

Fighting for Truth

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FIGHT - For What Matters Most | May 31, 2026 | John 1; Ephesians 2; Galatians 5; Romans 7:22-23; John 8:32; John 14:6; John 17:17; John 18:37

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

All right, if you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to grab them and turn to John chapter 14. That's where we'll base out of. Just like last week, this is a very topical message today, so we're going to look at a bunch of different Scripture references. Follow along as they are put on the screen for you.

Also, I haven't reminded you of this in a while, but all of the notes that I preach from, my manuscript that I preach from here in my Bible, go online during the week. So, if you miss a message or miss something that happened in the message because we move fast - and we're going to have to move fast today because we had this added element of honoring the seniors in this message - please go online. You can listen to the message or download the notes right there.

The title that I'm addressing today, the title of the message, is "Fighting for Truth." I thought this would be an appropriate message to preach, this being our Senior Sunday. I thought it'd be good to tackle a message like this because we all know that truth matters. This is one of the first lessons that we teach our children, isn't it? To tell the truth.

This July, we're coming up on the 250th celebration of our country, and I want to make you aware that July 1, a Wednesday night, we're going to meet right here and have a night of just celebrating America. We're going to have Chick-fil-A for you. I think we have a shot of this on the screen just so you can see it. We're going to have Chick-fil-A here. What can get much more American than that, does it? Getting some Chick-fil-A.

Then we're going to sing patriotic songs, pray for our country, and we've got a special guest, Dr. Robert Morgan, who's going to be here. He wrote a book, 100 Bible Verses That Made America. It's just going to be a great night. I really encourage you to be back for that.

I was thinking about our founding father. I recently watched a documentary on George Washington, and I can remember, as a child, the first thing I learned about George Washington was this whole idea of honesty and telling the truth.

You remember this story, right? Who cut down the cherry tree? The story is that Washington was six years old, he received a hatchet as a gift, and he damaged his father's cherry tree with it. Now, the legend grew over time and said he chopped it down, but originally he just damaged it.

His father saw it and was not happy at all. He called young George Washington and demanded to know what happened. George Washington confessed, "Father, I cannot tell a lie. I cut it with my hatchet."

The story goes that Washington's father embraced him, grabbed him in his arms, and declared that his son's honesty was worth more than a thousand trees. Awesome story, isn't it?

The only thing is, it's not true. It's made up. And you know what makes it worse? A minister made it up.

There was a pastor who was writing his biography on George Washington, and he wanted to make sure that the founding father was seen in a good light. He wanted to portray him as honorable and virtuous, so he just grabbed the story out of thin air and threw it in his book. It took on a life of its own. These ministers making us look bad, all right?

But we do know that truth is important. Now, three points I want to make up front. They'll be short, staccato-like points. Just follow along.

Truth Is Absolute

This is where we start. This must be emphasized and highlighted. There is such a thing as absolute truth, or what we call universal truth. There is a belief that there are certain realities, what we call unalterable facts, that govern life. These facts, these truths, by definition, never change.

Truth is absolute. It's like concrete. It's settled. It's universal, meaning what is true for me, if it's true, is true for you. It means it was true for George Washington 250 years ago, and it'll be true 250 years from now when someone's walking planet Earth. Truth is universally true, and it is absolute.

I've got to admit, I had the students in mind when I was writing this message, prepping it, and getting ready. But it doesn't matter, because all of us need to hear this message, and it needs to be reinforced over and over and over again. Truth matters, and truth is absolute.

The reason truth is so important - the enemy knows this, and this is why he keeps it from you; we're going to talk about that in just a minute - is because ultimately truth will lead us to Jesus Christ.

The world doesn't want us believing in absolute truth. The enemy doesn't. He wants us believing that truth is relative, that what may be true for me is not necessarily true for you, and vice versa.

But just follow this line of thought: If there are no absolutes, that means there are no standards. If there are no standards, that means there's no right or wrong. If there's no right or wrong, that means we can choose to do whatever we want to do.

If this, which is the prevailing mindset of the day, is true, then it's always going to lead - write it down; we're talking about absolute truth - to chaos. Living this way, basing your life on your feelings, your emotions, or what you think is right in the moment, if there are no standards and no absolute truth, will lead to confusion and have devastating consequences, not just personally, but for society at large.

So, number one, truth is absolute.

Truth Is Narrow

Two plus two equals four. It doesn't matter what you think. It doesn't matter if you believe it equals seven. Two plus two equals four.

Texas is bordered by Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Mexico. It's not bordered by Kentucky, Florida, or Utah, no matter how badly you want it to be or think it is.

All truth is narrow truth. You go to the top of this church building and jump off, and you see if gravity is truth, if you can suspend it. All truth is narrow truth.

You take any subject - mathematics, chemistry, biology, geology, whatever it is - and that truth, if it is true, will be absolute, and it will be narrow. It's true for subjects like the ones that I just mentioned, and it's also true regarding faith.

You take who God is and how I have a relationship with God. What Christianity teaches is very different from what Islam teaches, and they both can't be true and right. It's got to be one or the other. There's narrow truth.

Think about it as it relates to the person of Jesus Christ, His origin, and who He is. What Mormons teach is different from what Jehovah's Witnesses teach, which is different from what we teach as Bible-believing Christians. We can't all be right, and these statements can't all be true at the same time.

All truth is narrow truth.

By the way, seniors, take this to heart. If you believe this way and live this way as you go out into the world, you know this is true. I don't even have to tell you this right now, but I'm just highlighting it. If you live like this, you are going to be seen as bigoted and intolerant. You're going to be called closed-minded, all because you believe that truth is narrow truth.

So, we say that a biological boy is a boy. That's the truth. A biological girl is a girl. That's the truth. You can't change that. That's narrow truth.

But what is the world going to say? "You are narrow-minded. You are bigoted."

That's just not true. If you go to a doctor, he looks at your test results, and the truth is that you have cancer, but when you meet with him, he shades that truth and doesn't tell you the truth, that's not loving.

The most loving thing we can do is tell the truth. The wisest thing we can do is live in the truth. And so, we must fight for the truth.

Truth is absolute. Truth is narrow.

Truth Is a Person

That's what the Bible teaches.

John 14:6 - this is where I asked you to turn earlier - is Jesus' plain teaching that He is the embodiment of

truth:

> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

John 8:32 says:

> You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 1 says:

> The law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The reason truth is so important, and seeking truth is so important, is because ultimately it leads us to the person of Jesus.

Do you remember that conversation Jesus had with Pilate the night He was arrested and the day He was going to be put to death? Pilate, in John 18:37, said to Him, "So You are a king?"

Jesus answered:

> You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world - to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.

Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

Isn't it amazing? The embodiment of truth is standing right in front of him, and he doesn't recognize it. He's not even aware of it.

If we're going to fight for truth, we've got to know what truth is. I should say, we've got to know who truth is.

In John 17:17, Jesus is praying. He prays for the church, and He says:

> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

We know the Word of God is a title for the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Word of God.

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will always be in a fight for the truth and fighting for truth. Here's what we have to understand: The fight for truth always, always, always happens right here in the mind.

The Battle for Your Life Is in Your Mind

I've told this story before. My freshman year of college, studying to be a pastor, I walked into my first ministry class. There were a bunch of preachers, man. We were so fired up. We were ready to charge hell with a water pistol, man. We were called and ready to go.

We're sitting there, our professor walks in, and the notebooks are open. I'll never forget what he said. He said, "Gentlemen, the battle for your life is in your mind. If Satan can win the war in your mind, he has you beat."

I remember writing that down, and I can just tell you, all these years later, not only do I remember it, but what

my professor said that day has played out in my life. He was 100 percent correct.

The battle for our life takes place in our mind, and this is where we fight for truth.

There are three enemies that wage war in our mind against the truth.

The first enemy is Satan. Look at his name. It means deceiver. Listen to what Jesus says about him. He is the exact opposite of truth.

John 8:44 says:

> He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Satan, the great enemy of our soul, has one great play: to get in our mind and deceive us.

Chip Ingram, in his book *The Invisible War*, says this:

> Most of the battle is in our thought life. That's where Satan can manipulate people toward his ends discreetly and invisibly. If he can distort our thoughts, our emotions, and our knowledge, then our behaviors and relationships will fall the way he wants them to. And even if he doesn't manage to turn us to overt evil, a little bit of distorted thinking can neutralize us and render us practically ineffective.

The second enemy, as it relates to waging the war for truth in our mind, is the sin nature.

Now, this one's hard because, as Paul writes in Romans chapter 7, the flesh and the sin nature are used interchangeably in the Scriptures. The flesh, the sin nature, feeds on lies and deception. It wants whatever is contrary to the truth.

Galatians 5 says the Spirit desires what is contrary to the flesh, and vice versa. The flesh wants falsehood, deception, and lies, and it wages a war in the mind.

Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 7:22-23:

> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.

Paul says, "I want to honor God in the deep recesses of my heart." But look at what he says:

> But I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

His hands, his feet, his eyes, his sex organs - I see in the members of my body, this is the flesh, another law waging war against the law of my mind.

The sin nature knows how to win out. It targets the mind because, again, if it can get to our thoughts, then it can control behavior and actions.

What does the sin nature do? In the words of A.W. Tozer, it assaults our senses - what we can touch, what we

can see, and what we can feel. This is what the flesh wants. But it's totally different from living by faith.

As a matter of fact, Tozer would say this:

> The world of sense intrudes upon our attention day and night for the whole of our lifetime. It is clamorous and insistent and self-demonstrating. It does not appeal to our faith. It is here, assaulting our five senses, demanding to be accepted as real and final. But sin has so clouded the lenses of our heart that we cannot see the other reality, the city of God shining around us. The world of sense triumphs.

So, you have an enemy engaging you at the level of the mind: Satan, the sin nature, and then, thirdly, what I would call the world system.

The Bible teaches in Ephesians 2 and 1 John 5 that we are living in a world under the power of the evil one. The world system describes the rule, reign, and activity of a rebellious society that, again, is under the rule of the prince of the power of the air, Satan. He's in charge.

I was just in Las Vegas this week filming a 10-session series on the book of Daniel. Sin City, all right? I was scared to leave my hotel room. I just stayed in there until I had to go film.

But we filmed 10 sessions on the book of Daniel. It's going to come out later this year. I filmed it with RightNow Media Resources. I love the study. We did Daniel about a year ago. I don't know if you remember us preaching through Daniel. If you were here and don't remember it, shame on you. It's a great preaching series, all right?

But we talked about Daniel living in Babylon. We said Babylon is a real place. It's a physical city. But in the Bible, it represents something bigger.

I gave you words that describe Babylon. It's this world system. Here are the words: a lust for power, selfish autonomy, human greed, rampant idolatry, and unbridled hedonism. This is Babylon. This is the world system. And this is where we live.

The world system works on the mind through constant exposure. It doesn't have to argue with us. All it has to do is saturate us and surround us so that its values start feeling like the norm.

So, you look at these enemies: Satan, our sin nature, and the world system. No wonder it's so hard to live for truth.

Students, I want to get very practical with you. Again, this message is applicable for all of us. But I want to give us three ways we fight for and contend for truth, because we're going to have to do it until the day we die or Jesus calls us home. These enemies are incessant. They're not giving up. They're not going to quit.

How do we fight for truth?

Fill Your Mind With Truth

We've already established that God's Word is truth. John 17:17.

Romans 12:2 says:

> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

The J.B. Phillips translation says, "Don't be squeezed into the world's mold."

How is it possible to prevent that when this is where we live? Paul says, "You be transformed." It's the word we get "metamorphosis" from. You change by the renewing of your mind. We replace what is false, evil, and deceptive with that which is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Paul would write in Philippians 4:8:

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable - if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise - think about these things.

God did not give us His Word simply for information purposes. He gave it to us for transformation. But in order for that to happen, we can't put it on our bedside and expect osmosis to put it into our heart. We have to grab it. We have to read it, and we have to take it in.

Robert Morgan, who's going to be here for our America 250 celebration, wrote a great book. I read it a few summers ago. It's called Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation. It's all about how to have a quiet time and really sit in the truth of God's Word.

Listen to what he said:

> Biblical meditation is the powerful practice of pondering, personalizing, and practicing Scripture.

Can you tell he's a preacher? Pondering, personalizing, and practicing Scripture.

Now, I want you to notice that's work you do. You have to practice. You have to ponder. You have to think on it. Nobody else can do this for you.

Suffice it to say - I'll talk about this more in just a minute - filling our mind with truth is not just going to happen. We have to take it in. We have to meditate on it.

Joshua 1:8 says:

> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night.

Meditate.

The psalmist said in Psalm 1:2-3 that when we meditate on God's Word, we'll be like:

> A tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

If you want a life like that, you've got to fill your mind with truth.

As you navigate life and the enemy comes in and whispers lies, how do you combat those lies? You've got to

know the truth.

When the sin nature is craving what the sin nature craves, and the thought is, "It's only for a moment. If it feels good, do it. Nobody's going to know. It's not that big of a deal," how do you combat that? You've got to know the truth of God's Word.

It's not just going to happen. You have to fill yourself with God's Word.

When the world system is trying to conform you, how do you not conform? Paul said you have to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

So, you fill your mind with truth.

Guard Your Mind With Truth

This is going on the defensive.

Paul, in the context of spiritual war, says that we have a battle going on in the invisible world. He pulls back the curtains, and as this battle is taking place for your life, he gives us the armor of God.

Look at the first piece of armor in Ephesians 6:17:

> Take the helmet of salvation.

Why? So we can guard our minds.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that we:

> Destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Lives get shipwrecked - listen to me - lives get shipwrecked when we stop guarding our minds.

If we give the enemy an inch, he'll creep in, and he will pull us so far away from the Lord. If we're not careful, a depraved mind will lead to a depraved life. Just read Romans chapter 1.

The Bible is going to say that people exchanged the truth for a lie. As a matter of fact, I'll just read it. Romans 1:18 says:

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Look at this:

> Who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Verse 21 says:

> For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking.

Just skip on down to verse 28:

> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

What happens in the mind plays out in time. You'd better guard your thought life.

If the mind is the gateway to life, which is what we're talking about - this is one of the battles in the mind - what's the gateway to your mind?

Jesus said it's your eyes.

Matthew 6:22-23 says:

> The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Sometimes we're our own worst enemy when it comes to this because of what we look at and where we put our eyes.

The sin nature, Satan, and the world system - man, it is directed toward our senses. It loves when we do endless scrolling. It loves when we put images in front of us that are ungodly. It loves when we watch movies and television shows that make light of sin that God abhors.

Listen, I'm not being a legalist here. I'm making a plea for wisdom.

What you allow into your eyes takes root in your mind, and the battle is in the mind. If the war is won there, if Satan wins it there, he's got you beat.

We've got to fill our minds with truth. We've got to guard our minds with truth.

Train Your Mind With Truth

Guarding is protective - what we keep out. Training is active.

First Peter 1:13 says:

> Therefore, preparing your minds for action.

I've never been one of those MMA, mixed martial arts guys, you know, UFC. I kind of watch that, and I'm like, "Those guys have a screw loose," all right? It makes me weak just watching some of it sometimes. I'll watch the highlights.

But here's the deal about the fights: None of those people in the UFC show up on fight night and just get after it. No, they put in years of training - hours, blood, sweat, and tears.

Why? Because their life is physically on the line.

The same is true for us spiritually. Our life is on the line. The enemy has come to steal, kill, and destroy.

You say, "Jarrett, do you take that figuratively or literally?"

Both. He's out to kill, steal, and destroy.

How does he do it? He gets in our mind. So we've got to train our mind for godliness.

Jesus made it a practice every day to get up before the sun and go spend time with His Father. If Jesus needed that, how much more do you and I?

Before Jesus made a big decision, He'd spend all night in prayer. Before He called His disciples, He spent all night in prayer. Before He was arrested, He spent all night in prayer. It was a rhythm of His life.

Recall our sermon on temptation. How did Jesus battle temptation? The Word. Truth.

"It is written. It is written."

He was the embodiment of truth, but He had trained His mind in the Scriptures.

We have to train our minds for truth because, spiritually speaking, life and death hang in the balance.

Listen to how Paul put it. This is the last verse we'll look at, and we'll call it a day:

> For those who live according to the flesh, the sin nature, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Now look at what it says:

> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

We've got VBS coming up. I love VBS. We've got kids camp coming up. I love kids.

I could ask a second grader. I could ask a fifth grader. I could ask a senior in high school today. I could ask you, "What do you want? Life and peace, or corruption and death?"

It's an easy choice. All of us want life and peace. But according to Scripture, it will not happen unless we fight for truth.

The way we fight for truth is that we fill our minds with truth, we guard our minds with truth, and we train our minds for truth.

Because in this battle, seniors, church, the battle for your life happens in the mind. If Satan can win the war in your mind, he has you beat.

So let's fight for what matters. Truth matters.

Amen.