

Shaped By The News

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 14-Apr-18; Sermon #1428c

Here is a question as we begin: Do we recognize truths? That is an important concept for us to think about because we are hearing things constantly through the day. Is what is coming toward us something that should be accepted as a truth?

According to Webster's Dictionary, "truth" is "that which is in accordance with fact" or "a standard that is known to be true as a result of much testing." Also, truth can be defined by a few well-known synonyms such as "a certainty" or "a reality." But synonyms regarding truth tend to be wordy and awkward to use.

God's Word makes clear to us that *it* is truth, as stated in John 17:17 by saying, "Your word is truth," and thus it can be trusted.

When Evelyn and I came into the church in the late 1950s, members commonly asked of others, "When did you come into the truth?", rather than asking, "When did you come into the church?" At first, I remember thinking that that the question was strange, but eventually it dawned on me that I was not converted by the church, I was converted by the meanings of words of truth and the other members also believed—same words. I was the impact the truths had on me contained in the words that were most important not the organization.

It was Pontius Pilate who asked the question of Jesus, regarding whether He was a king, that motivated Jesus to respond using the term "truth," and that in turn motivated Pilate to respond with the question, "What is truth?" I do not know what inflection he put on that, but he put some inflection on it as he was judging Jesus before His crucifixion and the hunting of truth might have been on his mind. I am sure that Pilate's attitude was one of weary skepticism, born of hearing slanted versions of truths from thousands of mouths of fellow Roman politicians and citizens, as well as Jewish citizens appearing before him, seeking relief from some Roman law that they felt unjust for some reason. And I am sure virtually everybody responded during their testimony that their version of the event that caused them to be before him was the true one, and I am sure that Pilate was implying that the term "truth" is very easily twisted.

What is of particular interest in Jesus' case is that during His trial, Jesus was not appealing for relief from any charges whatever, even though He was completely innocent of what the Jews who had hailed Him before the Roman governor were

Shaped by the News by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

complaining regarding him. As you know, Pilate went on to say, "I find no fault in this man."

I believe that you are at least somewhat aware of how suspicious Americans are concerning what they hear or read from our media, especially that media that represents government or leftist positions on virtually anything considered by them as news. Brethren, it is a truth confirmed by God's word that Satan has used lies very effectively—so effectively that mankind cannot tell the difference between spiritual truths and lies in order that they might live by faith in God and His purpose. They are at the mercy of what anybody tells them, unless they have experience in that area and know what is true and what is not.

In fact, public lying by the news media is so common these days that the term "fake news" has become a common term to describe it. That term tells us that what we are hearing in news broadcasts has a high probability that very little of it is actually true. This is because so many within the media—listen carefully to this—are driven by character corrupted by the double lures of their desires for personal fame and fortune and bound together with strongly prejudicial opinions that began to be nurtured in family life without the guidance of a fairly strong Christian-like moral foundation. All this lying gets its start right in the family. But the absences of the Christian-like character continued to be strengthened by the liberal-progressivism fertilizing the minds and character in the government and corporately-controlled educational systems, and most especially the universities.

What we are seeing now in the American public has been building for decades, so the news can't be trusted. Thus, I am saying, in an overall sense, that we have been victimized by the god of this world's systems, and therefore much of the news that we hear is indeed fake and used almost indiscriminately to shape public opinion, and especially how Americans vote. Do you realize those people are doing that almost constantly now?

I recently read a sizable chunk of a recently published book sent to be by Mark Schindler. It was authored by Cheryl Atkinson, who is a television broadcaster. She has written many, many exposé-type books, besides the television broadcasting. That book is titled, "The Smear." Subtitle: "How shady politician, political operatives, and fake news control what you see, what you think and how you vote." She holds little back by naming the names of these people who are openly doing this before the American public on our broadcasting systems.

Perhaps I sometimes need my blinders adjusted because I am too idealistic, too

Shaped by the News by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

accepting, but I clearly had exposed to me that there are people in the media business who live and earned their profits by being hired professionally by adversaries to destroy reputation by lies, right on the front page, so to speak. it's not even hidden anymore. That's why Donald Trump gets away with it so easily, calling all this stuff "fake news," because it's the truth—an awful lot of it is fake. It is just made up.

The destruction is accomplished by these people through cleverly manipulated lies, and the public's willingness to accept the lies. The two most notable and most blatant attempts in recent years were those mounted against Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas. They were on the front pages, practically every day, hearing lies about themselves.

However, do not go too far, though because this practice—"fake news"—is as old as the hills. Let me give you a biblical example. It happened almost like it was on the front page of the New York Times. It was achieved by Jezebel—everybody knows Jezebel—using fake news in I Kings 21:1-14 to destroy the reputation of her neighbor Naboth, accusing him of something he was not guilty of, so that it resulted in him being publicly stoned, and he died, and his property was secured by her husband, King Ahab. Fake news did that. He was absolutely not guilty.