

10-3-21 World Communion Sunday

Sermon: Who Do You Trust?

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-4, 2: 5-12, CTW PS 26

Hymns: 152, 689, 748

Theme: Over the years I've learned that I've got to be careful who I trust and listen to. I've found that the experts can even be wrong! So if I can't even be sure of the experts... who can I listen to that I can always trust?

I. Introduction: Fake News!

A. Have you ever looked at what is on the stands at the supermarket checkout? These are what are known as "tabloid magazines." As you can tell from the headlines, these are not reliable news sources. In fact, they are the original fake news outlets!

Now, would you expect me to go out buy these magazines? Of course not. Most if not all the material inside their pages are sensationalist stories which are entirely made up. I can't trust them, and so I don't want to build my thinking around what they tell me. I don't want them influencing how I think.

In fact, there are many resources that I've got to be careful about. I once read that Abraham Lincoln had warned "Don't believe everything you read on the internet." Hahaha

And over my lifetime I've found I can't trust everything a politician tells me, and I can't always trust everything a salesman tells me.

But oddly enough, over the years I've learned to even question things that experts tell me: Theologians, Ph.Ds., and even some scientists. It's not that I believe these people are necessarily lying to me, but I've **noticed that even these people can have biases** they don't realize they have.

Or they may have built their thinking around false information that they believed they could trust.

B. But if that's true – that we can't always trust even the experts - who can we trust? Who should we listen to?

Well John 16:13, and also the Hebrews passage today remind us that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all things true.

In the Gospel story of the Transfiguration, on the mountain they were reminded by God: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. LISTEN TO HIM!" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." Matthew 17:2-8.

Jesus is the one we should look to. He's the one we should listen to because He is the truth of God.

John 1:17 says "For the law was given through Moses; grace and TRUTH came through Jesus Christ."

And remember the time in John 14:6 when Jesus said "I AM the way, the TRUTH and the life..."

So, if I want TRUTH in my life, I've got to start with Jesus. We can't have REAL TRUTH in our lives... if we don't have Jesus....

But what truth can Jesus give us that is superior to anything the world can give? Well, if you look at this text today you will find truths that the world can't give to us and often doesn't understand.

II. And the first truth is this: Jesus shows us WHO God really is. Hebrews 1:3 says "(Jesus) is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature..."

A. In essence, when you've seen Jesus you've seen God because Jesus IS God. In fact, that is the core of who we are. If you can't accept the fact that Jesus is God, you can't be a Christian. That's what Jesus meant when He declared "I am the way, the truth and the life. NO ONE COMES UNTO THE FATHER except through me."

Now, the rest of the world doesn't agree with that (that Jesus is the only God). They look at all the other world religions and say: "You can't be serious. You can't say possibly say there aren't any other gods. How arrogant and self-righteous can you be?" They

often view us with contempt and mock the very idea of Jesus being the only God.

Back in the 1800s there was a famous poem called "The Blind Men and The Elephant" (by John Godfrey Saxe). You remember that in the poem, several blind men touch different parts of the elephant and declare what it is based on what part they touch

The moral of the poem is that everybody who tells you that they know what God is like is partly right... but they are COMPLETELY wrong as to the whole picture because no one has seen God.

If the blind men could just see the elephant then they would know what it was like. Just as, if you could SEE GOD then you'd know what HE is like!

B. Well, Jesus said: 'Whoever has SEEN me has SEEN the Father'" (John 14:9). And John 1:14 "(God) became flesh and dwelt amongst us."

If you want to see what God is like... look at Jesus. Everything Jesus DID in the Gospels were the Works of God. Everything Jesus SAID were the Words of God.

Every act of mercy, and kindness, and love that Jesus showed: that was God in the flesh showing us how much God cares for us. So, when you look to Jesus, and you listen to Jesus, you've seen and heard God.

All the other world religions will tell you what they think God is like, but in Jesus - God became flesh so we could actually see what God was like. And that's the first truth Jesus revealed - He showed us what God was like.

III. Now, the 2nd truth was this: Jesus showed us what WE are like.

A. I saw a meme on the internet recently that said this: "Everyone makes mistakes in life, but that doesn't mean they have to pay for them the rest of their life. Sometimes GOOD PEOPLE make bad choices. It DOESN'T MEAN THEY ARE BAD, it means they are human."

Now I understand what the meme was trying to say. But when I read that...red flags went up all over the place because essentially

it was saying – there are GOOD people, and there are BAD people. BAD people do BAD things because that’s what they are good at... being bad. But GOOD people do GOOD things because that’s what they are good at...being GOOD.

The trend in society today would say that “occasionally GOOD PEOPLE do BAD stuff, but that doesn’t mean they’re BAD people - **it just means they made a mistake.**”

I’m sorry, that’s not the way it works. Romans 3 says “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” That mean’s you’ve sinned, I’ve sinned, every Sunday School teacher and other church leaders have ALL sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

In our text today we’re told “After making PURIFICATION for sins, (Jesus) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” **Hebrews 1:3**. Jesus came to purify us from our sins – to purify ALL OF US of ALL OF OUR SINS!

That’s why, when Jesus came to earth, He spent all His time with a particular kind of people. Who did Jesus spend all His time with? With the bad people – the sinners, the prostitutes, and the tax collectors. Why? Because He came “to seek and to save what was lost.” **Luke 19:10**

AND that’s a repeated theme in Scripture ... we’ve all been bad people. **Ephesians 2:3** says “WE ALL once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

B. We’ve ALL sinned! We’ve ALL fallen short of the glory of God. And each of us knows that’s true. Because every one of us has felt the need for their sins to be removed, cleansed, purified.

ILLUS: Have you ever been off by yourself, and suddenly you remember something you’ve done in the past that you are ashamed of and a wave of shame and regret regarding that act sweeps over you? Me too.

Warren Wiersbe, a clergyman and prolific writer of the faith, once said: "Many people are controlled by past sins, past regrets, and past failures".

I once saw a meme that said "The world drinks to forget. The Christian drinks to remember." Every time when we take communion, it's the center of our worship. Today the whole Christian world should be at the table more often!

We all need to remember that Jesus died for us to purify us from our sins. His body was broken and His blood was shed to forgive us of our past.

But those in the world who do not have Christ do not have that advantage. When those in the world struggle with their past – with their sins, regrets, and failure - they suffer from guilt and shame and self-hatred **that never seems to go away.**

They can't remove the past, so they seek to cover it by drinking it into oblivion. They'll turn to alcohol, or drugs, or sex or entertainment. ANYTHING to avoid being alone with the badness they feel inside.

Someone once wrote a poem about that: "I wish that there were some wonderful place called the land of Beginning Again, Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches, and all of our poor selfish grief Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door and never put on again." (Louisa Fletcher)

They WISHED for a place called the land of beginning again. But we don't have to WISH for that, because we live there. When Jesus died on the cross He made it so we could live in the land of beginning again. And that's the beauty of truth Jesus told us about ourselves. In voluntarily dying for our sins, Jesus showed us that He felt we were worth dying for. He revealed in that action that you and I were so valuable to God and God loved you so much that "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

IV. Conclusion: And so Jesus came to die, be buried and rise from the grave to remove all our sins, shame and guilt, and to offer us the land of "beginning again."

And that's what the world-wide communion service today should be all about. Romans 6:4-5 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might WALK IN NEWNESS of life."

We come to the table from whatever place and situation we are in, to be refreshed again in the Spirit and be resolved to go forward, not backward!

INVITATION: Let us come to the table once again to be revived and refreshed in Him as only Christ can enable us to do so. LET US PRAY...