

January 24, 2021
3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Come and See: Truth-Part 1

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pure and acceptable in your sight Lord, our heavenly Father, our Rock and our Salvation, Amen. Last week in Bible study, one of our members made the comment if only I could prove that Jesus was the Savior, it would be so helpful in talking to people and answering their questions. If only we could prove it, then again what does it mean to prove? What do you need to prove something? You need truth. But really, what is truth? Truth, it is knowledge that cannot be contested, because it is always right. Truth, it is knowledge that can't be contested unless, of course we allow the definition of truth to changed. Unless of course, we allow human emotions and feelings to enter in to the equation of what truth is. Unless of course, we allow human logic to enter in to the equation of what truth is. Unless of course, we allow human philosophy and human ideas to enter in to the equation of what truth is. The reality is when we allow emotions, logic, philosophy, ideas to enter in to the equation, we really can prove anything we want to prove to be truth. And you might say, 'oh pastor that is a far-fetched idea.'

I'd like you to consider something for just a moment. I apologize to those who are only hearing this and not seeing it; but I'd like to share with you a little algebraic math problem. We have here. $F = I + I + A$. This is a given statement. It is true. Facebook (F) is made up of (I) individuals sharing (I) information and it is funded through (A) advertisements. I don't think anybody's gonna argue with that. But what if we do a little algebra. If we remove the individuals and the ideas from the ads, we have Facebook minus ideas and or information and individuals equals ads. $F - I - I = A$. And by the way, I'd like you to consider that as an individual is on there and posting all this information, such as 'I got up today and drank a cup of coffee. It was really good and then I blew my nose.' As people start sharing just the most mundane things, people start to tune out. Or when they share more, 'do you know what my best friend did? My best friend...' people start to really turn them off or shut them out. And so the more information that is shared, the more individuals that are lost. And well you're just left with the ads. So, Facebook minus the information and the individuals is nothing more than a company

that makes money from ads. And what are ads? Well ads are really very simple. They're time times money. However, much time it shows up, multiply that times the charge per minute or second or whatever and that's what an ad is. So, an advertisement is time times money. $Ad = Time \times \$$. And well since Facebook minus individuals and information are ads; then Facebook is also time times money.

But we all know a basic fact of life; I mean no one is going to argue this one; that time equals money. Therefore, Facebook is equal to time times money, but if time equals money then it's money times money which is money squared. So, Facebook minus the information and the individuals is money squared. But of course, we know that the square or the root of all evil is money; therefore, evil is money squared or Money times money; or money times time because time equals money. And so what you end up having is Facebook take away the individuals and the information is evil. Or Facebook is evil with the information that individuals share. There you go, I just proved you mathematically Facebook is evil. I bet my Mark Zuckerberg would disagree with that. But it goes to that point, real truth is truth that cannot be contested, and truth does not change. And when you have something that does not change; especially if it is an idea or it is knowledge, you now have a foundation for life that can be built on.

And so, we come back to our epiphany message "Come and See, the Wiseman and the truth. Because you see the Wiseman came because they had the truth. How did they have the truth? Well, we have to go back to our Old Testament reading this morning from Daniel chapter two. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and it was a very troubling dream, so he called his magicians, his enchanters, his sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to him. These were his wise men. The first three are occultic, because they consult with the spirits, or the stars, or the satanic arts, much like in the Old Testament in Egypt. We see Jannes and Jambres duplicating some of the miracles that Moses did. So, there is an occultic world out there. Now the Chaldeans, they were the Babylonians. They were the ones who spoke the Akkadian language and they were the intellectually elite; the college professors shall we say. So King Nebuchadnezzar calls these individuals to him and he says I had a dream that's greatly troubled me. You heard their response, "oh King live forever, tell us the dream." To which he responds and says, 'no, no, no, you're the diviners; you're the smart ones. You tell me the dream and the message, or I will tear

you limb from limb and your houses will be laid to ruin.’ And you know that just kind of goes whoosh, right over their head. Because they come back and say, ‘tell us the dream.’ And now you can answer, he’s warned them, but he also told them, by the way; ‘if you do tell me the dream and the message, I’m going to give you a lot of rewards, gifts, rewards and great honor. But when they come back and they say; ‘tell us the dream.’ He immediately says, you guys you can't do it can you? You’re just buying time. In fact, he says this, listen carefully. ‘You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change.’ In other words, he's saying; ‘you're gonna lie to me until I forget this and I quit asking about it or I die or am replaced. You're just buying time. You're kicking the can down the road. You're lying to keep your positions of wealth and prestige and power. He knew and they knew that he knew because they come back, and they say there is not a man on earth who can meet the King's demands. No one can show it to the King except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. And so, we see that because of this, the King was very angry and very furious and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

Well, you might be saying, ‘good get rid of those magicians, enchanters sorcerers, and Chaldeans.’ But there's a little problem with that. This is Daniel chapter 2; and in Daniel chapter 1, Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego had been obedient to God's Law. They wouldn’t eat the Kings food and participate in all the Kings stuff that was preparing those who had been captured to serve within the King's court. And God had blessed Daniel and Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego. For when the King came to see them and to test them, he found; and I quote: they were 10 times better in every matter of wisdom and understanding. So Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego were like junior Wiseman. And we read and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. And when Arioch the captain of the king’s guard comes to Daniel, I think we should take great note at what Daniel did. Because it's something that seems to be losing its position in the world today and in society today.

Listen to what Daniel did: “Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion, to Arioch the captain of the king’s guard.” He didn’t cancel him out, he didn't fight, he didn't call him names, he didn't protest, he didn't tweet about it. Daniel looked at Arioch and he replied with prudence and discretion. Why is the decree of the King so urgent? And Arioch tells him. Well, he had this

bad dream, he can't remember what the dream was, but it really unsettled him. He lost his sleep, he can't sleep, it's really bothering him, so he told all the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, the Chaldeans, all the wise men you know the guys that are supposed to be teaching you guys. He told them, 'tell me the dream and tell me its interpretation and I'll reward you. But if you don't, you're all going to die. They can't do it, so sorry, you're all gonna die. And Daniel asked Arioch, 'Could you let me go to the King? I'd like to go to the King and request a time or time frame in which he would like this answer. Arioch thought you know that's reasonable, maybe I better let Daniel go and talk to the King. And so he did.

Daniel inquired of time that was needed, the King gave him some time and he went back to Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego, and guess what he did? He said we need to seek mercy and pray. Pray to God, seek mercy, ask God to give us what we don't deserve; an understanding of what the King actually dreamed and what it means. And that night God gave Daniel a vision that explained the dream and the meaning. Daniel's response takes us right back to last week with Simeon. He rejoiced and he blessed the God of heaven. And he went right to the King. Oh King, live forever. And the King responds just as he would to everybody else, 'Can you tell me my dream? And can you tell me what it means?' To which Daniel says resoundingly, 'no wisemen, enchanter, magician or astrologer can.' I can just see Nebuchadnezzar getting ready to stand up and grab a sword you know, in fury that Daniel would dare say no one can do it and he continues with that one big word but, which erases everything in front of it. He says, 'sure no enchanter, Wiseman, magician or astrology or can, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mystery.

Notice what Daniel does he is in a position where he can take the credit, and he can look good, and he does not. Just like we see Simeon, just like we see the greats of the Bible doing; they don't say I, they say God. God can interpret this dream. And so, he tells him the dream. It's a dream about a statue made of four different metals which represents four different kingdoms that were going to come. And by the way, that dream, and its interpretation are truth. They are rock solid. It does not change. There was the Babylonian empire, the Persian empire the Greek empire and the Roman Empire just what Daniel said 450 plus years in advance. He nails it!

And when the King hears this, it's not good news but that Daniel understands, he knows the dream and he knows its meaning. He falls down on his face as pays homage to him and says truly your God is God of gods and Lord of Kings and a revealer of mysteries. And so he stuck with his word that he would give great reward and honor. He gave Daniel high honor, many great gifts, and made him ruler over the province of Babylon. Listen very carefully here, He made him chief prefect over all the wise men of his of Babylon. He went from being student to a professor over all of them.

And then, and I've never noticed this until this time; then Daniel made a request of the King. What was his request? He requested that Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego be put over the affairs of the province of Babylon. In other words, the King made him ruler over Babylon, and Daniel said, 'I don't want the political stuff, it's just not important to me or to God. So let Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego take over that. Let me be the teacher, let me be that prefect in your court to teach you, and to teach your wise men the truth of God's word. Why would he do that? Because he understood truth; the truth that God desires all men to be saved, even King Nebuchadnezzar and even every one of those astrologers, enchanters, sorcerers, magicians, and Chaldeans.

Daniel knew his place was right there. He had been taken into captivity to be a witness to those who did not know the true God. And what kind of a job did he do? He did such a good job that that truth was passed down for over 450 years. For something to last that long, it must be truth. Consider it was able to overcome 450 years and four empires of human logic, human emotion, human philosophy, and human religion. What could do that? The truth! As each generation saw these changes in everything around them; they were also consistently reminded that Daniel had prophesied this is what will happen. Daniel's prophecy, given by God played out over 450 years. The wise men were wise because they watched it and they knew, this is truth.

Obviously, he had taught them more than just the four empires. Like what? What did he teach them? Well, for one, as we saw this morning, they understood the meaning of the stars. Or the star, shall I say. But he taught them much more than that. like there's a clock right down here that tells me what time it is, and how much time I've spent on this sermon. And you know I had a feeling I'd get to this point, and I would have spent this much time, so this is like one of those cliffhanger TV shows. Tune In next week and we will

look at the truthful ingredients of **the Truth**, that those wise men knew and what they came to know, and what we've come to know. So, if you were at all interested in being a wise man or woman; come back next week. We will look at The Truth. That which cannot be contested, and that which has withstood all time. In our Saviors Name, Amen.