

## Sincerity And Truth (Part Three)

### Living the Truth

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I have introduced my previous two sermons with blatant examples of fraud that we can see in our world. In the first sermon, I read part of an essay called “The Entire Status Quo is a Fraud” by a man named Charles Hughes Smith. I would like to read the first paragraph or two from that essay to you again.

This can't be said politely: the entire status quo in America is a fraud. The financial system is a fraud. The political system is a fraud. National Defense is a fraud. The healthcare system is a fraud. Higher education is a fraud. The mainstream corporate media is a fraud. Culture—from high to pop—is a fraud. Need I go on? We have come to accept fraud as standard operating procedure in America, to the detriment of everything that was once worthy.

In this vein I told you about science fiction author Theodore Sturgeon's law, which is “90 percent of everything is garbage,” which goes right along with what Charles Hughes Smith said about the entire status quo being a fraud. And then economist Gary North agreed saying that our job is to find and utilize that small 10 percent that is genuine and worthwhile and pursue it. Only that way—by pursuing that 10 percent that is genuine and worthwhile in this world—can we ever hope to move forward—to truly progress—from where we are to where we can be.

In the second sermon, if you will recall, we saw examples of fraud in the insurance industry. I did at one time have a tenuous link with the insurance industry. So I thought that would be a good place to go. We saw that it was endemic to the whole economy as the insurance sector (we have an enormous economy) and if it is that bad in the insurance industry, how bad is it throughout the rest of our economy? You can imagine why we have nearly

\$20 trillion national debt. A lot of it is paying for fraud. So it is widespread and entrenched in our society. It is everywhere. You can hardly turn one way or another and not run into it.

Now I would like to give you some more examples from another part of our lives. Recently a famous spy thriller author, whose name you would recognize if I gave it to you (but I will not), asserted that we can trust the record of history. It was just a blatant statement and I think that statement needs to be taken with a grain of salt. I know that from my study of history. I really enjoy studying history. I read a lot of history. Of course, anybody who has to speak about what is in the Bible has to also have a bit of interest in history because most of the Bible is history.

But I found that the saying “History is written by the victors” is generally true. It is especially true on the civilizational level. What I mean by that is long-standing civilizations—Rome; Egypt (Egypt was around for a long time); China (been around for a very long time); and even Britain (even though the length of its empire was not as long as these other ones, it was so powerful that it had an effect in the same way)—end up outlasting their opponents. So they get the last word on what is “really” historically true (I put really in quotes because you cannot be sure—because it is slanted from that civilization’s point of view).

So things like the way they took over another nation might have been full of atrocities. But they are not going to write in their books that they did all these atrocities. They will talk about them as “stunning victories over enemy forces.” So you have things like what happened in Armenia (I should also mention the Holocaust and things like that) that are now being thought of as not having happened because people are changing the way history is viewed. They are actually “changing the truth.”

Way, way, back the Pharaohs were known to do stuff like this. They loved to memorialize their victories in stone upon the walls of their temples, or on obelisks, or even on just walls that they would put up (kind of like the Roman arches that they would put up; the French Napoleon did it as well) showing all their victories over their enemies. But the Pharaohs usually did one step further than everybody else. They would write long accounts on hieroglyphs of their smashing victories over their enemies. They especially

liked to do this against their enemies that were formidable (like Assyria, Babylon, or some of the great powers of the time).

So their hieroglyphs, on these walls of their temples and such, tell of overwhelming triumphs over their enemies (battles—this battle and that battle) and they go into long, flowery descriptions of Pharaoh. They usually have pictures of him sitting in his chariot holding his spear or something and he looks like he is winning the battle all on his own. They would say how Pharaoh slew his hundreds or thousands of the enemy and the remaining fled or they bowed themselves to Pharaoh. It sounds like just a total annihilation of the enemy.

Historians are not content normally with one account. They try to go and find other accounts of what actually happened. So they have done a bit of sleuthing and have discovered that, in several cases, Pharaoh's glorious victories are found out to be a lot of bunk—a lot of hokum—that that is not what happened. There is one famous one where you find out that not only was it not a victory (both sides left the field of battle without anything to show for it), but that Pharaoh was not even there! Some of these times he was back at headquarters watching the battle from a hill at a very safe distance (a long block further than a bow shot) so that no harm could come to him. In other cases, he was back at Egypt in his palace. He was not even around. He let his generals do all the fighting.

I am kind of picking on the Pharaohs here. But almost all the ancient monarchs did such a thing. They would write all these things that happened and take personal credit for every good thing that happened and you find out that most of it was done by their soldiers—by their own champions. But they took all the glory for it. It was all for them and all reflected upon them. This happens today too. Men really have not changed. Updating this idea in terms of nationalist dictators in the 1940s, famous author George Orwell (from 1984 in 'Animal Farm' and other books and essays) wrote this:

The really frightening thing about totalitarianism is not that it commits 'atrocities' but that it attacks the concept of objective truth: It claims to control the past as well as the future.

Orwell was thinking particularly of men like Franco, Stalin, and other totalitarian rulers of the time (obviously Hitler and Mao could also be thrown into that group). But they all messed with history so that the things that they did do not seem very bad at all. They were the glorious rulers and leaders of the people in an uprising to make things right in their nations when they were slaughtering millions behind the building. This still goes on. And I got to say, even though it pains me to say it, this also applies in republics like ours and in democracies all over the world. It happens as soon as power entrenches itself in a political class. Because those people, who are in power, want to write the books to make themselves look good. So they change things. We see it all the time.

In fact, just a week or two ago, it was revealed in the media that the vaunted 9/11 Commission Report (you remember that from 10 years ago) was found to be missing 28 secret pages. There is a big hubbub about it. People are trying to get those 28 pages declassified because what those 28 pages show is that agents or employees of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were actually supporting the 9/11 bombers. But the Bush administration and the 9/11 Commission did not want people to know that because it would impact the relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They did not want the political repercussions that would come from that.

So now President Obama has a decision to make. Will he let that out and put a black mark on George Bush and the Republicans and the 9/11 Commission, or will he hide it in order to keep relations with Saudi Arabia humming along as they have been? He is not in a good position either. Right now, history, as far as the 9/11 Commission report goes, says that Saudi Arabia was not complicit in those attacks. But it is pretty clear from everything that has been revealed that they were just hiding it; they were trying to change history by putting that in a deep, dark vault someplace and not letting anybody see it.

Of course we are not getting the truth of present-day history by any means (or even past American history) in our schools. We are not getting much truth at all from our media, at least not the whole truth. Americans, I think, know it. The Gallup people did a poll last year, as they do pretty much every year, on how much people trust various institutions across the United States.

They found that people love the military; they trust the military. That usually gets about 50 percent. And there are various other things that do okay.

But only 31 percent of Americans trusted the public schools in 2015. Those are the most recent figures. Just 23 percent trusted television news, which to me sounded like a very high figure. Worst of all, a mere 13 percent of Americans trusted Congress (which I thought was another high figure; I would have figured it was about 1 or 2 percent). But, you know, everybody loves their own representative; it is all the other ones that are so bad.

Really, when it comes down to it, we Americans do not trust the teachers or the textbooks that they use; the talking heads that we see on our television screens; the politicians that try to tell us what to do all the time. The reason for this is because we know that their record for telling the truth is very poor.

Now that I have depressed you, that is just how it is. Much of history and much of our current political news—what will become history—is a fraud. In this area too, as Theodore Sturgeon said in his law, a high percentage of what we are told is garbage. Is it the same 90 percent? Perhaps.

But this is just one facet of how Satan has deceived the whole world, as it says in Revelation 12:9. And when God had that written in the book of Revelation, He meant it. Satan the Devil has deceived the *whole* world. There is not any that have been left out and that includes you and me, before we were called. But we have been called out of that world of deceit, out of that world of constant lies and fraud, out of a world that we cannot trust anything that comes out of it.

We have to face the fraud, the deceit, that garbage every day. It is part of what presses on us. It is part of what depresses us. It makes us negative about the way our life is—the way things are turning out in our country—because we see so much of the dirt, so much of the fraud, that is there in the world.

But Jesus loves us. And He said, before He died, in His prayer for us (because He wanted us to have something that we could use to endure)—He asked His Father, in John 17:17: “Sanctify them by Your truth; Your word is truth.” He gave us a lifeline to hold on to so that when we are moving through this world of sludge and dirt and grime and all the evil things that

are going on in this world, we could have something to cling to, that we can have something that we can say “This is true.” And because we have something that is like that—this lifeline of truth—then what it does is it makes us strange, it makes us weird. “Sanctify them” meaning “set them apart; make them different by Your fruit.”

When God looks down upon this world and sees the millions and millions of people that are on here, you look different because you believe the truth. Different from all the other people in the world. You have been made holy. You have been segregated from the world.

Of course the world, looking at us, thinks the exact same thing. “They’re weird people! They believe this and that.” “They believe you should dress up and go to church on the Sabbath, on Saturday the seventh day, not on Sunday the first day.” “They believe you should eat unleavened bread for seven days, sometime in the spring, after you get your feet washed by some other member of this church. And you take a tablespoon of wine and you crunch on an unleavened cracker. Boy, these people are weird! They won’t eat pork bacon. They won’t eat shrimp. They won’t eat all these other things.” You see how we are strange to them.

We do things that are not like this world because we are clinging to that rope of truth that God has flung out at us. But we are willing to risk our reputation by following those things that are the truth—that we have been taught to be the truth from the Word of God—that we have before us. It sanctifies us. It sets us apart. It also protects us because, in keeping the Word of God, keeping the truth of God, we do not fall into the same messes that other people fall into. The Word of God teaches us a way to live that promotes continued life.

So when we do things like keep the clean and unclean laws, there is an added benefit because God tells us in His Word—He instructs us—“Okay, I’m your Creator. This is what you are supposed to be putting in your mouths to eat. And if you eat this stuff, you will be holy to Me, you will be set apart.” But they do not make us holy by eating them. We are holy in terms of obeying what He says to do. But, as an added benefit of that, we do not get

nearly as sick as other people do. We are healthier because we are going by the guidelines of the Creator and how He made our bodies and what are good for us.

Now this does not work on everybody. We have heard of some people who smoked and drank and ate bacon three times a day and they lived to be 98. It is just one of those things. Some of our bodies have a better constitution than others. But, in general, eating what is good and right, what God told us to do, following those laws that He gave us—the hygiene laws and all the other things that He gave us—tend to keep us from getting sick, getting diseases. Just an added benefit, it is part of the sanctification that we got through what Jesus asked for us because we keep the truth. It is not something that we can go to the bank on and live to be 150 because “I’ve never had any bacon in my life.” That is not something that God promises.

But, on the other hand, generally, we are healthier. We can remain healthier. And we usually undercut that by doing some other stupid things that we should not be doing, and it all evens out in the end. But even so, if we do what God wants us do, we end up getting all kinds of benefits. Read Psalm 103: All the benefits that we have from God’s Word, from doing the things that God wants us to do.

So that was one of Jesus Christ’s parting gifts to us that He gave while He was still a man, that He asked His Father to give us the truth to set us apart, to sanctify us. That way of life that is shown in God’s Word, in the truth, is described in I Corinthians 5:8 as the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” That has kind of been my theme through all these three sermons, the phrase “sincerity and truth.”

Because I started this, of course during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and I wanted to show that if we are consuming or eating of that unleavened bread of sincerity and truth every day, like it is said we are to do during the Days of Unleavened Bread, then we will have eternal life ultimately and we will have the abundant lives that Jesus wants us to have.

That was my introduction.

Today I want to revisit Jesus' discussion with the woman at the well of Samaria in John 4, and I want to go into His statement that we are to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. But today I want to emphasize the "truth" more than what I did last time. Last time I emphasized worshipping in spirit. I would like to balance that by talking about worshipping in truth.

So if you will turn to John chapter 4, we are going to read the last part of this discussion that Jesus had with this woman. Remember He had come to the well after traveling all day; it was the heat of the day; and He was tired and hungry and thirsty. The disciples go in to Sychar to buy some food and left Him there at the well, and the woman of Samaria came down and they began to talk.

Of course, this was unusual because here a Jew was speaking not only to a Samaritan but a Samaritan woman, and not only to a Samaritan woman but a Samaritan woman of ill repute who had five husbands and was living with one who was not her husband at the moment. So Jesus was breaking all kinds of taboos here. But they had a very interesting conversation which has led to what we are going to see here.

Let us start in verse 20. This is the woman speaking.

**John 4:20-26** "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain [which was Mount Gerizim], nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what do you do not know [which must have been a real slap in the face]; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."



That is as far as we need to go for today. Now her statement, when she talks to Him in this little part of this passage, speaks about a place of worship being important. Jesus turns to her and reveals to her that the true worship is not about a place—“It is neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem”—which might have been a shock to any Jews that may have been nearby that He did not support Jerusalem in this (that you *must* come to Jerusalem to worship; that is the only place, is it not?). And Jesus says, “No. It’s not about a place.” What He says, as He goes on, in speaking about this in His stream of consciousness here, is that He tells her in so many words that the worship is not about *place*. It is about *Persons*. Worship centers around knowing Persons (the Father and the Son).

What He says here, in saying things like “salvation is of the Jews” and “We know what we worship,” is that God revealed Himself to the Israelites (Amos 3:2: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”). He had only revealed Himself in a personal way to the Israelites in the Old Testament, not to any other peoples. And not because they were special, but because He loved them and He wanted to give them this relationship with Him.

Now it was a very arm’s length type of relationship but there was still a relationship there. And we know that they could not have the personal relationship that we have. Only those ones that He specifically called out could have a relationship with Him like that. But He did call out a few now and then—prophets and kings and others—to have this relationship. Everybody else was kept quite at arm’s length. They had to stand out at a distance.

The only ones that could actually go near to their God were the priests—and they had to be kept at a distance too because there was a veil there that kept them from going into God’s presence in the Holy of Holies. And the high priest, only once a year (on the Day of Atonement), could go in there and sprinkle blood on the altar to make atonement for the people. That was it. That was as close as they could get—one man, one time a year—and everything else had to look from afar. Of course, there was only really one place to worship Him and that was the Temple.

But Jesus reveals here that that was the nature of the Old Covenant. But that was changing. God is now seeking individuals to worship Him in spirit and in truth. We know, from John 6:44, that He was actually Himself—the Father—calling and drawing individuals to Jesus Christ just for that purpose. So He was intimately involved in this process and He was drawing them to Him through Christ so He could have this relationship. And then we find out in John 17:3 that eternal life is to know the Father and the Son. That is the whole shebang, if you will. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. No longer are we having to go to a specific place at a certain time, dressed in a certain way with certain accoutrements, in order to worship God in a standoff manner. But now we can have this relationship with Jesus Christ and with the Father all the time.

He says here God is Spirit. All these other things that this woman was thinking of—that the Jews were thinking of—were physical: Go to a physical place, have on certain physical clothes, do certain physical offerings, do certain physical rites, and that was as far as it would go. And if you did all the physical things, then you were thought to be doing what was required of you and that was it. You could go home and do whatever you wanted to because you had done all the physical rites that were asked of you. Now, of course, we know God wanted more out of them and He tried to get them to understand this. But they were carnal people. It is part of the process that He went through to show us that way does not work.

But now He is telling us, Jesus is opening up here, that God wants worship in spirit. He wants it through this relationship, not at arm's length anymore (actually not even skin to skin as it were) but, as we will see, totally immersive—in the spirit. This is basically where I got to last time and I did not go much further than this. But I wanted to go over this again so we are all running together at the same speed and understanding where we are going with this.

So just going to some mountain and putting your sacrifice on the altar there (or going to a temple and going through the rites) was not enough. That is not what God really wanted. What Jesus is opening up to this woman is that those who really want to worship the Father and the Son must have a spiritual relationship with them. He wants a communication. He wants a

back and forth. He wants a living together side by side, if you will, that is not bound by physical restraints. So He is saying here that we have to adjust our minds.

And they had to adjust their minds more than we do because we live in a culture that has been saturated by Gnosticism where these ideas of spirituality are throughout the culture. We think, in this day and age, that it is okay just to be religious and spiritual. So these ideas of being spiritual have leaked out into the way everybody thinks.

But the Jews at the time did not think that way at all. They were still thinking in terms of all these physical things that they had to do. They had to get their boys circumcised at eight days. They had to do all these things that were prescribed in the law. They were things that God had given them to do and that is fine. But they did not think beyond those things to what God really wanted of them, which was a spiritual relationship with Him so that we are walking with Him—the way Enoch had walked with Him, the way that Noah had walked with Him, the way Abel had walked with Him, like Abraham had walked with Him where he was living his life daily in the presence of God and knew that and he did everything to please the Son.

Abraham had a relationship with God to the point when God Himself and two angels came up to his tent, he said “Come on in. I’m going to kill the fattened calf for you. Sarah, get it going.” And he had a conversation with them and he talked with them. By the end of the chapter, he is negotiating with Him for the number of people in Sodom that have to pass the test before He destroys it. So he felt close enough to God that he could say “God, let’s say there are only about 50 people in there that need to be saved. Will You spare the city?” “Sure, Abraham, I’ll do it for you. You’re a good friend of Mine.” You know how the story goes. So he got Him down to 10 people and there was one (and we have questions about Lot, but he was a righteous man). God did not spare the city. But you see the relationship that was there.

Abraham felt close enough to God that he could talk that way to Him. I am sure he was very reverential and did not go beyond the bounds of what was proper. But he still had a close relationship—a *personal* relationship—with

God there. So that is a similar relationship that we need to have with God as well. Because Abraham is the father of the faithful. He gave us a lot of good examples of the way to be. There is one better though.

Now I want to discuss this idea that the Jews and Samaritans had about a physical place as part of worship of God. I think it is important that we understand this so we have some background as to why this lady thought this. “We say that worship has to be done on this mountain and the Jews say it must be done at the Temple in Jerusalem.” “Which is it?” she says. Jesus has to blow her mind by saying, “Neither.” But I want to give you the background on why she thought this way.

Let us go back in to II Kings. You might want to keep a finger or some sort of whatever in John chapter 4. I will do the same. But let us go back to II Kings 5. We are going to read the first three verses and then verses 9 through 17. Now this is Naaman who was from Syria. He was a leper. He wanted to be healed. So this is his story.

**II Kings 5:1-3** Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria [which, by the way, was Israel’s number one enemy at the time], was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman’s wife [Just think of how the leprosy affected their relationship]. Then she said to her mistress, “If only my master were with the prophet [this was Elisha] who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy.”

So Naaman gets this idea from the girl to go to Israel and we see a few things going on in the intervening verses. But we can pick it up in verse 9.

**II Kings 5:9-10** Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger to him . . .

Now this is the commander of the armies of Syria. If you read a little further, you find that he came with all kinds of money and clothing and he was going

to richly reward the prophet Elisha for healing him. Big man! It would be like the Chief of Staff of America's armed forces coming to your door and asking for your help. And he sends out a messenger to him. He does not even come and answer the door. He sends somebody out to him.

**II Kings 5:10-11** [The messenger says:] . . . “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean” [very simple instructions]. But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and the heal the leprosy.’ ”

He was wanting a big show. He wanted to see magic. He wanted to see a miracle. And he was really disappointed.

**II Kings 5:12-17** Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel [and he was saying “I have to go and dip myself in this muddy river? Can you even call it a river? It's a stream. It's only this wide. You could pretty much pole vault over it. It is nothing.”] Can I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near and spoke to him [“Master, calm down”], and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” [“Why wouldn't you do this very simple thing? You're expecting something a little bit too grandiose here.”] So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean [he came out pink and rosy]. Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.” But he [Elisha] said, “As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused. So Naaman said, “Then [now notice this request], if not [if you are not going to take all my money and all these nice articles of clothing], please let your servant be given

two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord.”

Now we get to the point I have been driving at this whole time: Why did Naaman want two mule-loads of dirt from Israel? It is rather a simple thing.

Remember, the Samaritans were from Babylon. They had some Israelite blood in them because of a bit of intermingling, but they were mostly Babylonish-type people (you will find this in II Kings chapter 17) and they had the same ideas about their gods as most of the other people in the ancient Near East did. And this was it.

This Syrian general also had this belief. This belief is that the gods of a particular land were tied to that land—that they had geographical boundaries—and if they crossed out of those geographic boundaries, the god did not have this much power. So what Naaman was asking for here is just a little pinch, if you will, of the land of Israel that he could take back to his palace or whatever (his home) back in Damascus, make something (get some wood and make a frame), and he could pour in his two mule-loads of dirt from Israel and on that he could set his altar and give sacrifices to God—because he was sacrificing then on Israel’s God’s land which he had brought with him from Israel.

So they tied the land with the god. It was like the god was tethered to that particular area—that dirt, those rocks, that grass, those trees of that particular land—and if you left that particular land, you were in the realm of some other god who was tethered to those rocks, that dirt, those trees, that grass. Do you understand my meaning?

So when this woman of Samaria says “We worship here on this mountain,” she was thinking the exact same thing. The god that we worship is tethered to this mountain and if we go away from this mountain the god does not have as much power, and it wanes as you get further away. She thought that is the same thing the Jews thought and they did indeed have a kind of idea like this. It was tempered by what they had been taught about God. But they believed that God was in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem alone, and that is where you went to worship. So the woman of Samaria is just repeating a cultural belief that everybody had, that the gods were the gods of places.

Jesus is essentially blowing that idea to smithereens. The God that He came from—the God that He was preaching, the Father who was seeking those to worship Him—was a God who owned the whole earth. It did not matter where on earth you were, you could still worship Him. You did not need two mule-loads of dirt out of Israel to worship in Southern California, or Chicago (Illinois), or wherever you happen to be because God is everywhere. They did not have an idea of God as omnipresent or omniscient. They thought that He was in a particular place and that He might know more than you did, but He still was limited by where He was.

So Jesus Christ here is just blowing the Samaritan's woman mind by saying "No, the God I preach is a great God who is everywhere. He's not only on this mountain, He's not only in Jerusalem; He's over in Babylon, He's in Rome, He's in Greece, He's in England. He is everywhere, all over this world, at any time. You don't need to be in a particular place to worship this God."

Let us go to II Kings chapter 17. We will see that this was an idea that the Samaritans began their existence in the land of Israel with. Let us read a couple of verses here starting in verse 24.

**II Kings 17:24-28** Then the King of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel [this was after Israel was conquered]; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them. So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land" [that is three times that principle is said in those verses]. Then one of the priests [of course, this was an

Israelite priest, not a Levitical priest, that is neither here or there] whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel [which was one of the cultic centers of northern Israel or the northern kingdom], and taught them how they should fear the Lord [from a northern Israelite perspective; not the truth necessarily].

Like I said, it was this idea that there was a god tethered to a particular area of land that was a very strong cultural idea that they kept for 700 years or so until Jesus came. That is why I said it was blowing this woman's mind that there could be a different kind of God that could be worshipped anywhere.

Let us go back to John 4. So when Jesus speaks to her about worshipping in spirit and in truth, He is hitting her with a strange and new truth that is totally foreign to her. And it is blowing her mind. It is making her think beyond her own cultural biases. It is opening her mind to what is true. This is why, when you follow along here, the next thing she says is about the Messiah. She said, "This is the sort of thing that we've have been told the Messiah will say. He's going to come and teach us all things." Because her mind was certainly being expanded by this concept.

She immediately thinks, "Hey, this is the sort of stuff that we've been told the Messiah will say." And Jesus obliges her and says, "You're absolutely right; I am He, I am the Christ," which is amazing because this is the first time outside of His disciples that He had ever said anything like that to anyone—to this Samaritan woman who is an adulteress, a multiple serial adulteress. She is the first one He says right out, "I am the Messiah." This is an incredible thing.

Jesus' use of the term "in spirit and in truth" is very similar to Paul's use of the term "sincerity and truth" (I Corinthians 5:8). 'Spirit' here is the word 'pneuma' (without 'hagios,' 'hagion,' or any of that around), so it is talking about spirit and not necessarily 'Holy Spirit.' He is using it in its general form. Of course, the Holy Spirit is present within 'worshipping in spirit' but I want to kind of set that aside because we need to understand what He is talking about here. This idea of spirit, then, is very similar to Paul's idea of sincerity.



If you remember, what we saw there in I Corinthians chapter 5 verse 8 is that it is part of a phrase: He talks about ‘malice and wickedness’ being the leavened bread and then he talks about the unleavened bread which is ‘sincerity and truth.’ So what we saw there is that ‘malice and sincerity’ were being opposed to one another and ‘wickedness and truth’ were being opposed to one another. What comes out of this is that the first two (malice and sincerity) have to do with internal and inward things, and the wickedness and the truth tend to have to do with outward things—things that one can see. So the first pairing has to do with attitude and character whereas this second pairing (wickedness and truth) has to do with talking and doing and your walk with God—the things you do on a daily basis. One is inward (the malice and the sincerity) and one is outward (wickedness and truth). That is kind of how we have been going on these three sermons.

So, by ‘spirit,’ Jesus is saying in the same way Paul is talking about sincerity, that we have to worship God with a sincere mind or a true heart. He is talking about our attitude and our character as we worship God, that it is part of this relationship that we have. What He is getting at here is that, in the relationship that we (Christians) have with the Father and Son, we are on the same wavelength—not just that we are communing with Him through spiritual means, but we are on the same internal wavelength as far as our attitude and our character go—that our attitude and our character internally mirror His.

You know when we say “We’re on the same wavelength,” usually that means we are thinking the same things, we are in the same groove, we are going in the same direction, or (like the term I used last time) we are in syzygy. This spirit, this sincerity, means that our hearts and minds are on the same wavelength as God’s, that we are vibrating at the same tempo or what have you, that He and we agree internally about all these things. Really the same thing goes with truth as well, that our lives (or the way we live, the way we talk) is on the same wavelength as His.

So we can have a relationship with the Father and the Son only when our hearts and our minds have been purified through the blood of Christ. That is what initially gets us in to a relationship with Him. Because Jesus Christ died for our sins, we accept the blood of Christ as payment for our sins and by

that, the way to God is opened up. So we are covered by the blood of Christ when we come before Him and we remain covered by the blood of Christ as long as we maintain this relationship with the Father. He accepts us through Christ. And we have to add one more point on how it is maintained. It is maintained by continuing to become sanctified, by continuing in the sanctification process. Meaning, we are striving, we are cooperating with the Father and the Son to become holy and righteous as They are.

It is not just the initial justification that we are given through the blood of Christ that opens up the relationship. It is also the sanctification that maintains the relationship. And this is done because of the spiritual connection we have with our God and Father. So there are two parts there. There is the sanctification or justification through His blood. There is the sanctification through the process of growth, overcoming, and producing fruit and that sort of thing.

This kind of worship does not depend on holy times, places, appurtenances, or ceremonies. Why? Because we are always connected to Him. We have a relationship with Him that is ongoing. It is always happening. We are always connected to Him through His life being lived in us. It never ends. Our God does not go away, and come back, and go away, and come back. He is always there in us by His Spirit. So our worship is continuous. It never ends.

Think of it this way. You are worshipping God on Tuesday just as you are worshipping Him on the Sabbath, through the relationship. Because God never goes away. He is always with us through His Spirit. It does not matter whether we are in Jersey or in Jerusalem to worship God—because He is always with us. It does not matter if we have on our dirty work clothes or we are dressed to the nines in our Sabbath wear, He is always with us. It does not matter if we are attending a baptism or whether we are bathing our kids in the tub. It is an opportunity for worship because He is with us.

He is always there. We are always worshipping Him in spirit because there is always a spiritual relationship. And the worship is our response to Him in everything, all the time. It is our response to every situation, every word, every cross look. Everything that we get throughout the day is part of our

worship. It not only includes things like prayer and study, meditation, church attendance, and singing hymns. Those are all wonderful ways that we worship Him, that we participate with Him in things.

But it also includes things like our being faithful each day. It also talks about our continual obedience when times are good and when times are bad. It is also about overcoming our sins, growing, and becoming greater and better at doing what God wants you to do. It is producing fruit. It is all of that. All of those things are part of worship. It speaks to our constant spiritual connection and reverence for God.

Look at John 17:20-23. Notice what He says here. This is part of His prayer as well.

**John 17:20-23** [He says:] “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

He is saying this is what we need. We need to be united with the Father and Son all the time to make our witness to the world to let them know that this is the way of God, this is the way of love, this is the way that God perfects His people. But that is only half the equation. That is just worshipping in spirit. We cannot, as many mainstream and evangelical Christians do, forget or discount or diminish the other half, which is worshipping in truth.

I was going through a bunch of study Bibles (I own about half a dozen of them), and I wanted to see what they said about ‘spirit and truth,’ and you know what? They did not say very much at all. I went to a well-known systematic theology textbook that is out there on this passage, in John 4:23-24, to find out what they said about it. And you know what? It was all about worshipping in spirit. Hardly anything about worshipping in truth. Were the

authors avoiding it? I got to think that they probably were because had they really delved into worshipping in truth, it would have opened a can of worms for them.

Now, we saw a few minutes ago that worshipping in truth has to do with outward worship. It is what we do, it is what we say, not the internal parts but the outward, external parts. It is the way we live. It is the way we talk. It is the way we walk. It is our interactions with other people. We have to do these things in truth.

I want to go to a series of scriptures here. I am just going to read them very quickly, and they are all in the book of John. I want you to see something. You will see this very quickly. It is all about Jesus Christ.

**John 1:4-5** [It says:] In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

**John 1:9** That was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 1:16-17** And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**John 6:32** [Jesus said to these people who were following Him] “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.”

**John 6:35** “I am the bread of life.”

**John 8:13-16** The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.” Jesus answered and

said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.”

Aha! The Father was in Him, and He was telling the truth.

Let us go to the same chapter, verse 31.

**John 8:31-32** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

This next one is a memory verse:

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

**John 14:15-16** If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, [which] the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I [He says] will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

That sounds an awful lot like He is the Spirit of truth. Let us go to chapter 15 verse 1.

**John 15:1** “I am the true vine.”

Here He is talking to Pilate:

**John 18:36-37** Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not

from here.” Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth [listens to Me].”

This is just a smattering of verses, especially in the book of John, that characterize Jesus as truth, or true. Now we need to see in these passages that He is not just called ‘true’ or ‘the truth.’ Notice how it is phrased: He is the true something. He is the true this or that. I will just go through some of these here.

1. He is the true light.
2. He is an example of truth.
3. He is the true bread.
4. He is the true witness.
5. He is the bringer of true freedom.
6. He is the true way.
7. He is the true vine (meaning He is the true connection to the Father).
8. He is the true king and ruler of all things whose every action and every word made a witness for the truth.

This makes plain and clear the simple fact that the truth is in Jesus Christ. But it is even more simple and plain than that. More directly, *the truth is Christ*. I could have read the first verse of John: He is called the Word (“In the beginning was the Word,” the sayings of God). He exemplifies and models and is the standard for everything that God ever said. He embodies the truth. This means that, in that position, whatever He did sets an example for us in terms of our worship, our daily living.

Our worship of God must be inward and outward, just as His was because He is our model and our standard of true living. If He had compassion on the sick, so should we. If He was generous with His skills and with His abilities, so should we be. If He was kind and loving, so should we. If He spurned self-righteousness and ostentation, so should we. If He took suffering with patient endurance, so should we. If He prayed frequently in private, so should we. If He sighed and cried over the abominations of men, so should we.

Now, all these are things that most Christians understand about the character of Jesus Christ. They are very clear that He was that kind of Man. And they grudgingly accept that they should probably do those things. But notice Luke 4:16. I go to Luke for a very important reason because Luke was written primarily to a Gentile audience. But notice what Luke brings out.

**Luke 4:16** So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read [He taught them on the Sabbath day].

Let us go to chapter 6:5-6.

**Luke 6:5-6** [He says:] “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.” Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught.

Let us go to chapter 13:10. And these are very clear and obvious.

**Luke 13:10** Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

Do you think the Gentiles, who were receiving this, are not getting a message here about what Jesus did?

**Luke 22:14-15** And when the hour had come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”

**Luke 22:17-19** Then He took the cup, and gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

What is He saying? “Keep the Passover just as I kept the Passover.” We could go to other places (John 7: He kept the Feast of Tabernacles). And we could go on through the whole New Testament to show either Him or His apostles keeping the holy days. How difficult is that? If Jesus Christ embodies the Word of God, and that is the part of the truth that we need to keep as part of our worship, then that is what we should be doing.

Let us go to John 14. Notice that the scriptures cited above contain valuable information about worshipping in truth.

**John 14:15** “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

**John 14:21** “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

**John 15:9-10** “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”

The thing that the Christians of this world have done is they have gotten rid of worshipping in truth. They pick and they choose. You cannot do that. You cannot pick and choose what you want to keep and what you want to discard.



The same One who commands us to worship in spirit also commands us to worship in truth, and that includes keeping God's commandments—all of them, including the fourth commandment. The externals are as important as the internals, though they are a bit behind in their manifestation because we usually know what to do before we start to practice it. Sometimes it takes a while to do it, and we have to do it in faith before maybe we understand. Mr. Armstrong did that with the holy days. He kept the holy days for a long time before he really understood them. But he knew God wanted him to do it because it is said in God's Word.

So, as He says in these verses, we abide—we continue, we live—in God's love when we keep His commandments. We do not want to find ourselves outside the bounds of His love by failing to keep what He said we are to do.

So, let us end in I John 2. John was fighting this his entire ministry. It was a form of Gnosticism where the people believed that all they had to do was have the knowledge of what was right, but they did not have to *do* anything—it was all inward and spiritual, and their flesh could do whatever. What he gives us here is a clear line of reckoning, a test if you will, of whether we know the Father and the Son—whether we have the relationship that is going to end in eternal life. And here it is.

**I John 2:3** Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

It is that simple. If we are keeping the commandments, we know that we are knowing Him—we are in a relationship with Him—because we could not do it otherwise.

**I John 2:4-6** He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar [he is a fraud; he is deceived], and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in Him. By this we know that we are in Him [and He in us]. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

That is the key. It all comes down to one simple directive: If you want to continue in, if you want to maintain, the relationship with God—the relationship with the Father and with the Son—walk through life just as He walked and talk just as He talked and think just as He thought and live as God lives.