

Trends

Over 1,200 Christians were slaughtered in Nigeria in the first six months of 2020, according the *International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law*. They said, "the killing of Christians had reached 'genocidal' levels." The perpetrators are Islamist militants and members of the predominantly Muslim Fulani group. The report attributes 390 of the deaths to radical Islamist groups like Boko Haram and groups linked to ISIS. Some 812 deaths were attributed to Fulani herdsman who have targeted Christian farming communities.

—via *Christian Today*

Romans 8:36-37: ³⁶ As it is written, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' ³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Sentence Sermons

"Silence in the face of evil is evil itself." —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Matthew 5:10-12: ¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

News & Notes

Please pray for the brethren suffering serious persecution, especially those in Africa. Please consider donating funds to aid them in dealing with their dire circumstances. If you want to donate please let me know.

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



Oct. 25,
2020

Vol. 12,
No. 33

"What Is Truth?"

Craig Thomas

Today's **Thought for the Day** comes from Psalm 119, the seventeenth set of eight verses, "TSADDE" (vv. 137-144). I would like to briefly explore one thought from this section; it is found in verse 142:

¹⁴² Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
And Your law is truth."

Pilate very famously asked Jesus this simple but profound question: "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38) The website *Dictionary.com* offers several definitions for the word truth. Here are the first two listed and I think the most appropriate for our brief discussion:

1. the true or actual state of a matter: *He tried to find out the truth.*
2. conformity with fact or reality; verity: *the truth of a statement.*

Truth has always been a rare commodity in the world. It is ironic that our modern world has so many ways to communicate information. We have all the tools the ancients had in the days of Pilate (e.g., speech and the written word); plus, all the electronic methods of disseminating information (e.g., radio, TV, internet, cell phones, etc.). Despite these wonderful modern methods of communication truth has not measurably benefited. Mark Twain's famous quote is as applicable today as when Pilate lived: "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." In fact, the availability of truth seems to be inversely proportional to the proliferation of methods to disseminate it!

I think the most useful definition of truth is that truth is reality. Truth is the way things really are. I think Pilate's question betrayed a man with a jaded sense of truth. In his world, Pilate had seen so many lies and prevarications he felt there was nothing that could be trusted. Friedrich Nietzsche described Pilate's worldview very accurately when he said, "There are not facts, only interpretations." Life in such a world is a life of misery. Such a world has no foundational principles with any solidity. Such a world has no firm ground on which to build a satisfying life. There is no solid footing, one constantly skates on thin ice. Nothing that can engender trust, reliability, and fidelity. Ultimately such a philosophy leads to total nihilism: an extreme form of skepticism. I believe Pilate had become so

jaded he was a nihilist. He had totally lost faith in the existence and possibility of an objective basis for truth. In its final stages, nihilism leads to self-destruction because a nihilist eventually loses all hope.

There is no need for nihilism to consume man. God's word is the ultimate reality! Jesus prayed for His disciples on the night before His crucifixion: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (Jn. 17:17) Earlier in His personal ministry Jesus said (Jn. 8:31-32), "31 If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." God's Word defines the ultimate reality. His word alone can answer the deepest questions of mankind: "Who am I?" "Where do I come from?" "What is my purpose?" "What happens when I die?"

The Book of Ecclesiastes records Solomon's search to answer those questions. He tried "wine, women, and song." He explored the accumulation of great riches. He looked for meaning in great building projects. He even tried a bit of gardening. Ultimately all these temporal things left Solomon with a very nihilistic attitude (Eccl. 1:2-3):

² 'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher;

'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'

³ What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?"

However, he finally figured out the true meaning of life. All along it was right in front of him staring him in the face (Eccl. 12:13-14):

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: 'Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'"

Sadly, most men fit Winston Churchill's description when he said, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened." Such is the case with God's Word. His word alone answers all the "big questions" of life. We are just too foolish and prideful to accept it.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice," (1 Pet. 1:3-6)

Your Obedience is Known

SWORD TIPS #2081 (OCTOBER 9, 2020)

Joe R. Price

For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. (Romans 16:19, NKJV)

Do others know you obey God? The Bible indisputably teaches obedience is the expression of one's faith. For example, Jesus said, "If you love

Me, keep My commandments" (Jno. 14:15). James put it this way: "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:18). Earlier, Paul noted the Romans' faith was spoken of by others throughout the world (Rom. 1:8). People were talking about their faith because they knew about their obedience. Their

"8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"

—Hebrews 5:8-9

faith was genuine because they obeyed the Lord. Obedience proclaims our faith, too. Just saying we believe is insufficient to save us (after all, "even the demons believe—and tremble," Jas. 2:19). Our obedience to the Lord must be good and innocent (Rom. 16:19).

The wisdom of the world calls evil good, and good evil (Isa. 5:20). Conversely, Christians shun such folly and choose to live by the wisdom from above (Jas. 3:17-18). We influence the world for righteousness when others see our faith by our obedience (Matt. 5:13).

"What Saith the Scriptures?"

John Isaac Edwards

Our appeal in all that we teach and practice is to "What Saith The Scripture?" This writing brings some things to your attention about this appeal. (1) OUR APPEAL. We are not interested in what men may think or say about spiritual things. Paul stated, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5). The Bible also says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). We hope you will be impressed with our appeal to the Scriptures, as we give book, chapter, and verse for everything we teach and practice. (2) WHY ASK, "WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?" There are basically two reasons we ask this question. First, it is a Scriptural question asked by inspired men of the New Testament (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 4:30). We are

"If any man speak, let speak as the oracles of God."

—1 Peter 4:11

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

—Colossians 3:17

only interested in speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent (1 Pet. 4:11). If there is no book, chapter, and verse for a thing, then there is no authority for teaching or practicing it. Second, the Scriptures are God-inspired. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). This makes the Scriptures our sole source of authority. We invite your investigation into things taught and practiced. Your questions and comments are welcomed. If we teach or practice something contrary to the Scriptures, or if there is something we are not doing that the Scriptures teach us to do, please bring it to our attention that we may correct it. We also hope you will visit our services.

Editor's note: I agree 100%!