

## TRUTH – SESSION 1

(Transcript draft)

We want to begin pursuing a fairly thorough, biblically based understanding of the phenomenon of truth. I can't tell you exactly when it occurred, but within the past year to year and a half it occurred to me that I really didn't have a good handle on where all the aspects of truth actually come from or how it how actually works.

Both physical and social sciences – pretty much any science – at least believes in itself (its own veracity) among its practitioners. It believes that it is in pursuit of things that are real and often calls that truth. It isn't always what it calls it, but it often calls it truth. But it occurred to me also that people have very different opinions about what truth is.

It looks like most people want to be believed if they tell you a thing. Ordinarily they hope that you will believe it. They don't have to know themselves that what they told you is true. But they want you to believe it as though it were. But it is human nature, to want to be believed. It adds to us an element of reality in the sense that we're known, we're being recognized, in a sense, when someone believes us. We become related to thoughts that this person will have about what is true and what is not true in the world. We often know we're lying. But we're hoping that that won't be found out, at least not too quickly or too easily. And that really is a pretty commonly occurring human phenomenon. Even within the body of Christ it often occurs that the testimony that folks give to other folks isn't exactly necessarily truth. It's what they want the Truth to be, wish the Truth to be, or hope that you will believe to be the Truth, for their sake (as they see it).

Those of you who have done Spiritual or other kinds of counseling know from experience that many times you will be dealing with someone who tells you a version of the truth that suits them. They know that they're not actually telling you the truth, but they want to get an answer, or they want to get a response, or something that suits them rather than necessarily being appropriate to the situation. It comes in quite a variety – this project of attempting to convince another person of what the truth is in an effort to get something from them.

It turns out that God actually always knows the Truth. So, If you get something from me based on what's not actually the Truth, He's not bound by that – ordinarily. He's not bound by the counsel you might get from me, which gives you maybe permission to proceed in a certain way or undertake a certain action or whatever the case might be. But He's not

bound by that, per se. We need to know that He is not bound by what we want the Truth to be. In fact, the Truth is in him.

Another thing that began to occur early in that phase of examining truth, more closely than I had previously done anyway, was that I figured out, or I found out, or the Spirit showed me, however I may view the thing, that the Truth doesn't exist inside the creation per se.

The Truth exists in the eternal. Because it exists in the eternal, it is with the unchanging and unchangeable eternal God. That's where it is. Now, we have access to it and we're going to talk much about the access that we have to Truth as, as today's particular, more in-focus target.

Have you ever wanted to know what the Truth is? I have a relationship with God the Father. I assume you do as well. That relationship gives certain rights to each of us. It provides certain privileges to us in a sense. And you could assume that among those is the certainty of having access to the truth. And that's a good thing.

Who was there to verify that for us? Who's going to verify that the access to the Truth that you believe you have is actually access to the Truth. Because of the tremendous number of ways we use the word truth, we may be very uncertain about our access.

And so, these things began to percolate in me, in the context of another kind of project that I was working on, which had to do with the eternal attributes of God. Because God is who He is, there are eternal attributes that are His. The glory of God He may choose to share in small portions by bestowing it on you. But it's always His and it will return to Him whenever He chooses. In fact, it never actually leaves Him. He just imbues you temporarily with some sort of glory from time to time as He chooses. In terms of the research that I've been doing in the book of Revelation, scripture speaks to a number of these things. (See Revelation 5)

You might have thought, as I have long thought, that In Revelation 4, and more particularly in Revelation 5, that these so-called "songs of praise" were just spontaneous outbursts that occurred in the throne room in the vision that John had. But if you pay attention to them, if you really look at the things that are said: Worthy is the lamb for this reason. Worthy is the one who sits on the throne and the lamb. Very specific things follow these acclamations. And those things are attributes or properties, or even possessions of the eternal.

We can't give God glory actually. What we can do is testify to the glory that we see. He doesn't expect us to gin up some glory and provide it to Him. He's not interested in your ideas or my ideas about what His glory might be like. He doesn't need that. Any effort that we make to give to Him glory or honor or power or majesty or any of those other attributes is obviously going to be deficient. He is already fully replete with those things. And in fact,

they have their very being in Him and not in anything that you and I can conjure up. We can't put together a way of praising Him that is sufficiently satisfactory given the reasons for which we should praise Him. So, we offer Him praise, we acknowledge his glory, we acknowledge His majesty. We acknowledge these things, but the way it's recorded for us, in the speech of the Bible is "worthy is the lamb" for this reason, "all glory and honor and power to the Lord." These statements obviously are beyond our capabilities, or beyond our capacities.

What He does, through the power of His Spirit, is that He imbues us from time to time, hopefully, at least occasionally, with an overwhelming sense of (one or more of) these things. We have those moments when we're simply closer to something in the Father than we are at other times. It's not that He has put more of it in our path, it's that we're simply in a position, due to whatever is going on in His will, that we experience the thing more fully than we would ordinarily.

Some time ago, nearly 30 years, I said to a man I was having a conversation with "well, what do you think?" We had been ministering together, and I said, "what do you think is my gifting?" It was a term we used a lot in those days cause everybody wanted to know a bunch of stuff they don't really have to know but wanted to know it anyway. And he said to me, "I don't want to talk about your gifting. Let's talk about your calling." Okay, well, that's fine. Let's talk about my calling. And he said, "Your calling is to be a defender of the Truth." At the time, when he said that, I didn't have any idea what he meant. How does one "defend" the truth? I know now, having lived through a bunch of years since that occurred and having been on the trajectories that I've been on with the Lord, that it was referring to an attitude, a kind of position that I'm supposed to have with respect to how I am placed relative to the Lord God Himself. And more, even more particularly relative to the Christ.

Well, now that's more sobering. But it also has to do with the kind of decision on my part to bore in now and to begin to really pursue Truth in a way that I had not previously done. I can't tell God what is true. But he knows what is true without me telling Him. Now, there's a lot of things over the years that I have felt I needed to tell him so He could understand them. You know, and I'm sure that I'm the only one that's ever tried to straighten God out and make sure His understanding was okay. But In spite of those things, it was apparent to me that I don't know everything about the Truth. It's also apparent to me that it's one of the characteristics of human beings, that even for those things that we think we know, and we think we understand and maybe have a good perception of them, it still is imperfect. And even more particularly those things that exist primarily in the eternal. If you haven't noticed, this isn't the eternal that we're currently living in. This is the creation in which we're currently living. And this creation, while it is in the broader context within the eternal, it has

characteristics about it that make it imperfect. It is not perfectly the eternal that's yet to come. And it will come, but it's not perfected yet in the creation, nor is it perfected yet in me, and there's at least one or two others among you, in whom it is not yet perfected. And we'll just leave that right there. I'm not asking for shows of hands or any such thing as that. And if you send a nasty note, I'll ignore it. We're not perfect.

So, our perceptions of things are likely to be less than fully accurate. In the context of the imperfections that we actually have worked out for ourselves over the years of our lives, the mistakes that we've made, the lies that we've been told, the misperceptions that we've had, the lies we've told ourselves and so forth God doesn't need us to "certify" anything,

That's where I want to start. God doesn't need us to certify anything relative to the Truth. In Isaiah, He Himself, with Isaiah's voice, in Isaiah 45:19, He says, "I've not spoken in secret from somewhere in a land of darkness. I have not said to Jacob's descendants, seek me in vain. I, the Lord, speak the Truth. I declare what's right." That's the ultimate testimony. There can be no stronger testimony given.

About the relationship between the Lord God Almighty and the Truth: He simply speaks the Truth. When He speaks, it's the Truth. We don't hear Him audibly a lot. Some folks periodically have audible experiences and, you know, I don't know whether I wish I would have an audible experience with God or not. I'm unclear in my own mind whether I find that desirable. If you have then, you know, I'm happy for you. I think that's wonderful. I have not. My own hearing has been of another kind. The imperfection in which we live and the imperfection that we ourselves exhibit make it unlikely that anybody would really want to take our testimony for what the Truth is. And so, He didn't convene some sort of a group. He didn't put together a body of elders or a Sanhedrin or any such thing. He simply said, "I the Lord speak the Truth."

So, when I speak, it's the Truth. He doesn't say He does it some of the time. He said, "I, the Lord, speak the Truth." When I speak, it's the Truth. Now, when He speaks and it's the Truth, sometimes I say: "well, Lord, I'd like a different opinion on that. Let me help you get that modified real quick." Y'all ever do that? Yeah. It's been done. Everybody's done it at least once, to try it out if nothing else. I don't know how many runs at that we get before it quits being a trial, but we don't necessarily speak the Truth, but He does. And so, we know that the Truth is The Truth because He said it was. And there can't be a higher authority with respect to what the Truth is than the one who establishes what the Truth is.

There're some wonderful things about God being who He is. Among those are that He's got no particular reason to change. He's got no particular reason to be pushed around. He's got no particular reason to be anything other than Himself. And He certainly doesn't have to be

different than Himself, just to satisfy me or you. He doesn't have to do that. He speaks the Truth. So, it's that, it's from that place then that I want us to start.

Now, to begin this series of studies, I'm going to do a little bit of kind of technical stuff for a minute and then we're going to spend the rest of our time today in the Gospel of John. "Truth" is a word that occurs often there, and I'm going to give you statistics from the New International Version (NIV). It's not even the version that I ordinarily read, but there's so much more lexical material available to us on the NIV than there is on other, to me, more useful versions of the Bible like the English Standard Version, New American Standard. These just don't have the amount of lexical material available. But there's not that much difference between one and the other, generally speaking. So let me give you very quickly some statistical things coming out of the biblical material.

And on 137 occasions in scripture, some word or the other, either in Hebrew or in the Greek, is translated "truth". Not true or truthfulness, or any of those kind of things, just Truth itself. Of the things that we need to know about, 35 of those times are in the Old Testament, 102 in the new. 102 times in the New Testament, something is translated truth. Of the 102 instances of something being translated truth. I'll give you the number here in a moment, out of 102, 90 of them are the one word *aletheia*. Which is the one most people typically know if they know any of the Greek words. It is the most common. *Aletheia* occurs itself 109 times, but 90 of those times it is translated truth 90/109. That's a big percentage. So, it's a pretty pure concept.

There's not a lot of semantic ambiguity about what Truth is. There are lots of other terms that have all kinds of different meanings, but this one seems to be pretty pure, and in fact, most of the other ways that *aletheia* is translated in the New Testament in the NIV are similar to truth. One, for example, is right, rightly, correct. *Mysterion* is translated "truth" in one place, a mystery is translated as truth in one particular instance. Interestingly enough, though, it's again, not the only word translated into truth. In fact, in 1 Timothy 4:6, Paul uses the word *logos* (typically means "word") but it gets translated "truth" in the NIV.

In the Old Testament, there are not as many occurrences to begin with. And they tend to be, almost all of them, 22 out of 35 are the one Hebrew word *emet*. Somebody whose name is Emmett, it's supposed to be truthful. I mean that's where the name Emmett comes from, typically it's from this Hebrew reference or, or maybe mom just liked it and named her little boy Emmett. I don't know. I guess it could happen that way as well. But it's a fairly robust term. It's what I'm talking about linguistically, it's a fairly robust term, both in New and Old Testament.

Now, in the book of John, which we're going to spend our time in for the rest of our time today, John, in his gospel and in his three epistles uses truth 42 times. 41% of the total usage of truth in the New Testament is in John's Gospel and epistles; 43% in sources that Paul wrote. So, between those two fellas 85% of the time, when truth shows up in the New Testament scripture, it's either John or Paul writing about it. So, again, it's good for us to look at John. Paul had a lot more different things he was attempting to do in his writings. And an interesting thing about John is you'll often hear John referred to as the apostle of love. And yet, other than Paul, he mentions truth more than any other writer in the New Testament. Other than Paul, between the two of them, each one of them speaks of truth more than everybody else put together in all the other gospels and so forth. And the word truth doesn't even occur in Revelation. We will probably, at some point, get to the whys and wherefores that relate to that.

Now, when we speak of truth, we're speaking of something that stands in contrast to lies and fibs, and falsifications, and falsehoods, and false and deceptions and misleading things and conspiracies, ruses, subterfuges. And all the other things we'd like to do when we don't want to deal with the facts, so to speak. Shades of meaning, we love shades of meaning in the English. Yeah. Those are lies. We'll try to be very clear and very blunt with these things, and then you can go away and use them how you want to. But we will be looking at that contrast.

Now, I'll go through several passages in the book of John, beginning in John 1, and make some comments and some observations about these to get us started. John 1 is fascinating, the first part anyway, of John 1 is fascinating to me, because it appears to be so deliberately written to stand in the presence of Genesis 1. *En arche* – in the beginning. *B'resheet* – in the beginning. "In the beginning," these things. And in the writing of Genesis, we believe, there's a really good chance of it being a dictation that God provided to explain what He did, because nobody else was there to record it. So, there wasn't somebody sitting there watching God create. In the beginning, God did this and God did that, God did the other. So obviously, the testimony was provided at a later point in time, and it wasn't made up. It was provided. The mechanism of that providence is beyond me. It's not even all that important to me. God has already said that when He speaks, He speaks Truth. I'm okay, I'm fine there. Now, then we get into all those weird arguments about what the days were like and all that kind of stuff, and, well, go ahead, but in terms of what I'm attempting to accomplish here, this is a strong contrast because here in John, John says *en arche* (in the beginning) was the Word. In the beginning God created and in the beginning was the Word.

You stand those two side to side, and they don't contradict each other at all. They just give us two different ways of seeing the most fundamental things that have to do with the

“coming into being.” If God came into being, He did so because He chose to do so, and He hasn't shared that information with us. How about that, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God in the beginning. I didn't create the Word in the beginning. The Word was already with God in the beginning. How about that? Is that not wonderful?

And so, John goes on now, he writes about the Word and he obviously, as you all know, he personalizes the Word (speaks of the Word as a person). The process of personalizing the Word, of course, is to focus on the one whom John knew – physically, in the flesh as being the Word of God. Son of God, but also the Word. So, John's giving us a whole different view in a way of what the front end of this whole enterprise looked like that we became involved with.

But I don't want to spend our time there. I want to go down to verse 14, where John says “the Word”, the one I've been talking about here, the Word that “was with God in the beginning, and He, made everything and nothing was made that He didn't make”, and all of that stuff. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. So, there was a point in time when that one who was with God, became flesh as we are, and in the Greek here, *sarks* (or *sarx*) – flesh, it's refers to soft tissue primarily. And made His dwelling among us. He became as we are then in terms of the life that He was living for a season. And He came and He dwelt among us. He lived with us. (He tabernacled with us.) We've seen this glory, even though we can't define it. The glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. When the Word came from the Father to become flesh, this Word was with the Father in the beginning and was the Son of God. When He came to be in the flesh, He came full of grace and truth. That's an interesting juxtaposition, grace and truth.

“Grace” tends to imply things like mercy and stuff like that to most people. My personal opinion is that the whole idea of grace and mercy being synonyms needs to be scrapped, and we need to start over. Because the word there, the Greek word is *charis*, from which we get the word *charismata*, And that's empowerment. When He got here, He was full of possibly empowerment and truth. Empowerment and truth, the capabilities and truth, He was able, He was full of ability and truth. I'm not going to change the way the world sees grace as being the same thing as mercy. I'm just saying, I think we need to, it's a thing that needs to be done. So, it's out there now. You know, they can do whatever they like with it.

“And John testified concerning him, this is the one I spoke about.” He's obviously speaking of John the Baptist; John was speaking of John the Baptist. “The one I spoke about when I said, He that comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.” Even though John was – in the flesh – six months older than Jesus. Out of his fullness, we have all received grace in place of, or an exchange for grace already given. This is a difficult term in Greek. It's kind of a difficult passage. It might mean grace following grace. It might mean

sort of grace and then (more) grace and then (even more) grace. Paul speaks in one place of going from glory to glory. There's a level of glory in your life, and as you live in the level of glory that the Lord has extended to you in your life, it's possible then at some point in time, He will elevate you to another level of glory. In fact, those are about the great moments of life when you achieve those elevations that can occur. They don't happen all that often. When they do, generally, you know something has changed, and that's a pretty wonderful thing. But it may mean what follows, but the law was given through Moses. The grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Moses came with the law. Grace and truth, empowerment, or mercy and truth came through Jesus Christ.

I think that we need to understand – if nothing else – that the law was in a sense a holding place. It was temporary, was put in place for purposes of being there temporarily until full grace and truth could come into the earth. Now, there's a separate teaching unto itself, a whole separate topic unto itself because the grace was offered to the Israelites in Sinai, and they chose not to accept it, they chose to reject it instead. But again, that takes time to develop, and we certainly can't stop here and pursue those purposes.

And then he (John) goes on to say, “no one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son who is Himself God.” These reckonings are very straightforward in front of us and He is in closest relationship with the Father. That one has made Him (the Father) known to us. Oh no. Now, this *charis* (grace) thing, as I said, which is translated grace, I think, in just about every case. Its relationship to Truth is one I haven't ferreted yet, I suspect (we) probably will as we go through our time in this series of studies. And so there will be some more attention, I'm sure, given to them.

I want to go down now to John chapter 4. Let me make a comment. In the Isaiah passage I started with, God said, “I speak the truth.” Here in John 1, John is establishing that when Jesus came from the Father, He was full of grace and truth. He brought the Truth with him. Now It wasn't that He took the Truth out of eternity, it was that He took the eternal, or He had access to, and He was actually an owner, a possessor of eternal Truth and brought it with Him. He brought eternal Truth with Him, in His being, when He came to be with us. That's going to be important when we consider the pursuit of grace or the pursuit of truth a little bit later.

In John 4:23 Jesus speaking again to the disciples, says, “a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” Well, those are the kinds of worshipers the Father seeks. He's a spirit; God is, and his worshipers must worship in the spirit and in truth. In the spirit and in truth. And there, by the way, it talks about true worshippers there, doesn't say worshippers, it says true worshippers. The Greek root is *alethinos* (true), which is the same (root as) for *aletheia* (truth), which speaks to



what truth is. The true worshiper, the person who's truly a worshiper, is of a similar substance to the Truth which that one occupies or with which that one can be associated. Worship then appears to me to be something that occurs in the presence of the Spirit. If the Spirit is required, the Spirit of God is required, or worship isn't truly worship.

The Spirit of God is sort of the bastion of truth in the worship. He's almost the substance of the Truth in the worship. That's pretty cool. Worship then really isn't worship unless it comes out in such a way that it is in and of the Truth, that it properly portrays the Truth. We can worship. We cannot control Truth, but we can worship as a voluntary act of a human being. There's some evidence also that angels worship, but it's particularly a voluntary act of a human being. We choose to worship. But now Jesus is saying, but true worship happens (in the spirit and Truth). This is going to be maybe a little offensive to some, not all these memorized worship songs. True worship happens out of the Truth. Okay. So, Truth, then is a place in which we find a reason to be in a posture of worship with the Father. Otherwise, it's really praise. There's nothing wrong with praise. Praise is a different thing than worship. Praise doesn't have the same requirements that worship has. Worship requires that the Spirit be present and that it occurs in a manner that has to do with Truth. Praise is more like what we ordinarily do. Let's just say that when we do it, we're being earnest.

So, the Spirit now is for the first time being related to Truth in this particular passage. We're going to see more about that as we go on through John. In John 8:32, Jesus was speaking. He said, "you'll know the Truth and the Truth will set you free." When you know the Truth, then the Truth will set you free. There's not another source of (true) freedom, by the way. There is no source of freedom except the Truth. There may be lots of latitude. We might have political rights and all kinds of things like that that enable us to do this, that or the other. But actual freedom is a thing that comes out of whatever Truth is. At least Jesus said so anyway.

And since He was the presence of Truth in the earth at the time of His life in the flesh with us, then I'm going to take His word for it and say that knowing the Truth enables me to be free. In 8:36, He said, "if the Son," that is Himself, "sets you free, you'll be free indeed." So again, He's relating Himself here in the same context as truth. Okay.

It may not be obvious to everybody, but it's obvious to me that freedom is a thing to be desired. True freedom, not just political latitude. A lot of people when they say freedom, they mean political latitude, the right to do this, or the right to do that, or the right to do the other. Many of the "to do's" that come with the right to do in a political sense are not freedoms. They're awful things. And freedom is never an awful thing. It is invariably a property that is provided to us by the Son of God, according to scripture. You may not like

that, but I believe that's what He says. The Truth will set you free. And He, being the Son, when He sets you free, it's full freedom. It's freedom that doesn't have limitations on it. Let's move on to another passage in chapter 8 of John. He's speaking to the Pharisees and He says, "you belong to your father, the devil. And you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning. Not holding to the Truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, because he's a liar and the father of liars." If you examine this a bit, and, I believe, take it to the Lord, I believe by revelation, you'll find that Satan is incapable of telling the truth. He can prevaricate. He can twist and pervert, but he can't actually tell the Truth.

When he spoke to Eve, what he said to her sounded similar to what she knew. And then the three temptations that he provided to the Christ when He was in the wilderness; he started out by quoting scripture, and then immediately perverting it, in an effort to get Jesus to obey the scripture by doing what he, the Satan wanted Jesus to do. He's a liar. He speaks his native language when he lies. Not only is he a liar and the father of all lies, lying comes from him. It flows out of him. And if you need a lie, he'll provide you with one. You know, he's got plenty of them ready. If you can't concoct one yourself, he'll provide you with one. He is the father of lies.

God can only speak truth. And Satan or the devil can only speak lies. The closest Satan can do is try to deceive us. God doesn't even bother with trying to be close to Satan when He speaks. Our Father makes no effort to present an argument to us that's like something Satan would have us believe. What would be the point in that, so to speak. So, you know, we'll talk about lying and lies and all those things on another occasion, but already, Jesus introduces us to truths related to that here early in the Gospel of John.

In the 14th chapter. He said, "I am the way, the Truth and the life." Jesus said, I am the way, the Truth and the life. He's not a liar. He came in Truth. He came in grace. He is of the Father. Truth is in Him. So, when He says, I'm the Truth, then He means something. Yes. Obviously, for us, that's a little bit difficult because a person being an invisible, untouchable phenomenon is a little weird for our minds to try to wrap around. But we can accept on faith that He is the Truth. "No one comes to the Father except through me," he said, and "if you really know me, you'll know my Father as well. And from now on, you do know Him, and you've seen Him," and He said in another place that, "you've seen Him because you've seen Me." Some of us have actually seen Truth and handled it, and some of us handled and touched Truth and, and ate fish with Him over the campfire and broke bread with Him on different occasions and had a common cup of wine with Him on occasion, and so forth.

This manifestation of eternal Truth; right there, right there in front of their eyes. I can't stress how important it is we understand that what is eternal was right there with those guys. So, I said, they were blessed for having seen how much, how wonderful a blessing it is for those of us who haven't seen, who didn't see. They got to see Him and they were blessed. And He said we are too, because we can, we can believe, we can believe as well as they could. We just didn't get to see it in the flesh, but the eternal reality of it is given to us as it was just as much as it was to them. When this person told me that I was a defender of the Truth, he specifically said, "and the Truth is a person" and referred to this particular passage where Jesus said, I'm the Truth. And the way. There's not another reasonable way to get through things. He's the Truth and life comes out of Him. There's no other way to get to the Father. There just isn't any other way. There's not another way.

People have proposed many things to me over the years. I once knew a man, many, many years ago, who told me that he couldn't be saved, and I asked him why he couldn't be saved. And he said, well, when he was a teenager, his family was in an automobile accident. And one of the things that occurred as a result of the accident was a partial lobotomy was performed, and he was pretty sure his soul must have been in that lobe. And therefore, he had no soul, so it couldn't be saved. He didn't get that from the Father. He made that "truth" up for himself. His way of resisting the gospel. There's just no other way, and Jesus was clarifying that.

He's the Truth, and because He is the Truth, when we know Him, we know the Truth. When we know the Truth, we know the Father. It's all the same thing, in a sense, even though when He was saying this, it was in the flesh in the earth. A little bit later in chapter 14, one of the, to me, one of the great chapters, this section from 14 to 17 or 18 really, a long section of scripture that really blesses me when I read it. Because He's giving the disciples so much. Here on the cusp of laying down the natural life that He had taken up for my benefit. He's trying to give them as much more information as He could possibly give them about that which is to come. In 14:16, He says, and "I'll ask the Father and, and He'll give you another advocate to help you and be with you perpetually forever, the Spirit of Truth. The world can't accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him because He lives with you, and He'll be in you.

Another advocate, another *paracletos*. The Greek here, *paracletos*; I've heard a lot of people, I've heard sermons on the paraclete. People want to call the Holy Spirit the paraclete. Sounds almost like a little bird if you're not listening carefully. The Paracletos. He is the fullness of the one that He was replacing, the one that was to come. The Spirit who was to come was to have all the capabilities of the one who was speaking to them that evening. The Holy Spirit of the living God had the capabilities of the Son of God. Now, that

should have been self-evident to us, but the way we've been taught with respect to the Holy Spirit, it's not necessarily clear to us. We still tend to think of Him as being a junior partner in some manner. Holy Spirit's just, you know, there's the Father and the Son, and then we got the Holy Spirit to help out pick up the extra little pieces of things. But that's not really what it's all about. It's, it's about Who's there.

So, God was speaking the Truth to Isaiah, Jesus was present being the Truth to the disciples, and now He's going to send one, who's going to be in them, even more intimate. The intimacy they had with God the Father was the intimacy with the one who was in eternity. The intimacy they had with the Son was the one who was present in front of them, sharing bread and wine with them and the intimacy with the Spirit was the one who was to be the one within them. He in them because the Truth is in Him, in them.

This was the setup that Jesus was leaving them with. And He'll be here to help us forever, as long as is necessary. There's no end to His help for us. As long as there's the need for His help, then there's no end. He won't get tired. He won't be done with this. He won't get so fed up, He goes off and leaves us. I don't know how He puts up with me sometimes. He won't go off and leave me. He lets me run away and pout sometimes, but He won't go off and leave me.

The world can't accept Him because we can't see Him. I just love it when somebody says, "Well, I can only believe in things I can see. You know, and I wonder, so if this person becomes disabled with respect to sight, what will their life be like? Well, of course, I didn't really mean just physical vision. I meant more than that when I said "what I can see."

I can only believe what can be proved. People will say that to you. I believe things that can be proved. And you say to them, what do you mean by "proved," and all of a sudden, the argument ends. They become angry, because they don't even know what they mean when they say that. It's just something that somebody picked up. Haven't seen the Spirit? Jesus said, the world won't know Him. You'll know Him, He'll be in you, but the world won't know Him, they can't know Him. But you will know Him. Because He will live in you. Now listen, this is a different way of life. You can live life without the presence of the Spirit in you, and you're one kind of thing. You can live life with the presence of the Spirit in you, and you are another kind of thing because the presence of the Truth is in you, and it cannot be in those in whom the presence of the Spirit is not. It can't be. Scripture bears this out. I didn't have to arrive at that conclusion logically, scripture actually bears it out.

And for the first time, the Holy Spirit here is called the Spirit of Truth. Now, there are actually a number of the "spirit of" kinds of statements made about the Holy Spirit, but in a few places, He is called specifically the Spirit of Truth. Now, I want to suggest to you that when

He's called the Spirit of Truth, the writer, the person, the entity who is calling him the Spirit of Truth is calling Him the Spirit of Truth because in the arguments being presented, Truth is the main point. So, if you'll accept that, I call him the Spirit of Truth when I'm talking about Truth, I might call him the Spirit of something else when I'm talking about something else. That's not an unreasonable thing. The Holy Spirit of the Living God is really quite adept at whatever it is He does – whatever the things are that require attention. And in John 15:26, He says, “when the advocate comes, when the *paracletos* comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father.” Calling Him again the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father.

Now look again at the relationship between the whole Godhead and Truth here; The Spirit of Truth coming out *from* the Father bringing *with* Him the Truth, which in this instance is the testimony of Christ in a sense. “When He comes”, when that one comes, “the Spirit of Truth that goes out from the Father,” what He will do is “He will testify about me.” Here I am, Truth in your presence, and He's going to testify about this. Obviously (this is) in the generations to come because Jesus was speaking of the Spirit coming about 50 days later – approximately 50 days later, after He was giving these particular instructions to the disciples. So, there's a brief period of time.

Three times, by the way, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel of John. And His work primarily, apparently, is to bring the Truth, which is the testimony about Christ. In John 16:13 He said, “but when He, that is the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all the Truth. He won't speak on His own. He'll only speak what He hears, and He'll tell you what is yet to come. He won't speak on His own. He'll only speak what He hears.”

Jesus said one time, that He only spoke what He heard the Father saying. There's a complete uniformity, an absolute conformity, and absolute unanimity in the things the Father says, the things the Son said when He was in the flesh among us, and the things the Spirit says subsequently. It's complete unanimity. The Truth is always present. When God speaks as God from on high, He speaks the truth. When Jesus was among us, He only spoke what He heard his Father speaking. And when the Spirit comes, He will only speak that which He hears, and He's called the Spirit of Truth in that particular setting.

So, He's going to guide us into all the Truth. He is the spirit of Truth. Truth exists in the eternal. You're just going to have to believe me on that part. There's not a repository of truth somewhere (anywhere else). Some people tried that out not too long ago. We're going to have a National Bureau of Truth or something like that, and it just kind of fell apart real fast. There's not going to be a repository anywhere in the world of Truth. There are many repositories of knowledge, but there's no repository of (actual) Truth except in the eternal. Not all Truth anyway.

We'll get, in another time, maybe next time, we'll talk about truth, the various perceptions of Truth and get into that in a little bit more detail. He, the Spirit of Truth, is going to guide you and me into all the Truth. Not most of the Truth, not some of the Truth, but all the Truth. He will guide us into all the Truth. Now, He will speak not on His own, but He'll speak only what He hears. But when He does that, we have, of course, to hear Him. He will speak the Truth to us. And He will actually guide us, in a sense, take us to the place where Truth is quintessentially located, even though the Truth is actually everywhere. Everywhere in the eternal anyway, whatever that even means.

So, because Truth is eternal, the sons of God, having access to all truth, actually have the right to an expectation, of knowing the same Truth that God the Father knows, that God the Son knows, and that the Spirit of the living God knows. The expectation of access to all of that Truth. That particular thing blows my mind. I feel like something in me wants to let God have some extra truth reserved off on the side in case He needs it, you know. But that's not what it says here in this passage. It says the Spirit is going to guide us into all the Truth. Wow, that's something else.

In John 17:16, He (Jesus) is speaking to the Father, speaking about the disciples. "They're not of the world even as I'm not of it. Sanctify them by the Truth. And Your word is Truth. As you sent me into the world, I've sent them into the world." Sanctify them, make them be holy in the Truth. Use the Truth that the Spirit will bring to them, who will dwell in them with that Truth to make them holy – to sanctify them.

To sanctify, and then in case we have too many doubts, He goes on and says, "your word is Truth." The *logos* is Truth. It's the Truth. Well, it's either the Truth or it's not. That's true of anything, but it is the Truth in so far as human consumption is possible. It is the Truth, as we can know it in this life anyway. So, we are to be sanctified by the Truth when the Truth is in us. The Father's word is Truth. Jesus Himself is Truth, and He possessed Truth, and He sent the Spirit to bring the Truth to be in us. That's the mechanism.

Finally, I want to close out by one last passage. In John 18 Jesus had been brought before Pilate to be tried. In the trial that the Pharisees needed to give them permission to move forward with getting rid of Jesus, in 18:37, Pilate speaking to Jesus, said, You're a king then. Jesus answered, "you say that I'm a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the Truth. (You say that I'm a king. You and these people say that.) The reason I came into the world was just to testify to the Truth. To just tell you what the Truth is.

Jesus didn't actually answer the (Pilate's) question. He just said, what I came for was to testify to the Truth. And then went on and said, "everyone on the side of Truth listens to me." Then Pilate says, one of the most famous things, "what is truth? retorted Pilate" and with

that he went out. Again, to the Jews gathered there and said, “I don't see any good reason to kill this guy,” but he let them do it anyway. Except, of course, the Roman soldiers carry out the execution, for political purposes, political reasonings.

Now, we've touched on a real big percentage of passages in the New Testament that specifically use the word truth. And we haven't talked at all about its (Truth's) content, or its mechanisms, or any of those kinds of things. We've merely talked about it as this something that is immutable, unchangeable, eternal, a pre-existing property of God's. That seems to be important, so important that He says of Himself, “whenever I speak, it's the truth.” And who says as His Son, “I am the Truth,” and who then also says of the Spirit who was to come at that time, “He will bring all Truth and He will dwell in you.” And in that, then “He will guide you into all the Truth.”

All of those things, (by the way, you're going to hate me for this), all of those things are true. They can't not be true. There are some things I'm learning about God that just blow my mind. It cannot be true that God is not. It just can't. It's not logically possible for there to not be God. It's just not, it's just not possible. People make up all kinds of reasons for there to be no God, but it's not possible. I love it. If you watch science literature, and I watch it a pretty good bit, it's become a hobby of mine. I'm amazed at how often we'll have variations these days in particle physics. subatomic particle physics, variations on the idea of what it was that preexisted before whatever we call the Big Bang happened. So that nonexistent things could become existent things. You won't understand what I just said. You can't. It can't be understood. We cannot understand what there was before there was anything that resulted in there being something. You can't do it. I love that, that kind of thing. It's willful ignorance about the person of God.

Anyway, so, this was, to me, this was like to get us beginning, to get us to a starting place, to begin to talk about what truth is, and to some extent what truth isn't but I'm much more interested in what the Truth is. Most of us are more experienced with what it isn't than we are with what it is. And so that's the nature of the endeavor. In doing that, I hope to work, be able to work with you through a number of related eternal phenomena. Because the eternal phenomena accompany God – even if (when) He hadn't created us – God's glory, His splendor, His Majesty, His Honor, everything about Him that's wonderful, would still be what it is, had He not created. When He created, He decided to share, in some sense, to share what He was and His properties and so forth with that which He created, and to create relationship with that, that was capable of sustaining the knowledge and the presence of these things.

We talk about different perspectives. People talk about “individual truths” and things of that sort these days. Different perspectives. Well, that's your perspective, my perspective is

different from yours. All that's all okay. People can do whatever they wish. They're totally free, totally, they have all the latitude they need to do those things.

But for those in whom is the presence of the Spirit of the living God, the Truth is the real pursuit. He will guide us into all the Truth we can stand today. And tomorrow will bring us to a new place where He can guide us into even more Truth. There's something pretty glorious and marvelous about that. And it's all already in God. All already in God.

I'm going to close pretty quickly now. There's always something else it feels like you want to say, but I'm going to, I'm trying to close here pretty quickly. In the 22nd chapter of the Revelation, John tells us, the same John tells us that when he saw, when he looked for the temple, he discovered that there wasn't a temple in the New Jerusalem that came down out of the new heavens into the new earth. But those of you that want to spend eternity in heaven, it isn't going to work out because our ultimate destination is the new Jerusalem in the new Earth, E A R T H not H E A V E N. But John doesn't, where he thought he would see a temple, he doesn't see a temple. He sees "the presence." But in order to raise, elevate our visions, to the fact that we will be a presence with the One that created this, we had to go through a bunch of stuff. God didn't set out to be mean to us, He set out to get us ready, to be the presence with Him. It takes a lot of getting ready for me. We're not done yet. But He hasn't given up. And I hope I haven't given up yet.