

# The Truth or the Lie

by John Murray

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being of the truth, which involves accepting the truth about God and keeping Jesus' commandments.*

**Duration:** 48:45

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:4

**Topics:** "Truth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the purpose of Jesus coming into the world, which is to bear witness to the truth. Jesus came to accomplish the redemptive work of God and to minister to others. The transformation and change that need to happen in our lives can only occur through Christ, who is the brightness of God's glory and the expression of His grace. As we receive the light of the knowledge of God's glory in Jesus Christ, the truth displaces the lies in our hearts, leading us to prioritize God's kingdom and His righteousness.

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## Transcript

John 18, verse 37, the last sentence. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice. The conduct of Pilate, in connection with the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, is one of the most baffling incidents in the biblical record of events.

It is probably impossible to lay bare the tangle of motives and considerations which induced Pilate to act as he did. But there is enough evidence to show that Pilate vacillated between a sense of justice on the one hand and considerations of worldly expediency on the other. It is indeed to Pilate's credit that he found no fault in Jesus, and he protested that fact and sought to relieve Jesus.

But what is to his credit, on the one hand, only accentuates his weakness on the other hand. For he ought to have acted according to the dictates of his judgment, that he found no fault in Jesus, and he ought to have delivered Jesus from the violence and enmity of his accusers. But instead, Pilate vacillated.

And because he vacillated, he did not guard the paths of justice. And that is the tragedy of the Pilate's conduct in connection with this trial of Jesus. Pilate showed a complete lack of appreciation of the person of Jesus.

He showed a complete lack of appreciation of the stupendous character of Jesus Christ. And he also showed a failure to guard the paths of justice against every consideration to the consideration that might be pitted against him. And how ironical it is that Pilate should have asked the question, what is truer than the person who stood before him of whom he asked the question? It was himself.

It is simply evidence of the complete contradiction that there is in the estimate, in the judgment of man, between the reality which came through expression in Jesus' personal mission and the judgment on the part of man with respect to that particular person and with respect to that. And the conduct of Pilate is simply an illustration of the cleavage which is being constantly, which is being constantly drawn between those who on the one hand are of the truth and therefore hear Jesus' voice and those on the other have stone stumbling and a rock of offense. Now in connection with these words, everyone who is of the truth, heareth my voice, there are obviously two considerations.

And the first is what it is to be of the truth, and the second, the test, the criteria. And so we have, first of all, what is meant by this expression which Jesus uses, of the truth. And it will help us to understand by that expression if we remember the background of our human history, if we remember what occurred when our first parents died.

For then, by way of Congress, we will discover what it means to be of the truth. Then entered into the world, when Eve, our first parent, one of our first parents, was seduced by the temptation of the test. And it is very important to recognize that Eve had been seduced.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of that when he says Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. The woman was therefore subjected to a deception, to a seduction on the part of the tempter.

And the seduction was in the form of a lie that had been directed against the veracity of God. The tempter came to Eve with this statement, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be of God, knowing good and evil. And there the tempter alleged that God himself had perpetrated a lie.

And sin began in our first parents in the human race when Eve gave her consent to that allegation on the part of the tempter to the effect that God himself had perpetrated a lie. Now notice, the tempter did not bring an accusation directly against the power of God. And he did not bring an accusation directly against the goodness of God.

But he brought, first of all, a thought and a fact upon the veracity of God himself. It was the truthfulness of God that the tempter had said. And therefore, the lie that the tempter alleged, or the lie of God's part, was that which Eve believed.

And Eve sinned when she gave credit to that allegation with respect to the untruthfulness of God. And there is the beginning of the lie in human history. And it is very necessary, it is very important to recognize that to believe a lie about God, or to believe the allegation made by the tempter about God to entertain disbelief of God's truthfulness, is really the collapse of human integrity.

The way by which our integrity is destroyed is by disbelieving or doubting the integrity and the veracity of God. And there is the origin of untruthfulness in the human race. There is the origin of the lie.

And it is very important to remember, for Jesus had in another connection, with respect to Satan, with respect to the great archenemy, recorded also in this Gospel, he was a murderer from the beginning because he abhors not in the truth, for he is a liar and the father of it. That is the way in which Jesus characterizes the great archenemy of the kingdom of God, that he abhors not in the truth, he is the father of lies, he is a liar. And he was successful in seducing our first parents by perpetrating a lie about God.

And he was successful in seducing our first parents when she was induced to believe that lie about God. And because she believed that lie about God, because she did not preserve in fact the belief in the integrity, the veracity of God, that untruth, that lie, has affected the whole human race. Because of the relationship that our first parents sustained to us in the institution of God, the lie has permeated to every member of the human race.

Untruth, unreality, is the element of our very thoughts. And have you ever considered that statement of Scripture with respect to every member of the human race, that we go astray from the world? There is nothing that is more natural to us than untruth. And therefore nothing more natural to us from our very womb than to speak untruth, to speak lies, just because the lie, untruth, falsehood, has become, as it were, the very element, the very atmosphere of our existence.

And that's because of that great apostasy that occurred at the very beginning of human history, when our first parents believed a lie about God and did not abide in the truth. Now it is that background we must have in mind when we try to understand what Jesus says in this particular text by way of Congress. Everyone who is of the truth in Congress with everyone who is of the lie.

There must be that radical transformation by which the truth rather than the lie, by which reality rather than unreality, by which honesty rather than dishonesty, by which simplicity rather than duplicity, by which light rather than darkness, comes to be the very atmosphere of our being, of our existence. Just as the lie began with the acceptance of the lie about God, so the truth in us begins with our acceptance of the truth about God. It begins with our, with the rendering of our total consent, our total amen to the truth that God in the reality of His being, in the reality of His perfection, in the reality of His relation to us, our relation to Him, comes to possess our heart, our mind, our conscience, our total being to such an extent that God is to us the only absolute and ultimate reality.

And I have a question, a very pointed question. Is that true with respect to us? Has God, in the reality of His being and of His perfection, as He is related to us, as we are related to Him, come to take such possession of us that our first thought in every first instance, our first thought in every relationship is the relationship of God to us and to our relationship? That's what it means to be all the truth. Now since redemptive provisions have to be brought to bear upon that radical transformation which must take place, I say since redemptive provisions must be brought to bear upon that radical transformation, that change can only take place as Christ, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, as the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, comes to shine into our hearts and to dispel the darkness.

Christ Himself is not only the way and the light, He is also the truth. And it is in that way that the truth of God comes into relationship to us and comes within, as it were, the orbit of our apprehension in such a way that the lie becomes displayed. It's when God shines into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of His own glory in the face of Jesus Christ that there begins to be this displacement of the lie by the truth.

And from that starting point, the apprehension of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, our whole heart and soul and mind are controlled by the conviction that God is the justice and judgment or the habitation of His soul or His glory. That is what it means to be of the truth. That conviction of the reality of God, of His perfection, captivates our hearts and then it is not our own interest that is paralyzed.

It is not our own advantage. It is the praise and honor of God and the interest of His kingdom. Say then with me, let God be true with every man alive.

We picture, as it were, the reality and the truth of God against every contrary consideration. And however much appearance may seem to be to the contrary, we are always ready to accede to this, that the fundamental article of our faith, that as for God, He is worthy of judgment in all His ways of justice and God of righteousness and without iniquity. Just and righteous He is.

It is perfectly true that God waves in the sea, He falls in the great waters, His footsteps are not lost, clouds and darkness surround the mountains and it is but as it were the outskirts of His ways that we, that we feel Him. Nevertheless, everyone who is of the truth has this as the fundamental article of his faith and of his conviction, that justice and judgment are the habitation of God's law, that He is just in all His ways, and holy in all His ways. And it all comes back to that very simple truth, that the person who is of the truth is the person who has become perfect and indeed has become perfect with the conviction of the reality of God, the reality of His perfection, the reality of our relationship to Him, not His relationship to Him.

Now we have secondly the path which Jesus enunciated in this particular passage. That is the criteria by which we are to determine whether we are of the truth or not. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

And now we are to concentrate upon that hears my voice. And there are three things implied in that very brief statement. First, there is the claim of the person.

Second, there is the finality of His words. And third, there is the sanctity of His commandments. And so we have first of all implied in that statement the claim of Jesus.

How significant it is that Jesus should have placed Himself on such a plane of dignity and honor that it would be attention to His words which would determine whether or not we are of the truth or whether we are of the law. Whether we are of God or whether we are of... whether God is our Father or whether it can be said to us that we are of you. That Jesus should have placed Himself on such a plane of unique dignity and honor that it was attention to His words which is the criterion of that ultimate and all-important life.

You remember when Jesus asked Peter at Caesarea Philippi, Whom do ye say that I am? And Peter answered, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus replied to Peter, Blessed art thou Simon Barjono for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father who is in heaven. Jesus therefore placed His endorsement upon the confession of Peter to reject thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.

And that confession of Peter the Son of the living God is one that is very significant because at that particular time in the thinking of the Jews the person who claimed to be the Son of God or the Son of the living God was considered to have placed Himself on an equality with God. That was the prevailing conception. And you find the evidence of that in this very Gospel.

In the fifth chapter where the Jews said for a good work we do may not but for blasphemy because of thou being a man make of thyself God. And why did they bring that allegation against Christ? Just because He

claimed to be the Son of God. Because He claimed that God was His Father in that unique sense.

Which implied that He was in a unique sense the Son of God. And they brought against Him this charge that He made Himself equal with God. And that was perfectly correct.

So when Jesus places His endorsement upon the confession of Peter that thou art with Christ the Son of the living God He places His endorsement upon this tenet. Namely, that He Himself is on an equality with God. And nothing else, nothing less than that is the implication of this particular statement here.

That He is placing Himself on an equality with God. On a plane of dignity and honor that is comparable to that upon which God that belongs to God the Father Himself. And that is the implication of the test of the person who is of the truth that he accords to Christ that position of deity that is of equality with God Himself.

Now the second statement is the finality of Jesus' word. Finality of Jesus' word. The distinctive mark of our faith in God is the simplicity of that faith and the simplicity because it is the faith of total and unreserved commitment.

Simplicity in the sense of the total and unreserved commitment. Now it's perfectly true that we have faith in our fellow men. And if they are trustworthy, we have faith in them.

But our faith in a mere man never rises to the level of being total and unreserved commitment. And it cannot be total because attaching to every man there is a certain infirmity, there's a certain weakness. A certain weakness arising from his primacy and outburst in him cannot be total because of that infirmity.

Even if he were a perfect man, even if he were a glorified saint, and Abraham in heaven or Moses or Elijah or John the Apostle, our trust in him cannot be total. And our trust in men in this life can never be unreserved because there is always not only the infirmity attaching to their primacy but the weakness attaching to their infirmity. So however high may be our regard for men and however much faith we might have faith in them, our trust is never that of total and unreserved commitment.

And that is reserved for God alone. And when Jesus says here, everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice, he means that to his word is attached that total and unreserved trust, that characterizes our very trust in God himself. Now we have certain patterns of thought and we are sometimes very jealous for these patterns of thought.

And because we are, as it were, committed to certain patterns of thought, we accept those words of Jesus which fall into accord with these patterns of thought and we reject those words of Jesus which don't accord with that pattern. And so we can be, as it were, selective. We take some of Jesus' words because they accord with our own way of thinking and we reject others.

But that is just exactly what Jesus comes, what Jesus exposes as power in this particular pattern. Everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice. There's no reservation, there's no qualification.

It is to listen to the words of Jesus in every particular. It just comes back to this that we stake everything upon any one particular word of Jesus because he is the truth itself. He is the truth incarnate.

And if there could be any error, if there could be any falseness, if there could be even the suggestion of a lie, if there could be anything that Jesus ever spoke, then he could not be the person that he claims to be.

He could not be on this plane of dignity and honor which is equal to that of God himself. If anything that is of the Lord could possibly attack him, if anything at all.

Now that is a matter that should give us the greatest comfort because there is abroad in the world and abroad in many cases even in the professing Protestant Church the disposition to be very selective with reference to the words of Jesus. Take for example this matter of his deliverances regarding the damnation of the finally impenitent. That is the doctrine of everlasting perdition.

We don't find anywhere in the New Testament any words that are more explicit to the effect that there is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power than we find in the words of Jesus himself on which he did obey. He referred to that place which we translate paradise where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And on the most, perhaps what is the most solemn occasion depicted for us in the New Testament he says depart from these churches into everlasting fire prepare for the devil and his angels and then he finally says these shall go away into everlasting punishment for the righteous and the righteous.

If we are of the truth then we cannot possibly enter there in disbelief with reference to that statement of his because he is the truth. He is the final judge the final arbiter of destiny and if he can say with reference to the final judgment which he himself will execute these shall go away into everlasting punishment. It is quite contrary to every every, every standard by which we are to judge for us who disbelieve that truth we get plain to be Jesus' disciples plain to be of the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth here is my one and we must take everything upon the veracity the absolute verity of everything that he says. And now thirdly in connection with this criterion we have the sanctity of Jesus' commandment Everyone who is of the truth here is my one yet is to say he gives attention to my one and therefore he keeps my commandment. How can a warrior be to Christ? How a profession of his name how a profession of being his disciple be compatible with playing loose and fast with his commandment? Simply a contradiction is an impossibility.

It is very strange indeed that there should be a God in certain circles within the professing of a fellowship and this finds antipathy to the whole idea of keeping the commandments of God. I have met with him in particular circles within the professing evangelical church and impatience and indeed an intolerance with the whole idea of keeping the commandments of God. Have we forgotten the express words of Jesus himself? He that acts my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father and I will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

Jesus never spoke a word which is more grim, full of cursing and intimacy for the people of God than that. We will come unto him and make our abode with him. But what is the purpose? He that acts my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father.

Have we forgotten the word of Jesus again? If he loved me he would keep and have we forgotten the final word that he spoke to his disciples on the eve of his ascension when he said so he that for him teaching them to observe all things that is teaching them to keep all things to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded. And you have the transcript of that very same teaching in the first epistle of John where you have to watch that context of staying emphasis upon keeping the commandments of God. My little children let us not love in words neither in tongue but in deed and in truth.

Nearby we know that we are all the truth. How do we know that we are all the truth? Keep the commandments of God. Keep the commandments of Jesus.

It is simply mockery. For us to claim to be the friends of Christ and more particularly to be the disciples of Christ if we can play fast and loose with his commandments with his institutions. The way we honor him is to keep for thereby we prevent our love for him in accordance with his words.

If you love me you will keep. Now look, nothing could advertise the paramount concern of this particular matter than the words which introduce these words of our Lord. Jesus said, To this end was I born.

And for this cause came I unto the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth here is my God. Jesus did here define the very purpose for which he came into the world in terms of bearing witness unto the truth.

Something that is too frequently forgotten because what is central in the witness of Jesus himself in connection with his coming into the world is the redemptive work that he came into the world to accomplish. The Son of Man came, he says, not to be ministered unto but to minister. Give his life a ransom for many.

In the name of God he might redeem a man essential from the fullness of the childless tongue. God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. But in this particular passage our Lord brings to our attention himself that he not only came into this world to accomplish a work of wisdom but he also came into this world to bear witness unto the truth.

And therefore we must always coordinate that high priestly purpose for which Christ came into the world and this that we may call the prophetic function for which he came into the world. And the truth really comes back to this that we cannot be partakers of that redemption which he came into this world to accomplish unless we give the evidence of supreme concern for that other function of which Jesus also came into the world namely that he might bear witness unto the truth. Can we be indifferent to the whole question of truth to the whole question of the truth that Jesus did to the whole question of the truth that Jesus spoke Jesus is out of his grave we can just slightly change the form of expression and still use the words of Jesus.

He said the good shepherd giveth his life there is his redemptive desire. And he also said in that very connection My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish my Father in heaven he is greater than all and no one can pluck out of my Father. Do you see how intimately related all of this is to the very eternal security which Christ came into this world to procure of earth and sheep hear my voice everyone who is of the truth here is moved to this world to bear witness and it cannot but be that the person who is the beneficiary of his redemptive accomplishment is the person who is also characterized in jealousy for the truth the truth as it comes to a supreme expression in Jesus Christ himself but the truth also as it comes to expression in the whole council of God as it comes to expression for faith and for comfort for life and for hope hope of the most humble hope of gravity is positive for us in this living world now how do we stand in reference to this criterion how do we stand individually in reference to this are we of the truth or are we of the lie and that all that all comes back simply to this question are we of God or are we of the devil nothing less than that is the urgent alternative placed before us are we of God or are we of the devil and that is to say are we of the truth or are we of the lie and it all comes to its focal point in this in this criterion in this test are we ready to

accord to the words of Jesus to the voice of Jesus all that credit all that honor all that glory with his voice the voice of the way the truth I can but leave that question with you with your conscience with your mind and with your heart as I must also in the last analysis leave it this is the ultimate question after all of our human relationship of the truth of our let us now call upon God's name and praise him O thou eternal and ever blessed we beseech thee that thou wouldst notwithstanding all our frailty our weakness notwithstanding all our sins cover us with the wings of thy protection because thou didst sprinkle upon us the blood of spring that speaketh better things than that of Abel O Lord and Abel to receive the truth in simplicity and honesty of heart and to live and walk in the light as thou art in the light that we may have confidence towards God O forbid that we should if anything be the victims of satanic seduction might always be in the secret place of the most high and under the shadow of the almighty for Jesus' sake and in his name

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