

**Mid-Week Lenten Sermon 2**  
**Modern Day Sins and Tempations**  
**Relative Truth**

**2 Timothy 4:1-8**, 1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction.

**3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**

**5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.** 6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

**John 8:38-47**

38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."

39 "Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. 40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the things your own father does."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. 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, for he **is a liar and the father of lies.** 45 **Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!** 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

**Mid-Week Lenten Sermon 2**  
**Modern Day Sins and Temptations - Relative Truth**

**SKIT 1 (Before the Sermon)**

**SAM:** Hi, Jane.

**JANE:** Hi Sam, last week you told me “I’m not sure there is a God. If there is, I’m not sure of His care.”

**SAM:** I said it. Sometimes I still think that too.

**JANE:** God tells us He is creator and Lord of all, Sam.

**SAM:** You can believe that if you want, You know, everyone can believe whatever they want.

**JANE:** Sam, the Bible tells us there is a God. He’s our Lord, our Creator, our Savior.

**SAM:** Jane, the Bible’s just another book. It can be true for you. I have my own truth. What I THINK, WHAT I EXPERIENCE, WHAT I WANT. That’s what’s true. . . for me at least.

**JANE:** Sam, I feel sorry for you. Just because you don’t believe in God doesn’t make God not true. He is truth. Just because you don’t think God’s Word is true doesn’t make it false. Your truth is falsehood. And if you think it’s truth, you are living in falsehood.

**SAM:** Whatever.

Have you ever been in a conversation like the one in the skit? I have, a number of times. But, I remember one of those conversations specifically. I was talking to another pastor about a controversial issue. He made a statement that I couldn’t agree with. But, instead of arguing with him I asked him a question, “So how do you understand this verse in Scripture?” His response was, “Don’t you quote Scripture to me. The Bible is just another book.” I felt like this pastor was saying, “You believe what you believe and I’ll believe what I believe. There is no absolute truth.”

We run across this thinking in our culture today. We live in a world where through our media we have contact with the whole world all the time, so there are many different ideas and beliefs offered constantly. In this multi-cultural world it is considered wrong, or misguided, or simple, or even hateful to claim there is such a thing as absolute truth. We hear questions like, “Who says the Bible is right?” Or, “There cannot be just one way to heaven.” Or, “God may have said people were to live like that in Bible times, but this is modern day, and He can’t mean that now.”

I want you to realize what sin we are facing in this kind of thinking. This is not just doubt about what God says. This is out and out idolatry. When people know what God says, but believe they have an alternate truth, or a better truth, then people are making themselves into God. This is saying that we know best what is right and good for the world, and what is right and good for the world is not necessarily what God says, but what we want to do, and what we want to believe. It may be considered enlightened thinking that everyone can believe what they want to believe. It IS the thinking of New Age Religion that everyone is really their own God. But, such thinking is idolatry. On Judgement Day, when truth is revealed in Jesus Christ, where people thought God might be wrong will be shown to be foolish, rebellious sin deserving of eternal punishment.

How does a Christian deal with such sin? First of all, we don't argue. Proverbs 9:7 and 8 says this, "**7 "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. 8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you."**" In other words, it is foolish to ARGUE with a fool. Such argument leads to more trouble.

Secondly, we need to be prepared for this sin of proud idolatry to try to sneak into our own lives. It is not just unbelievers who are tempted to think they can decide what is true. As Jesus says in today's Gospel lesson from John 8, **the devil . . . is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!** Jesus was saying this to people who considered themselves believers in the Jewish God. More scary perhaps is the epistle lesson from 2 Timothy 4, which warns Pastor Timothy, **3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.** In order to remain faithful to God, we need to know His Word so we can remain faithful to the teaching of God there. We need faithful leaders who know God's Word and lead us to remain faithful. There is such a thing as truth in this relative world, and it is the truth of God and His Word. Jesus prayed to His Father for the church in John 17. **17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

Finally, God calls His children to be willing to witness to the truth. This calls for preparation, and a respectful and gentle presentation. God tells us in 1 Peter 3:15, **But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU TO GIVE THE REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE. But do this with gentleness and respect.** There is a difference between arguing and witnessing. We can still with gentleness and respectfulness witness to the truth found in Jesus Christ. But such witnessing requires preparation, and this preparation is found in knowing God's word. You see, Jesus tells us in John 14, **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

So, let's see how this works in the life of God's people as we watch the end of the skit.

**SKIT 2** (After the sermon)

**SAM:** Hi, Jane.

**JANE:** Hi Sam, Are you still thinking the Bible is just another book, and there is no real truth in life?

**SAM:** Well, that's what every body else says. This is a free world, you know, and if I go thinking there's some truth out there other than what I think, or some truth other than what I want to do, well, I might have to change.

**JANE:** I'll pray for you, Sam.

**SAM:** Prove to me there is absolute truth, Jane.

JANE: Sam, I'm not sure I can prove that, but I'm not sure you can prove what you are saying either. But, I care about you, so, I'll pray for you.

SAM: Pray about what?

JANE: Well, I'll pray that God gives you the hope that the truth of His love for us in Jesus gives.

SAM: Hope? I guess if there is nothing true, there's nothing to hope for if there's no truth, is there? Though, I do look forward to a good steak and a dark beer. (Laughs) (Pause) Hmm. You do have a different attitude Jane. What hope do you have?

JANE: My hope is that God who created this world in order and wisdom, is bring order and righteousness to our lives of chaos and sin. My hope is that God sent His Son so that sinful people could be forgiven, and have eternal life in heaven where the pain and doubt of this world is gone.

SAM: Hmm. That sounds good. How can you know this?

JANE: I can't prove anything, Sam. Though, look at the world around you. Do you see order and wisdom and power? I do believe the God who made all this, that God sent His Son in love, and I believe God shares that love in the Bible. That's my belief, and that's my hope.

SAM: Let me think about this, Jane.

**BULLETIN INSERT**  
**Mid-Week Lenten Sermon 2**  
**Modern Day Sins and Tempations**  
**Relative Truth**

Proverbs 9:7-8 7 "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. 8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you."

John 8:42-45 42 Jesus said to them, . . .44 You belong to your father, **the devil**, and you want to carry out your father's desire. 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, for he **is a liar and the father of lies**. 45 **Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!**

1 Timothy 4:3-5 **3** For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; **your word is truth**.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always BE PREPARED to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with GENTLENESS AND RESPECT.

John 14:6 Jesus replied "I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.