

**Ancient Advice for a Modern World: Knowing Truth**

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1 Timothy 2:1-7

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I have a little quiz for you this morning.

- Don't worry, no one will be grading your results.

- It's a true and false quiz

- and there are only five questions.

If you'd like, you can grab a pencil and your bulletin

- and let's get started.

- Here's your first question.

True or false -

- St. Michael was started in 1968.

- The answer is true.

- St. Mark and St. Peter voted to merge in 1968

- which means we are coming up on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- of the founding of this congregation.

OK - here's number two.

- True or false -

- St. Michael has hosted 10 Thanksgiving Day Meals for the community.

- The answer is true.

- This coming year will be the 11<sup>th</sup> year for the

- Community Thanksgiving Meal

- which means somewhere in excess of 1200 people

- have shared in that meal across the years.

OK - here's number three,

- True or false -

- The offerings from the 53 people who were in Sunday School last week

- will be given to help support a seminary student

- at the Lutheran Seminary in Columbia, SC.

- True,

- over the last few years our Sunday School offerings

- have helped support two seminary students.

Here's number four -

- True or false -

- Thanks to God's grace, Christ Jesus came to save sinners.

- True -

- Now, I have to admit that I asked this question because,

- I wanted to see how many of you remembered

- the good news of God's unconditional

- love, mercy and forgiveness

- that we talked about last Sunday.

- And finally,

- True or false -

- God desires everyone to come to the knowledge of truth.
- The answer is true.
- In Timothy today,
  - that's exactly what we hear - - -
  - “God our Savior, . . .
  - desires everyone to be saved
  - and to come to the knowledge of truth.”

*(1 Timothy 2:1-7)*

Think for a moment

- about the wonderful good news we just heard.
- God desires everyone to be saved
  - and God desires everyone to come to know truth.
- God through an outpouring of grace,
  - of unearned love, mercy and forgiveness,
  - which comes to us in Jesus Christ,
  - opens the door for all people
    - to be in an eternal relationship with God.
- Now the truth is - -
  - that God gives us free will
    - and some people will turn away from this invitation -
    - this gift,
    - but that doesn't change the good news

- that the invitation is offered - -

- the gift of salvation is freely given

- for all God's people.

- And in addition to this gift of salvation,

- or perhaps because of this gift of salvation,

- God also wants us to come to the knowledge of truth.

- Unfortunately in today's confusing and varied world,

- seeking truth isn't always easy.

- In fact, in many ways we find ourselves asking

- the same question Pilate asked of Jesus

- a long, long time ago –

“What is truth?” (*John 18:38*)

- Getting people, especially people of faith,

- to agree upon the truth

- or a truth these days

- can be fairly difficult.

- For example,

- take Global Warming.

- There are a group of people who say that Global Warming is true.

- They believe that we are called to be good stewards of creation

- and so we must change our ways

- and stop this process.

- There are another group of people who say Global Warming is a lie.
  - They believe that we don't need to change a thing
    - about our stewardship of creation.
- Each group will cite statistics and claim
  - that their point of view is the absolute truth.
    - Which leads one to ask - - -
      - whose truth
        - is actually true.
    - The answer, of course, depends on whose facts you believe - - -
      - and if you think about it,
        - Global Warming is just one example.
    - The question of whose truth is actually true,
      - is being debated every day
        - all around the world.
  - Whether you are talking about science
    - or religion
      - or relationships,
        - it seems there are always groups of people on any issue
          - offering their opinion
            - about what is and is not the truth.
- For good or for bad,
  - we live in a relativistic society.

- Everything seems to be a shade of grey.
  - It is extremely hard to get a group of people
    - to agree upon
      - a judgement, proposition or idea
        - that everyone can accept as a fact.

- I mean,

- if I said

- “The sky is blue.”

- Someone would quickly say

- “Well, it is blue, but

- the clouds are white,

- so the truth is the sky is blue and white.”

- Which is why, - -

- I’m so glad

- that the author of first Timothy

- didn’t stop at verse four

- and leave us to try and decide what truth he was talking about.

- No,

- I give thanks that he continues on with verse five

- and lays out a basic truth

- that he believed God wanted us to know - -

- namely

- “There is one God;
  - there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
    - Christ Jesus, himself human,
      - who gave himself a ransom for all.” (*1 Timothy 2:5*)
- Now, I realize
  - there are non-Christians
    - who would assert that this statement is false,
      - but for us as people of God,
        - for us as people who believe that out of love,
          - God sent us Jesus to save us, - -
    - for us, this statement is a basic, truth
      - that we can all agree upon.
  - Whether we are Christians, - -
    - who call ourselves Lutherans,
      - or Catholics,
        - or Methodists,
          - or Baptists,
    - we can all agree that
      - “There is one God;
        - there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
          - Christ Jesus, himself human,
            - who gave himself a ransom for all.” (*1 Timothy 2:5*)

- And while Christians may disagree
  - about who this one God calls us to be in the world,
    - and how this one God calls us to worship
      - and what a life of faith following this one God should look like,
- we can all agree
  - that there is only one God.
- We can all agree
  - that Jesus Christ,
    - God's Son
      - was born of Mary
        - and died to save us from our sins.
- We can all agree,
  - that this truth
    - has powerful meaning for our lives.
- For when we know the truth that God exists,
  - and when we know the truth that Jesus Christ became human
    - to repair the brokenness in our relationship with God,
      - and when we know the truth, that this salvation is offered for all,
- then we know we are a part of something larger than ourselves and our time,
  - which means as children of God
    - we care about issues like stewardship of creation,
      - and God's ministry in places like Slidell, Louisiana,

- Papua, New Guinea and Malawi, Africa.

- When we know the truth that God exists,
  - when we know the truth that Jesus Christ became human
    - to repair the brokenness in our relationship with God,
      - when we know the truth, that this salvation is offered for all,
- then we know that God's love for each of us
  - is as vast as the stars in the sky,
    - which means as children of God, - -
      - we are secure in the knowledge
        - that despite our mistakes and shortcomings,
          - God always has and always will be with us.
- When we know the truth that God exists,
  - when we know the truth that Jesus Christ became human
    - to repair the brokenness in our relationship with God,
      - when we know the truth, that this salvation is offered for all,
  - then we know
    - that each person we see
      - whether we are walking the streets of our neighborhood,
        - or looking at an image from around the world, ---
          - each one of those faces belongs to a child of God
            - that God desires to experience salvation,
  - which means as children of God

- we treat other people with dignity and respect,
  - we offer assistance and help to those in need,
    - we work for a time when peace will replace conflict
      - and we are intentional about sharing God's story
        - with those around us.
- Oh - the world may have a hard time agreeing upon whose truth is true,
  - but as people of God,
    - we know the truth
      - that there is one God
        - who sent Jesus to bring healing and hope
          - to all God's people.
- And the good news for us this morning,
  - is that this word of truth
    - can serve as an anchor for our lives
      - as we stand in the midst of our confusing world
    - and can provide for us a foundation
      - upon which we can build
        - whole, healthy lives of faith.