

"Bringing Truth to Life"

Dallas Willard, Navigators, Colorado Springs, 2008

Scribe's Comments - The session was transcribed from the audio recordings in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** and underline offer the scribe's emphasis and the [brackets] offer commentary or clarity to the content.



"Bringing Truth to Life" Series (separate files)

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|---|---|---------------|
| 1 | "Truth Overview & Relational Discipling" | [41:55] |
| 2 | <u>"What is Truth?"</u> | [1:05:30] |
| 3 | <u>"Good News that Makes Disciples"</u> | [48:40] + Q&A |
| 4 | <u>"The Bible as the Source of Truth"</u> | [49:25] + Q&A |



Session 1 — "Bringing Truth to Life" (audio) [41:55]

Conference Introduction

"I always remember our times here in the Castle, a wonderful place God has given and the wonderful people who fill it with their wonderful service."

Overview of Session Themes

1st Night - Overview

(Handing out 4 pages of notes from a talk at Southern Methodist University a few years ago.)

Topic - "*Bringing Truth to Life*"

"Nav" has used long in their publications.

Core Values...on page 8 (of session handout)

= **Truth** and sufficiency of Scripture for the whole of life

= **Families** & Relational networks discipling the nations [30:05 - p.5]

"Tonight's Session — *Bringing Truth to Life*" [2:45]

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer - John 17:16-17

Jesus was praying for His disciples. One of the great joys of life is to know He never quit. Jesus is still praying for us. He is our intercessor. It was necessary for him to go away from the form He was on Earth so He could be more effectively present to billions of people as Lord to deal with them and you & me individually.

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* Today's technology - Possible to be in touch with millions of people.

Jesus is now interceding for us. His prayer is very helpful when you understand what it means.

John 17:16-17 - *"They are not of the world even as I am not of the world."*

What He means - There is another order than the world.

The **"world"** in the Bible (def.):

"How natural human energies have been organized at a social level."

Three Problems: The World - The Flesh - The Devil (Ephesians 2)

I John 2 - *Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, Pride of Life*

Three things Eve mentioned in the Garden

Three things Jesus mentions in Matthew 4

A system is the one that runs on **"desire"** - motivation of the flesh.

Christian don't think "desire" is bad. They leave that to the Stoics & Buddhists. Desire has to be ordered, then it is wonderful.

The world is an organized way of living. Jesus is saying, *"They are not of the world."* They partake in another **system**...just as He lived from another system. That other system is **the Kingdom of God.**

Paul, "Our citizenship is in Heaven" and he did not have to leave earth for that to be true because the Kingdom of God is here.

I. 1st Core Value - Truth

[07:35]

"Sanctify them in the truth." (John 17:17)

The whole system of the world would breakdown if people lived in the truth.

Probably 97% of all the wrong people do, they do on the assumption they can hide it. They can't but they assume. All the stuff you hear on the news would never happen if they knew they could not hide. Truth is an incredibly powerful thing and the world is environed in darkness.

People don't like the Light. *"Men prefer darkness to light."* Jesus was full of light. He prays. *"Sanctify them in truth."* It just doesn't mean religious truth. He's talking about all truth. That is the playing field of God. When you decide to live in truth, you automatically step into another world. That's what **Sanctification** means - to set it apart in a different realm.

Very people can stand that unless they are also trusting Jesus.

"The truth will make you flee."

John - *"The Law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."*

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That's the only TRUTH that enables us to live in TRUTH at all otherwise we are going to hide. That's what the law does to you when you don't understand grace. The Law makes you hide. The Law is not capable of bringing people up to it's holiness and goodness. The Law is good. It is an expression of how God does things.

Psalm 119 - The Law is a vision of how God does things.

Romans 8 - *"Law was weak in the flesh...the Son showed up sin for what it is in the flesh...Righteous might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh."*

Flesh is not bad until you make it your god, and then it is death.

"Walk after the Spirit" - The Spirit of truth will guide you into all things.

"Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17)

[12:25]

I hope you will meditate on that verse. Stepping into the TRUTH puts you in the realm of the Kingdom of God but only the TRUTH that comes in God's Word enables you to do that.

Relationships growing is a reflection of the power of truth, not just spoken but exemplified. We're not talking about perfection. We're just talking about doing the simple things. The Word of God brings them to life and they are in a different realm. Truth does that. It puts you in touch with God. It brings you to new life from above. It gives you a character that is eternal.

"The one who keeps my word will never see death because they are already living in eternity." (John 8)

The life they are living is continuous and when the shell drops off, they keep going.

How you go wrong in Sanctification - try to be sanctified. [14:30]

Sanctification is a side effect of something else. We suffer so badly in our traditions from people who define it as it would come under human control. Has to do with exteriors of some kinds - what you would do and don't do. But you don't go at it that way.

Sanctification comes from living in the truth and that comes from taking in the Word of God. Don't make up one of your own. Go to one that is already here, the word in Jesus. Listen the words. Take the personal Word - Jesus - through the pages of the Bible, the written Word and put the words into practice. That's how it works. If you want to step into the realm of the Kingdom of God, you take Jesus' words from his primary message,

"Turn, the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand." (**Matthew 4:17**)

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First, we turn. We enter the Kingdom of Heaven. How do we do that? By relying on Jesus because He is the King of the Kingdom. He is the one who issues the invitation. Here He is now in the world all over the place, certainly the most famous man in the world. *"If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."* That's still going on. We have not made it to the ends of the Earth. There are a lot of churches that have not heard about the Kingdom of God. The primary place for discipleship of evangelism in our world today is the American church. I know how hungry people are to hear it. Light bulbs go on when you explain it the way Jesus presented it in the context of Jesus the person. It is such good news. What it means now is you can enter the Kingdom of the Heavens. If you want to go to Heaven, don't wait, go now. When you do, you take his teachings and put them into practice.

For example, when someone hits you on the cheek, you turn the other one. Don't think of that as something terrible to do and when you do it will ruin your life. When you're hurt, you can remain vulnerable because you are in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is a perfectly safe place for you to be.

Romans 8:28 - *"All things work together for the good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes."*

Not everything is good. Everything works together with everything else "for good". Notice it does not say for best. You might be able to think of something that is better. Everything is redeemable no matter what happens. That's why this Earth is a perfectly safe place for a person who is living in the Kingdom of God. That's why Jesus said, *"Don't worry."*

* Alfred E Newman, "Who me worry?"

"Don't be anxious...pray...Peace of God that passes all understanding..."

You don't write a check on that account unless you are the person who is loving God and called according to His purposes.

Because of that, some interesting things follow.

[20:45] **Matthew 11:11-12** - *"No one greater than John the Baptist...yet those who are least in the Kingdom are greater than John the Baptist."*

Why are they greater? Because they stand in a different relationship to the Kingdom of the Heavens and the King that John didn't have. Don't worry about John. He'll be in Heaven. When the Bible talks about the Kingdom of Heavens, it is not Heaven after you die. It is the rule of God in this world right now. Obviously it takes care of Heaven later and way off, too. That's not the focus. [\[see Talk #3 - "Good News that Makes Disciples" @ 22:00\]](#)

Sometimes it is the focus. If you die tonight, where will you go? But we also have to answer the question, if you don't die tonight, where will you go?

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That's a serious question for a businessman, a teacher. If I don't die, I have to deal with tomorrow. That's where the Kingdom of the Heavens come in. There is only one gospel and that is trust Jesus, the whole person. When you trust Him, you enter a Kingdom.

Jesus had a lot to say about His words and the Bible is full of teaching about the power of the Word.

Joshua 1:8

[23:38]

"This book of the law will not depart out of your mouth..."

Not out of your mind. Your mouth is where you want it.

That puts the word into your life.

"Meditate on it day and night...then you will be prosperous..."

That verse is worth more than most college educations. Show me a college that can give you something like that after four years of hard work and thousands of dollars. You need to go to college, too, but as you go keep the book of the law in your mouth. You'll profit wonderfully from education If you think you're college education is going to help your life, you're going to have to think again because there is not enough there to help your life.

Psalm 1

[25:00]

"Man planted by the river and it brings forth it's fruit in season, whatever it does it will prosper."

You'll have to re-interpret prosper in light of the kingdom of God not lust of the eyes, flesh and pride of life.

Jesus has something much better for you.

"Abide in me, my words abide in you, Ask whatever you wish, and it will be given unto you...bear much fruit and prove that you are my disciples.

You have to have it but then you live it.

John 8:31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Abide like you live in a house is to abide in my Word then watch what happens. Once you study that, then you put it into practice.

"Turn the other cheek" - When you put that into practice and trusting the kingdom of God, then the Kingdom of God begins to act and that's how you come to know it. You are my apprentices, because of that you will know the truth.

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* "Truth will set you free" on university buildings [28:00]

If they build that buildings now, they wouldn't put up there. I'd be surprised if a donor could give enough to get people to put that on a building at a local university.

* USC Elevator, "The Truth will make you free." Apparently you don't even have to know it.

When you put his word into practice in fear & trembling, not arrogance and pride, you watch what happens. A whole new set of dynamics begin to take place. All of a sudden, you find you're free from the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life! You can walk off from sin and temptation without feeling like your missing anything. In John 8, he was talking to people who were slaves to sin and pretending they were righteous and they thought they were righteous but they were slaves to sin. The truth of God comes and then the transformation begins to take place.

II. 2nd Core Value - Relationship Discipling

[30:05]

Only Sanctified lives can disciple the nations through FAMILIES and relational networks.

That is to say lives that are remarkably different because they are living in a different world. Those lives can transform those that they come in contact with.

The time of the greatest expansion of Christianity was undoubtedly in the earliest centuries of the Christian era. When you study it it is astonishing what happened. It spread like the flu. There were almost no mass meetings. It was almost entirely individuals skin on skin with other individuals. In that context, the superiority of the life that is sanctified in the truth was so blazingly apparent, you had to try to kill them or join them. In cases like the Apostle Paul, you do both. Kill a few of them then join them.

People only become apprentices of Jesus when they see the overwhelming goodness of life that it brings and they choose it over everything else. [32:00]

"If you don't hate your mother & father, you can't follow me."

Luke 14:26-27

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Often when Jesus said something, He said it in such a way they didn't need to write it down. Jesus taught in a way you didn't have to memorize it. It would stick in you like a cocklebur.

If you're going to be His disciple, it has to be the most important thing in your world. There can't be anything more important than to be with Him and learning to be like Him. If there is something else more important, you will not learn those lessons.

* Pearl of Great Price - Merchant sold every pearl to buy the one pearl.
"This is what I've been waiting for."

* Treasure in the Field

The person who says, *"In comparison to Jesus, it looks like I hate everything else"* is not an unhappy person. That is a person who says, *"I have found the greatest opportunity I will ever have in my life."*

If you have people who are sanctified in the Word and it has taken over their character, people around them want that.

* Charles Finney - Minister in this country is like a lawyer stating what he is going to prove to the the court who calls his witnesses and every witness contradicts him.

We have fallen into a period where we have accepted Christians who are not disciples. You don't have to be a disciple to be a Christian in the U.S.

In church after church, when people are accepted into the membership, nothing is said about learning from Jesus how to do what Jesus said. Nothing is said about love in most churches. People line up a faith and practice and if you agree with that, you get to be a Christian. That's where we get a church that has lost it's way. What they have is not contagious. That's why we have to have para-church groups that do the simple work of the local assemblies. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they went out of business because the local churches were doing it before they got there. Then we could concentrate on places where no one's heard it yet.

Renovation of the Heart, page 41-42

[38:18]

Description of what happens for those who enter the Kingdom.

"Once our spirit becomes alive in God through the new birth, the process of subduing all aspects of the self under God can begin. This is the process

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of Spiritual transformation viewed in its entirety. Spiritual transformation happens only as each essential dimension of the human being is transformed to Christlikeness under the direction of a regenerate will interacting with constant overtures of grace from God. Such transformation is not the result of mere human effort and cannot be accomplished by putting pressure on the will alone."

That is saying to people, "If you would just try harder, you'd be able to do all these good things.." No, trying is not the answer. You have to **TRAIN** your thoughts, your feelings, your body, and all the aspects of your self, your social relations, you train them where they flow in the love of God. That's the process of discipleship and that comes about through taking the Word of God, internalize it and living it out. That means you're going to have to have some discipline, fellowship and teaching. That's what a disciple does. We have to have the standard set right. That's why in our thinking about our projects, we want the focus to be obedience to Christ from inner transformation.

You will occasionally see a church get worried about its result that will suggest more Bibles studies or greater commitment of resources to the work of God. Those are good things. That's not the aim. **The aim is to have people who walk easily and routinely in the holiness and power of Jesus Christ. That's the outcome of discipleship - easy, routine obedience.**

We have to talk about it to help people realize that is what it is about. **Sanctification is the easy life.**

Jesus - *"Come unto me. Take my yoke...learn from me."*

That's the process of discipleship.

"For I am meek and lowly and you will find rest unto your soul."

"Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth."

God bless these thoughts to us!

~ ~ ~ **End of Session 1 @ 41:55** ~ ~ ~

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Links to a Willard Toolbox with dozens of teachings with A/V & notes:

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