



© 2018 Ginger Hertenstein
SERMON TITLE: God Redeems Our Judgment with His
Righteousness
SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 2:1-15, Advent 3
DATE: December 16, 2018
Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Read also John 5:26-30

Where do you seek truth?

Do you seek truth in your own ideas or thoughts?

Today and for a while now, our culture and pop culture—you know, people in the public eye, athletes, celebrities—say something like this: “proclaim your truth.” Sometimes people justify their behavior or decisions by saying, “this is my truth,” as if they are accountable to no one. There are even websites to help you “discover your truth.”

The concept of seeing truth as “my truth” or “your truth” as opposed to “The truth” defines truth as reality according to my own will or desires or experiences.

This is largely accepted thought today, that truth is determined by my judgment of what is right, and especially what is right for me. Truth, then, is subjective.

The Truth, in contrast, is defined as “shared common facts.” The Truth is communal and universal. The Truth is not subjective.

Just because someone proclaims something does not mean it is the truth. Think of someone who is colorblind saying, “This hat is blue.” 

Or think of those people whose truth is not the posted speed limit, but whatever speed limit they want to go, as they weave in and out of traffic on the freeway.

What guides your path? There is stability in knowing where you are going and what you are doing—

- If you are an auto mechanic, you need to get training
- If you want to be a mathematician, you must learn math correctly
- If you drive in an unfamiliar city, you won’t get lost with a true map
- In a foreign country knowing the language, having a trained guide, and understanding local customs keeps you out of trouble.

Recently Dean and I were driving on a freeway, and cars were speeding around us, crossing that solid white line, weaving in and out of traffic—even on the shoulder, far exceeding the speed limit. The truth is 70 miles per hour, stay in your lane, don’t pass on the shoulder, but their truth was anything goes. Dean said, “How do you put up with this?”

I said, “I sing *The Messiah*. “All we like sheep have gone astray.” So we sang it as we drove down the road.

In New York, our choir sang *Messiah* with people from Qatar, Hong Kong, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Canada, and all across the United States. The choir sings, “all we like sheep” and that echoes throughout the four harmonies of the 250 singers sweeping across the group, soprano, bass, alto, tenor again and again singing “all we like sheep”. . . then “have gone astray-ay-ay-ay.” Again and again the words reverberated through their voices and it came to mind *here are people from every continent singing* “that the truth is not in them.”¹

Going astray is humanity’s problem throughout the entire world.

The chorus continues: “we have turned every one to his own way.” So across the 250 people for three minutes these words flew from one side of the choir to the other, from one side of the globe to the other.

It’s a universal problem that we humans cannot hold to the truth. Our judgment in and of ourselves will never be fully just or entirely right, hard as we might try.

It plays out on the freeway and also in the courtroom, on the street, and in our homes all around our world. It is true that without the Lord, you will only have “your truth.”

Thus it is not shocking that the world seeks its own truth without God, that famous people shout, “Proclaim your truth!”—“For we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).

What hope is there? Will God just give us over to failure?

¹ Click on this link to hear Handel *Messiah* – 27, to which I refer. It is not a recording of our performance. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDar_26lnrk, accessed December 15, 2018.

With that scenario in mind, hear the Word of the Lord from Proverbs 2:

My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (v. 1-6).

Solomon, the writer, urges us because he knows that just as the Lord redeems darkness with light and brings life out of death, so the LORD because of his incredibly patient love redeems our poor, misdirected judgment with THE Truth. God is the source of true righteousness.

We would love to be righteous, but that lasts about a day, and sometimes just one hour. But there is great hope. God is the source of Truth and God is willing to give it as we seek it.

When Solomon became king he realized his inadequacies to rule. Solomon did not ask God for riches, or fame, or length of life, he asked for wisdom and an understanding mind so he could govern well. He asked also for the ability to discern between good and evil. (see 1 Kings 3:5-14)

The prayer for wisdom is the best prayer ever prayed!. You can pray it too! The Scripture tells us the secret to gaining wisdom:

- *Listen to God*
- *Treasure God's commands*
- *Tune your ears to wisdom*
- *Concentrate on understanding*
- *Cry out for insight*
- *Ask for understanding.*
- *Search for them like hidden treasures.*

Then you will understand and you will gain knowledge of God. For the LORD grants wisdom! Do you remember James in the Bible? He wrote:

"If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith . . ." (James 1:5-6a)

If you sit and pray but you don't think you are going to get a thing from God, then you are not asking in faith.

If you sit in front of the TV and your prayers take place during the commercials and then you get back to the game, you are not tuning your ears or crying out or searching as for treasure like silver and gold.

But if you really carve out the time, and open your Bible and say something like this:

God, I don't understand this, would you show me?

Or, if you come to a small group Bible study, which will start in the new year or a Sunday School class or youth group and you listen intently and ask the questions you really want to know the answers to, God will do it! God will reward you and you will understand and gain knowledge of God.

This knowledge will bless you like no other, and then you will no longer wander about seeking after "your truth" because you will know THE TRUTH.

Here's what The Truth does for you:

God grants a treasure of common sense to the honest (seeker). He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe. Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths. They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil. Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong" (Proverbs 2:7-15).

You see the choice every person makes? What kind of wisdom do you want? Your own, or God's?

Jesus explains it like this: "I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will" (John 5:30).

You can take the same approach. Seeking God's wisdom and following God's will allows God's active relationship in your life. It is for your good, and offers you and your family protection.

In this way, God redeems our poor judgment with his true righteousness.

Do you want to follow your truth? Or let your truth be redeemed with The Truth?

AMEN