

Fighting for Truth

John 14:6

SERIES “Fight”

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I’m titling the message today: **Fighting for Truth**

I thought it would be appropriate with this being the Sunday we honor our graduating seniors to tackle a subject like this. We all know that truth matters.

It’s one of the first lessons we teach our children, isn’t it? We teach them to tell the truth.

We’re coming up on the 250th Celebration of the founding of America. And I do hope you will join us on Wednesday evening, July 1, as we celebrate together as a church this milestone in our country. It’s going to be a great time!

I was thinking about our Founding Father, George Washington and his relationship with the truth. You remember the chopping down of the cherry tree, don’t you. This is one of the first things I remember learning about our first president!

Illus. George Washington - The story is that Washington...when he was six years old received a hatchet as a gift, and he damaged his father’s cherry tree with it. When his father saw what George had done, he became angry and wanted to know what happened. George went to his father and confessed, “I cannot tell a lie...I did cut it with my hatchet.”

The story goes on to say that Washington’s father embraced him and declared that his son’s honesty was worth more than a thousand trees!

It’s a GREAT story. The only problem is...it’s just that! It’s a story! It never happened...it was made up!

And what makes it worse...you ready for this?! It was made up by a minister! He was writing a biography on Washington and the irony – he wanted to portray him as honorable and virtuous so he just made the story up...thought it would sell more books!

Sheesh! Making us ministers look bad!

So, let’s talk about truth. If you’re taking notes, write this down:

1. Truth is absolute

This must be where we start! We begin here...emphasizing and underscoring there is such a thing as “absolute truth” or what some term as “universal truth”.

This is the belief that there are absolute realities...unalterable facts that govern life – and these facts...these truths...by definition never change!

- Truth is absolute - it's like concrete – it's settled...and...
- It's universal – meaning: what is true for me is true for you it was true for George Washington back in the day and it will be true 250 years from now for every person walking planet earth...

Now, one major point I want to make about absolute truth, and I'll give some examples of this before moving on.

And btw – while I had students...specifically the graduating seniors in my mind when I was prepping and getting this message ready, this is a word that ALL of us need to hear – it's a message that needs to be reinforced over and over and over again.

See, the enemy...he doesn't want you believing in absolute truth because he knows truth...to really seek it ultimately will lead someone to Jesus – because he is the ultimate truth!

So, what the enemy wants is to get you and me believing that truth is relative...that what may be true for me is not necessarily true for you. He wants us thinking (and living) like there are NO absolutes.

Now, follow this line of thought:

If there are no absolutes, then there are no standards. And if there are no standards then that means there is no right or wrong. And if there is no right or wrong, then you can choose to believe and live however you want to.

Listen: when this type of mindset rules the day, what you have as a result is chaos and confusion.

People who live this way...instead of basing their life off truth, they base their life off their feelings...emotions...what they think is right in a given situation or at a certain moment in time – there is no governing standard!

And again...just mark this down – talking about absolute truth – this is one of those absolute truths. To believe and live in this way ALWAYS results in chaos, confusion, and it has devastating consequences not just personally, but for society at large.

Truth is absolute.

2. Truth is narrow

- $2 + 2 = 4$ – it doesn't matter what you think or what you feel. It's truth. It's absolute and it's narrow – there's no fudging.
- Texas is bordered by Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arkansas. It's not bordered by Florida, Kentucky and Utah – all truth is narrow truth.

- Go to the top of any building and jump down – you’re not going to suspend the truth of gravity!

Take any subject: mathematics, chemistry, biology, geology – what’s true will always be true. It’s absolute and it’s narrow.

It’s true in subjects like the ones just mentioned and it’s true regarding our faith.

Look, we can’t all be right. When it comes to knowing God and have a relationship with God. Christianity teaches one thing and Islam teaches another! They can’t both be right and true.

When it comes to who Jesus is. Mormonism teaches something entirely different about WHO Jesus is...his origin than Jehovah Witnesses do...than what we do. We can’t all be right.

All truth is narrow truth...and btw – when it comes to this point (Seniors) – MANY...just get ready for it are going to call your belief and stance for truth (which is narrow) i.e. biological boys are boys and biological girls are girls – that’s narrow truth that doesn’t change – just beware, you’ll be called intolerant...close-minded...bigoted.

NONE of that is true! If a doctor comes in and says the truth – you have cancer...this is what the test shows – your body is not working properly – that’s not intolerant...that’s loving for him to tell you the truth!

3. Truth is a person

John 1:17 – “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

John 8:32 – “and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 14:6 (this is Jesus’s plain teaching that he is the embodiment of truth) – **“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”**

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

Do you remember the conversation that Jesus and Pilate had as Jesus stood before him the day of his crucifixion?

John 18:37-38 – “Then Pilate 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.”³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

Amazing that the embodiment of truth is standing right in front of him and he isn't even aware of it. If we are going to fight for truth, we better know what it is...or perhaps I should say WHO it is!

John 17:17 – “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

As followers of the Lord Jesus, we will always be in a fight for truth, and here is what we have to understand. The fight for truth happens in the MIND – THIS is where the fight for truth takes place.

I've told you this before...sitting in one of my first Bible classes in college. The professor walks in and he's speaking to a room full of wannabe preachers. I've never forgotten what he said on that first day of class.

I had my notebook out...I was ready to get after it. It was week one of preparing to be a pastor. My professor said, “that battlefield of your life, is in your mind. If Satan can win the war for your mind, he's got you beat!”

I have never forgotten that statement, and he was 100% correct. The battle for our life takes place in our mind – this is where we fight for truth.

Now, there are three main – what I would call “enemies” of truth that wage war at the mind level.

These enemies are constantly assaulting us and our senses attempting to move us away from living for and basing our lives off truth – and again the battle is in the mind!

The first enemy: **Satan**

Look...his name is, “deceiver”. He is the exact opposite of truth. Remember what Jesus said about him?

John 8:44b – “...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...his greatest play is to get in our mind and deceive us. Have us buy into his lies.

Chip Ingram, writes in his book, *The Invisible War*: “**Most of the battle is in our thought life – that's where Satan can manipulate people towards 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...**”

A second “enemy” of truth is: **Our Sin Nature**

Goodness...this is a hard one...because as Paul wrote in (Rom. 7) we are of the flesh. It's a part of us. And here's the thing...the sin nature...the flesh – these terms are used interchangeably in the scripture...they feed off lies and deception.

The sin nature...the flesh...wants what is contrary to truth. The flesh wants to feast on falsehood...and this battle...this fight against the sin nature it takes place in the mind!

Rom. 7:22-23 – “For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,²³ but I see in my members (the flesh) another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.”

See, the sin nature targets the mind. If it can get to our thoughts, it will control our behavior and actions. And so, it attacks our senses and assaults us at the mind level!

A.W. Tozer – “The world of sense intrudes upon our attention day and night for the whole of our lifetime. It is clamorous, 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 hearts that we cannot see that other reality, the City of God, shining around us. The world of sense triumphs.”

He goes on to say, “we’ve established bad thought habits...”

If Satan can win the war in your mind, he has you beat. I was once told, “what happens in the mind, plays out in time.” The enemy wants your thought life...the flesh...the world of sense...the sin nature wants your thought life.

There's another enemy that want's your thought life...your mind so it can strangle out truth, and that is: **The World System**

The Bible teaches that this world we are living in is under the power of the evil one (Eph. 2, 1 John 5). The “world system” describes the rule and reign and activity of this rebellious society if you will.

1 John 2:15-17 – “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

Illus. Right Now – Filming a 10-session series on the book of Daniel that will be out later this year.

You may not remember, but the setting of much of Daniel is Babylon...and do you remember what we said Babylon represents. Yes...it was a physical city, but it represented a system...the “world system”.

I describe Babylon the “world system” using these words:

- **lust for power...**
- **selfish autonomy...**
- **human greed...**
- **rampant idolatry...**
- **unbridled hedonism...**

This is the world system...this is the Babylon we're living in – and truth – it doesn't matter in the world system. And yet this is where we are called to live.

The world system works on the mind through constant exposure...it doesn't have to argue with you, it simply surrounds you so that its values start feeling like the norm.

No wonder it's so hard to live for truth! We have enemies like Satan, the sin nature, and the world system coming against us...the fight never slows down...it never gives up...and this is why we must fight.

We fight FOR truth...and we fight for truth with/in our mind. How do we do this?

1. Fill our mind with truth

We've already seen that God's Word is truth and if we are going to fight against Satan, the sin nature and the world system, it's imperative that we are filled with his truth.

Romans 12:2a – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”

That word transform here is the word “Metamorphoo”. It's where we get our word “metamorphosis” from!

Think caterpillar to butterfly...think incredible hulk... think of the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Hermon – same word! It describes a complete change of form!

We are changed...transformed when we renew our mind in truth.

We replace what is false and deceptive and evil, with that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

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.”

Look...God didn't give us his word for simply information. He gave us his word so that we would be changed and transformed by it...that we would operate differently than the world around us while we live in the world around us.

Seniors graduating...if you have ANY hope of continuing to strive in your walk with the Lord, you better fill your mind with truth, and this begins by walking intimately with him. We need to be spending time in his word.

Robert Morgan is going to be with us at our America 250 celebration. He has written a book, *100 Bible Verses That Made America*.

I read anything Robert Morgan puts out. Several summers ago, I got his book, *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*, and just listen to how he defines meditation. This is how you fill you mind with truth!

Robert Morgan - “Biblical meditation is the powerful practice of pondering, personalizing, and practicing Scripture.”

Notice...this is work you do!

I’ll talk more about this in a moment, but suffice to say...filling our mind with truth is not just going to happen by simply falling asleep with the Bible on our bedside table!

We have to grab it...and read it...and take it in!

Joshua 1:8 – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Psalm 1:1-3 – “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is 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.”

Truth...God’s truth will help you so much as you navigate life and all that comes with it.

- The enemy will whisper a lie, and you have to be filled with God’s truth to combat that lie.
- The pull of the sin nature is so incredibly STRONG, and you have to be filled with God’s truth to stand firm when what you are feeling in the moment is shouting, “just do it...it’s not a big deal...no one is ever going to know!”
- The world system is going to try to squeeze you in its mold and conform you, and its truth that transforms you and will keep you sane in a world that’s gone mad.

Fill your mind with truth. Write scripture out. Listen to it. Download the podcast. Listen to the sermons. Most of all spend time alone with God in his word – THIS is how you fill your mind with truth.

2. Guard our mind with truth

These enemies are real enemies...and this fight is a real fight. You have to stay on guard!

Ephesians 6:17a – “take the helmet of salvation.”

That passage is written in the context of warfare...that’s what Paul had been writing about. Many think as he was writing this, he could have been looking at a Roman centurion or guard and just using him as an example of how to “fight the good fight of faith”.

The first thing he says is “take the helmet of salvation”. Why? Because this is where we win or lose the fight for truth!
It’s in our mind!

Illus. Football Helmets – put it on and keep it on!

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 – “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

This is so important because this is where lives get shipwrecked! We don’t capture our thoughts and over time our mind is darkened and the scripture says this is a dangerous place because a “darkened mind” leads to more and more depravity.

In fact, just turn to Romans 1. I wasn’t really planning on going here, but in my study thought about this verse in this section of the message.

A person who doesn’t know Christ...they end up where they are because of a “darkened mind”...they refuse to surrender to the truth and so God gives them over!

Romans 1:18, 21, 24-25, 28 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth... For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened... Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen... 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.”

Guarding our mind...it’s critical and let me just go one step back here...how does something typically get in our mind? It’s by what our eyes see.

So, in all this talk about guarding our minds...it starts with our eyes. Jesus put it like this in:

Matthew 6:22-23 – “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,²³ 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 are our own worst enemy because of what we let into our minds through the gatekeeper of the eyes!

Satan, the sin nature and the world system...they love endless scrolling...they love to put images in front of you that will fill your mind with worldly junk...anything besides God's truth.

I want to make an argument here for wisdom that says, “I'm not going to give the flesh, the world system or Satan a bat to hit me with! I'm going to be wise when it comes to what I let in my mind!”

Saying “NO” to going to certain movies, not watching certain television, getting guards on your computer...that's NOT legalism, that's wisdom...and it's a part of guarding your mind that will help prevent destructive emotions and behaviors from forming in your life.

We fight for truth. This means we fill our mind with truth...guard our mind with truth.

Third and finally: **Train our mind with truth**

While guarding is protective – it's what we keep out. Training is active...it's what a build in! A mind that is trained knows what to do when the enemy shows up.

1 Peter 1:13a – “Therefore, preparing your minds for action...”

Illus. MMA – People who fight for a living...I don't understand those people! It's hard for me to even watch it.

But here's the deal...they don't show up to the fight having not put in the work beforehand. They've trained for hours...they've put in the hours...they have poured out blood and sweat and tears to prepare for the fight. In many ways, their life is on the line!

Well, spiritually...our life is on the line. And we have to train our minds for truth. This requires putting in the work...it requires sacrifice!

Jesus made it a habit to get up in the morning and go spend time in prayer...before any big decisions he spent all night in prayer.

This was huge for him because recall in our sermon on temptation...how did Jesus win the battle – “it is written...it is written...it is written.”

He knew the word...he had trained himself in it and it allowed him to combat the lies of the enemy and resist temptation.

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

Romans 8:5-6 – “For those who live according to the flesh 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. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”

Illus. VBS/Kid’s camp – I’ll ask, which do you want? Life and peace or corruption and death. It’s pretty easy to answer. Seniors, what do you want? You want life and peace.

Well, life and peace depend on making sure we fill your mind with truth, guard your mind with truth, and train your mind with truth.

Seniors...Church...I’m going to tell you like my professor told me that day, “The battlefield for your life is in your mind. If Satan can win the war in your mind, he has you beat.”

Let’s keep fighting for truth. It matters.

Will you pray with me?

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.