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Don't we all have to find truth for ourselves?



'Christianity is seen as the enemy of freedom.'
Discuss



Galatians 2:14 'But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel...'



Truth and freedom are more important and complex than we think.



TRUTH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WE THINK

1. The French philosopher, Foucault said that people who claim to have and know the truth are just making a play for power and control over people.
Do you think Jesus is saying the same thing of the Pharisees and religious leaders in Matthew 23:2-4, Luke 18: 9—14?
2. In Acts 26: 19—29 the Apostle Paul is standing before King Agrippa. (see also 1 Corinthians 15: 1 –11)
What is Paul claiming as true and rational (v 25)?
3. We live in a world where a lot of people want to do away with any 'truth claims.' Is this possible?
4. The historian, Andrew Walls says, 'cultural diversity was built into the Christian faith...in Acts 15, which declared that the new gentile Christians didn't have to enter Jewish culture...the converts had to work out...a Hellenistic (Greek) way of being a Christian. [So] no one owns the Christian faith. There is no 'Christian culture' the way there is an 'Islamic culture' which you can recognise from Pakistan to Tunisia to Morocco...'
Comment.
Also, how should Christianity look in our culture?



Timothy Keller quotes Alistair McGrath who in his history of atheism says: 'The 20th century gave rise to one of the greatest and most distressing paradoxes of human history: that the greatest intolerance and violence of that century were practiced by those who believed that religion caused intolerance and violence.' (p 5 Timothy Keller *The Reason for God*.)

'There is an appearance of humility in the protestation that the truth is much greater than anyone of us can grasp, but if this is used to invalidate all claims to to discern the truth it is in fact an arrogant claim to be kind of knowledge which is superior to [to all]....we have to ask: 'what is the [absolute] vantage ground from which you claim to be able to relativise all the absolute claims these different scriptures make?' (Keller p 9 quoting Newbegin in *The Reason for God*).

FREEDOM IS MORE COMPLEX THAN YOU THINK

5. How do people you know define freedom? What is your definition of freedom? Divide into pairs to answer these questions and then share your answers with the group?
6. What is freedom according to Galatians 5:13,
7. How did the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, lose his freedom? John 1: 1—5; Philippians 2: 5—11.
8. The Apostle Paul wrote: ‘the love of Christ constrains us?’ What does this mean?
9. Perhaps people do not have a problem with rules in general, traffic rules for example. But some would say that certain rules in the Bible, such as those about sex, restrict individual freedom. How would you respond?
10. Some people argue that the idea that real freedom is having no restraints or restrictions and being able to do whatever you want does not work? Explain



THINK &
APPLY



PRAYER

Praise God for the challenges raised Praying for others in your group: by God’s Word through this study?



FAMILY
DISCUSSION

How does this passage apply to our daily life?

‘Christians, then, should expect to find nonbelievers who are much nicer, kinder, wiser, and better than they are. Why? Christian believers are not accepted by God because of their moral performance, wisdom, or virtue, but because of Christ’s work on their behalf. Most religion and philosophies of life assume that one’s spiritual status depends on your religious attainments. This naturally leads adherents to feel superior to those who don’t believe and behave as they do. The Christian gospel, in any case, should not have that effect. (Keller p 19 The Reason for God).

PRAISE GOD that the death of Christ substantiates God’s presence, right in the midst of pain, evil and suffering.

CONFESS that we are more troubled by the evil in the world than we are by evil in our own heart.

ASK GOD that we would have hope, even in the midst pain, suffering and evil.

PRAY ALSO that we would reach out to someone going through a time of suffering and pain this week.



READ AHEAD
2: 1-17

For next week— Hasn’t religion been an instrument for oppression? James 2: 1-17