

## I want to be a Christian because I love the truth!

### ➤ Intro:

#### → 2 Th. 2:7-12

- ! vs. 7 mystery of the lawless one at work
- ! vs. 9 in accord with the activity of Satan — powers, signs, false wonders
- ! vs. 10 deception of wickedness, perish — **not receive love of the truth to be saved**  
! **love is agape**: devoted to truth to do whatever it sets forth, apart from any consequence
- ! vs. 11-12 God send upon them a deluding influence that they believe what is false, judged, **not believe** the truth but took pleasure in wickedness

#### → This lesson: I want to be a Christian because I love the truth!

- ! **Christians**: love truth, and obey Jesus (Jn. 14:6)
- ! **What is your commitment to truth?**

### ➤ #1 We are living in a postmodern society, that denies there is absolute truth. (no truth to love)

#### → What is postmodernism? — we are living in a postmodern society

- ! Postmodernism is a term used by philosophers, social scientists, art critics and social critics to refer to aspects of contemporary art, culture, economics and social conditions that are the result of the **unique features of late 20th century and early 21st century** life. Among these **features are included globalization, consumerism, the fragmentation of authority, and the commoditization of knowledge** (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

#### → Important features of postmodernism:

- ! Postmodernism was born out of the idea that **human reason should not be held as the main source of finding truth**.
- ! Postmodernists believe that there are **other ways of discovering truth other than human reason** such as **feeling, experience, stories, metaphors and intuition**. — “feel good religion” — “story telling religion” — “touchy-feely religion”
- ! Postmodernists **believe that truth is relative (with no absolutes)** and **accept and respect all beliefs as true** and equal. — **your truth is as valid as my truth** (e.g., Unitarians)

#### → What is important to postmodernists? — five core values

- ! Postmodernism is skeptical of certainty. — **nothing is certain, absolute**
- ! Postmodernism is sensitive to context. — **truth is relative to culture**
- ! Postmodernism leans toward the humorous. — **entertainment value highly important**
- ! Postmodernism highly values subjective experience. — **personal experience (feelings) take precedence**
- ! For postmoderns, togetherness is a rare, precious, and elusive experience. — **touchy-feely is cherished**
- ! **application**: as Christians we tailor our thinking to God’s word

#### → Seven things a church must adopt to grow dramatically (church growth movement, purpose driven church movement). — postmodern society — rf. many churches today

- ! **note**: take from the Saddleback Community Church "Building a Purpose-Driven Church" seminar held in Southern California - 1998
- ! Rick Warren started the church in January, 1980, in his home
  - ! built the church into a superchurch, gave seminars, “Building a Purpose-Driven Church”
  - ! wrote the book “a Purpose Driven Life” published August 2002
- ! below are points #6 and 7 — first five omitted in this lesson for time

- ! #6 **Doctrinal instruction should not be given to the church as a whole on Sunday.**
  - ! should be given in sub-groups, apart from the regular church services, as **an option** for interested parties
  - ! **aem:**
    - ! **not proclaim the "whole counsel of God"** from the pulpit (Acts 20:20-31)
    - ! **never teach doctrine, or have any evidence of doctrinal positions** communicated on **church sign or literature** available at Sunday service
    - ! **never say the word "denomination"** or talk about other religions to point out their error

- ! #7 **A spirit of compromise must prevail** in the church that is to experience dynamic growth.
  - ! embrace of **contemporary culture and style**
  - ! **What works?** things that are the least offensive, and what is positive and uplifting — nothing negative
  - ! **church leader's attitude must be (Waren):** "Don't try to tell me the Bible requires holiness and a style for worship and ministry that is different from that of the world." This "grace-in-your-face" attitude is so prevalent today because of church elders who are not willing, or not aware of how, to instruct ones to behave in the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15).
  - ! **conclusions, aem:**
    - ! never tell anyone they're wrong, always find a way to agree with everyone
    - ! never reprove and rebuke — only exhort (2 Tim. 4:2)
    - ! i.e., tickle their ears (2 Tim. 4:3)
    - ! never contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 1:3)

→ **illus.: man watches the Passion of Christ, goes home and open mail** (John Beukema, Western Springs, Illinois)

- ! **John Beukema opened the mail** that night, the first letter was from a **local church, inviting him to visit** their "special community."
- ! They listed the **ways they were unique:** (note: **only some listed below**)
  - ! **No religious dogma:** We encourage the freedom of individual thought and belief.
  - ! **A humanist view of life:** Our faith is based on celebrating the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
  - ! **Our children's religious education program:** We teach our kids to be accepting of differing beliefs and the importance of each person seeking **his or her own truth.** They study the world's major religions and draw on the core values of each faith tradition.
  - ! So if you're looking for a congregation that cherishes **freedom of belief and opinion**, with a warm sense of community and fellowship, please visit us!
- ! **quote from Mr. Beukema:** "I had watched the horrific suffering of Jesus and heard him say, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Hours later I opened an invitation to visit a group where truth doesn't matter. The contrast was overwhelming.

➤ → **Postmodernism is an old fight in a new package! (Ec. 1:9)**

- ! **historical perspective:**
  - ! **agnostics** (perhaps from shortly after creation, rejected Noah's preaching) - no absolute truth - it's impossible to know God
  - ! **Buddhism** does not believe that there is absolute truth — Buddha lived about 500 years before Christ
    - ! there are different levels of truth, but there is no absolute truth
  - ! **Plato and Aristotle** (credited with Correspondence Theory of Truth, about 400 years before Christ)
    - ! **truth corresponds to fact and reality — truth is relative**, it's dependant upon one's beliefs
    - ! Oxford English Dictionary of truth reflects the Correspondence Theory: "Truth, n. Conformity with fact; agreement with reality"
    - ! e.g., story of conversion of great Philosopher Justin Martyr by Polycarp: "What is truth?"
  - ! **Jews in Jesus' day:** taught as **doctrines the commandments of men**, neglecting the commands of God to hold their **traditions** (Mk. 7:6-8) — e.g., **doctrine of corban (truth is relative)**
  - ! **Gnostics** (first century, Paul) - pleroma (fullness) of God
    - ! Gnostic religious philosophy: **truth is esoteric** — you can come to know truth, but it is by personal

experience, guided by the spirit rather than a written word (Bible)

! **New Age Religions** (20<sup>th</sup> century): no absolute truth - truth is something felt and experienced, not something from a book (Bible)

! **“Christian” religions today: truth is relative to culture**

! e.g., show how culture changed the truth regarding these issues: women preachers, women obeying husbands, music in the church, homosexuality

! e.g., unity in diversity movement: all “Christian” religions have truth and are equal

! some conservative churches of Christ are going into apostasy today over this issue

! e.g., purpose driven church movement

! some conservative churches of Christ are going into apostasy today over this issue

→ **Summary / Application: Our postmodernism society believes there is no absolute truth.**

! **Satan’s deception:**

! if there is no absolute truth, there is no truth to love, all are lost who believe this doctrine

! **Christian’s are different:**

! believe that absolute truth is revealed in God’s word, love the truth, obey the Lord

! tailor our thinking to God’s word

➤ **#3 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked — there is absolute truth!**

→ **“truth”** definition (Webster’s):

! the state of being the case: **FACT**

! the body of real things, events, and facts : **ACTUALITY**

! often capitalized : a transcendent fundamental or **spiritual reality**

➤ → **God’s word is absolute truth! — God sets forth the facts (spiritual reality) in His word**

! **Pr. 22:20-21** words of truth, written in God’s word — certainty

➤ ! **Jn. 17:17** God’s word is truth

➤2 ! **PP - Ec. 12:10, 13-14** God word is truth: fear God and keep His commandments, judgment

➤ ! **Jn. 14:6** Jesus is truth, only way to heaven — Jesus is our “spiritual reality”

➤ ! **PP - Jn. 1:14, 17** Jesus brought truth to earth — our true “spiritual reality”

➤2 ! **PP - Jn. 12:48** - judged by Jesus’ word — absolute truth is Jesus’ word — spiritual reality is Jesus’ word

➤ ! **Acts 26:24-25** God’s word is sober truth

➤ ! **PP - Gal. 2:5** the gospel of Christ is truth

➤ → **Examples:**

! **illus.: 1 Ch. 13, 15 David (Israel) moving ark**

! **if God’s word was not absolute truth**, Uzzah would not have been killed — did what he believed

! **truth is not relative, not based on personal beliefs**

! **problem: Israel had not consulted God’s word** to find out how to move the ark, they “believed” they were doing the right thing — moving the ark the same way the Philistines moved it — **God’s word is absolute truth**

➤ ! **Paul preaching in Athens (Acts 17)** — were lost living according to their philosophical beliefs

! Stoics held a similar view of truth to Plato and Aristotle - derived from the corresponding theory of truth

! believed that truth is derived from the property, meaning, or overall essences of sentences

! that the meaning of a statement exists without the actual statement, therefore the Stoics did not see a need for statements in order to determine truth

➤ ! **PP - Acts 17:30-31** all men must repent, judge world, resurrection

! if truth was relative, based on what one believe - God would not require all men everywhere to repent

- ! **Paul's condemnation of men teaching** Gentiles they had to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law to be saved — taught what they believed, but lost in sin (Gal)
- ! **PP - Gal. 1:6-9** different gospel, accursed if preach something other than gospel of Christ
- ! **PP - Gal. 5:4** fall from grace
  
- **Conclusion / Application for the lesson:** New Testament reveals man's spiritual reality
  - ! **I want to be a Christian because I love the truth!**
  - ! **What is your commitment to truth?**
  - ! **2 Th. 2:10** love the truth, agape, devoted wholeheartedly to truth
  - ! **“truth” appears** 97 times in NT (NASB)
    - ! 26 times in John, 9 times in 1 Jn., 4 times in 2 Jn., 5 times in 3 Jn.
  - ! **John's message / Bible's message (man's spiritual reality):** Jesus is the truth — believe Him, love Him, and obey Him to obtain eternal life
  - ! **Inv.: 1 Pet. 1:22 you must obey the truth to be saved (Jesus, Heb. 5:9)** — “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls. . . .”
    - ! **Christians:**
      - ! **2 Th. 2:10** love the truth
      - ! **1 Pet. 1:22-23** obey the truth
      - ! **1 Jn. 1:6-8** practice the truth
    - ! **inv.**

Audio sermon notes:

- ! ➤ denotes the place to proceed to the next PowerPoint slide.
- ! All Scriptures are NASB unless otherwise noted.
- ! Sermons recorded 11-13-05, Church of Christ, South Livingston Avenue in Lutz, FL, Allan McNabb, BibleGuide.org.