away their ears from hearing the truth." Youth's Instructor 10-11, 1894.

"Heresies are now arising among the people of God, and they will continue to arise. As we near the end of time, falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error. Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth". 7 MR. 359

Folks, may we stand firm unto the end and proclaim a "Thus Saith the Lord". Let the light shine from God's throne - The Eternal Flame - The Eternal Truth...Praise the Lord - The Truth Is Not Dead!