October 22, 2017

Series: What is Truth?

**Real Peace**

John 20:19-31

Growth Track Step 4 today …

Generosity

Prayer

**Intro:** We are at the end of the Story of Jesus that was written by John, one of Jesus’ closest followers.

As we come to the end of this great story, we are seeing answers to one of the greatest questions ever asked - What is Truth?

When Jesus was on trial, He stated that He came into the world to tell the truth, and that all who loved the truth received what He had to say.

Pilate’s response: What is Truth?

We are finding out the answer to that question!

A couple of weeks ago, in the story of Jesus’ death by crucifixion, we saw 5 simple truths:

* Jesus is Lord
* The Bible is true
* Jesus cares
* Jesus died for you
* You have a choice

Last week, in the story of Jesus’ resurrection, we saw how His closest followers moved beyond uncertainty - to understanding - then making a difference by telling others the story of Jesus’ resurrection.

As we continue with the story - Jesus begins to appear to His disciples after His resurrection - He proves Himself to be once dead - now alive - and it is in the knowledge of that truth that they find real peace.

**Big Idea: Knowledge of the Truth leads to real peace!**

Ronald Reagan: Peace through strength…

There is a deeper peace, that requires a difference kind of strength.

**> Peace through forgiveness.**

John 20:19-23 - That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus comes and He brings peace!

He promised them this peace in

John 14:27 - I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

The night before Jesus was crucified … He had dinner with His closest followers –

* Judas was going to betray Him …
* The disciples would fall asleep on Him in His hour of greatest grief …
* When the soldiers came and arrested Him the disciples ran away …
* Peter would deny even knowing Him …
* Jesus would be beaten while blindfolded … beard pulled … crown thorns … scourged … horrible beating … then crucified …

Jesus knew all this was coming – was it possible that Jesus Himself was struggling with peace? But He said these words –

This was His last will and testament!

* His clothes fell to the soldiers at the foot of the cross.
* His mother He left in the care of John
* He committed His soul to His Father
* His body went to Joseph of Arimathea to be decently buried.

What about His disciples? What could He leave them? He had nothing of material value – He left them something infinitely more valuable – He left them this peace –

And this peace is still available to His followers today. It is not a peace that you can find in this world – so don’t look around at the lack of peace in this world and say that there is no peace on earth, good will to men – because the peace Jesus gives is a peace of mind and heart –

It’s a peace that we can have no matter how much the world outside our heart is lacking peace.

There is something else very important here to our peace and to people receiving peace - forgiveness.

John 20:23 - “If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

We know that we have to confess our sins to God to receive His forgiveness (agree) …

The Lord’s Prayer … Forgive us as we forgive …

If we don’t forgive, we can’t be forgiven …

**If we are followers of Jesus, and we don’t forgive others, how in the world will they believe that God can forgive them?**

He sends us, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to share the message of forgiveness.

If we don’t forgive people, how will they receive the message of forgiveness from Christ?

If you are a follower of Jesus, and He has already offered forgiveness to everyone, how can you follow Him if you don’t do the same?

And how will they understand that Jesus wants to forgive them if His followers won’t forgive them?

Our actions are evidence of what we believe - so next we see -

**> Peace through Faith**

John 20:24-29 - One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

We receive this peace through faith - we receive this peace by believing -

John 14:27 - I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

* It’s HIS peace

Not anyone else’s - it’s not second hand - what does this mean?

Think again of what He knew was coming when He said this! You would think He needed to muster up all the peace He had for Himself - but no - He had enough peace for His trial to get through it and to share with His followers.

He had this because He believed in the will and the plan of His Father -

* It’s His Gift -

It’s free - you can’t buy this peace -you can’t sell this peace -

Isaiah 26:3 - You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

* It’s the kind of peace the world can’t give!

Nothing in this world can give you this peace - It’s a gift - if you believe! If you have faith!

Philippians 4:6-7 - Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

You don’t need to lack peace in your life! Jesus has done everything needed to do for us to have peace - all we have to do is believe and receive!

Thomas wouldn’t believe until he saw - when he saw, he realized his waiting to believe was futile and foolish.

What are you waiting on? Do you need to see something? Can you see from this passage that there is a blessing for those who believe without having to see?

John 20:29 - Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

**Our failure to believe is the main contributing factor to our lack of peace.**

But here’s what Peter said to those who believe without seeing -

1st Peter 1:8-9 - Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What is truth?

There is Peace through Forgiveness

There is Peace through Faith

**> Peace through Purpose**

John 20:30-31 - The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

This was the purpose of this book.

What is your purpose?

I’d say you’d have a great purpose in life, if you lined up your purpose with this purpose.

What can you do to help others come to this believe, this faith, this conclusion, this life?

What are your gifts? What are your passions? Are they pointed to this purpose?

Growth Track Step 4 today -

If you haven’t come to Growth Track, why not? Over 130 …

Come see the vision - come hear the direction - come find out how you can be connected in life-giving relationships - come find out what your gifts are … it’s amazing …

Come find out where you can make a difference.

Find out your purpose - and if you think you already know - open up your mind and heart to more!

John said, “There is so much more! I can’t even begin to tell it all!”

And sometimes we act like we already know it all and already have it all together.

God’s got a great purpose for you! And when you discover that purpose - and begin to make a difference in other people’s lives as you live your purpose, you are going to experience REAL PEACE!

It begins with Knowing God. That’s Step 1 - Two weeks - but you can know now.

John’s purpose in writing this book is that all readers come to confess Jesus as their Lord and God in the same way that Thomas did.

Invitation …

Baptism …