

205 Factual Truth, Relevance and Need

We live in times when "truth" seems to mean whatever people want it to mean. One effect of this attitude is that the real, ultimate, unique Truth we have been given by Almighty God, concerning Himself, His Son, His Bible, His Gospel and all of us, is widely ignored. No wonder that human society finds itself in such a mess, with the eternal destinies of millions of people being at awful risk (eg., John 3.3, 14-19, 35-36 / Romans 3.20-28 / I Timothy 2.4-6 / and many more). As always, Christ's faithful sheep are called to "stand up, stand up for Jesus" against the prevailing tides, prayerfully and appropriately.

The Lord in His Word gives us ample instruction when it comes to our own proclaiming of God's truth. Our scriptural forebears followed a basic "witnessing template", always speaking to their hearers of factual truth, relevance and need. When all three of these "boxes" had been ticked in people's minds, they were spiritually open to respond to the message by following a second template - "Repent, believe and be baptised".

For John the Baptist, the Lord and His disciples, and initially for the apostles also, their hearers were Jewish, who were thus already spiritually informed for they knew the Scriptures, the Law and the Messianic promises. Later on, when the Gospel was proclaimed also to Gentiles, who were wholly ignorant of such things, Paul and his colleagues started differently, before getting on to the same message of repentance, belief and baptism, always focussed on the Person, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we could define the mood of our own age as "Gentilian in spades"! - with widespread ignorance, apathy, and the lack of any sense of personal need. So, following scriptural precedent, we are to apply the first template, giving factual truth centred on the Bible's credentials, showing the total relevance of what we are saying and hence the total need of our hearer(s).

This process will often include our use of some "Christian evidences". These factual truths will rarely convert anyone in themselves, but play their part in showing why the Bible still deserves to be taken very seriously, thus opening the path for the rest of the template to be applied, concerning the relevance of these facts and the great need of those we are speaking with.

Thanks be to God, there are many unanswerable Christian evidences involving the Bible itself, concerning its structure, teachings, miracles, prophecies and effects. Of the many books available - look on Google and Amazon - I have found the following especially helpful: "Many Infallible Proofs" by Henry Morris; and "Evidence That Demands a Verdict", in two volumes, by Josh McDowell. It helps

to know a few of these evidences, so as to introduce real factual truths into that "bear-pit" of debate we came across last time. Throughout, we remember two things: first, our purpose is not to win arguments but to save lost souls, hence prayerfulness, friendliness and courtesy; and second, some folk will accept, and some will reject, whatever the facts staring them in the face, as has always been the case.

Alongside our possibly speaking of some "Christian evidences" in any discussion about the place of ultimate Truth, we can also refer to "God's Law", which tends to get straight to the point! For instance we might ask, "What do you reckon is your score out of 10 on the Ten Commandments?"; or, "How do you think you'll get on when you are giving account of your life to your Maker?"; or even, "Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life?". Simple questions such as these can focus the mind rather abruptly, and, perhaps for the first time ever, can arouse a real sense of spiritual need with the realisation of the gulf between God's holiness and personal sinfulness. So the way opens up for that famous old question to be asked, "What must I do to be saved?", and then that famous old answer can be given, "Repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptised".

It is by such exchanges, how ever long they may take and how ever many people they may involve over time, that sinful souls are still saved "from the wrath to come" (I Thessalonians 1.10). Every single such soul brings joy in heaven! (Luke 15.7).

This precious, vital work for us starts, far more frequently than we might expect, with our having the simple courage to speak of the Bible, God's Law and the Lord Jesus Christ in casual conversation; and we then let the Holy Spirit take things on from there.

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