

Session 4: The World's View of Truth - Where Does Truth Come from?

Romans 12:2: Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Objective: To understand that Christians need to make a definite decision to turn away from believing what the world teaches and choose instead to believe what God says is true. Choosing to believe what God says is true can be difficult—we need to stay focused and not become distracted by other influences that would like us to believe untruth.

Focus Truth: The world we grew up in influenced us to look at life in a particular way and to see that way as "true." However, if it doesn't stack up with what God says is true, we need to reject it and bring our beliefs into line with what really is true.

Review last session:

How did you get on learning the Bleeding Woman story? Who did you tell it to? What did they think? Is there anything of more significance to you than it has been before? If this story is true, how does it affect your ongoing relationship with Jesus? What is your next step in stepping out and acting on the belief in your heart?

Optional Warm-ups

1. Talk about (or make a list on a large sheet of paper if you are in a group) how the current culture in the UK tends to look at the following topics:

- Spirituality in general—What place should it have in your life? Is it a positive or a negative? Is it only for the weak or less clever?
- Jesus—Who is he? How is he relevant to our life?
- Where does material provision come from?
- Where can you find comfort when life is hard?
- How do you know what is "right"?

Now look at each topic. How do you personally look at each of these? Do you find yourself slipping into the same kind of thinking as the culture around you? Give an example. Where does ultimate Truth come from? How can you know what it is?

2. Read or tell the following Old Testament passages in the following order:

- Exodus 16:1-12; 17:1-7

- (part of Moses' speech to the Israelites just before he died and they entered the Promised Land) Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 13-19, 8:1-6

Jesus' Temptation

Based on the NLT - The Matthew 4:1-11 account with some added details from Luke 4

Matthew 4:1-2

Then Jesus was led by *God's Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted there by *Satan*. For forty days and forty nights he *didn't eat anything* and became very hungry.

Matthew 4:3-4

During that time *Satan* came and said to him, "If (*Since*) you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:5-7

Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple (*place of worship*), and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! *Because* the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.' "

Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'"

Matthew 4:8-10

Next *Satan* took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give it all to you—*authority over these kingdoms, because they are mine to give anyone I please,*" he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "*Because* the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'"

Matthew 4:11

Then *Satan* went away, *until the next opportunity came*, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Now retell this story in your own words...

Questions for Discussion:

1. *What do you like about this story?*
2. *What bothers you about this story? Is there anything you don't understand?*

- a. *Why 40 days of fasting? What was the purpose? (Some would say it was about Jesus preparing for his ministry, but it also had a deeper symbolic purpose of contrasting Jesus' ability to obey God in the tough situations against Israel's inability to obey God while they were wandering for 40 years in the desert.*
3. *What does this story show us about Jesus?*
 - a. *What did you notice about how Jesus responded? How do you think he was able to respond so well?*
 - b. *What kinds of things was Satan tempting Jesus to do? (Consider reading or telling the stories of these Old Testament passages, or at least reading these Old Testament passages during the week as you meditate on this story.)*
 - i. *Doubt God's provision (Will God really provide for me when I need Him?)—Exodus 16, Deut. 8:1-6, even 8:7-20*
 - ii. *Doubt God's protection (Is the Lord here with us or not?)—Exodus 17:1-7, Deut. 6:16-19*
 - iii. *Doubt his Identity (Who am I really? Am I truly loved by God, no matter the circumstances surrounding me?)—Deut. 6:1-12*
4. *What does this story show us about people? (This question may not be as relevant as question #5 is for this story.)*
5. *Do you see any parallels between the things Jesus was tempted in and the things you are tempted in?*
 - a. *What needs to change in your life in order to be able to turn away from the world's view of Truth and believe and live out what God says is True?*

To Take Away

Read the following passages:

- John 8:31-47—In what ways do you feel “not free”? What does this passage say makes someone free? Do you feel that you know the truths of God? Do you feel that you understand His teachings? If not, stop and pray that He would reveal more of Himself to you as you study His Word.
- John 8:48-59—How do we know that the teachings of Jesus are trustworthy? What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

Learn the Temptation story and practice it with at least one other person. Tell this story to yourself or read it every day and meditate on its truths.