

Sunday, February 26, 2023

Absolutely

Romans 1:18-23

The Gospel-Is it true because it changed your life or is it true and therefore changed your life? There's a difference....

One states that personal experience determines truth and the other starts with truth that effects our experience. You see, if our experience is the bases of what is true, then someone else who experiences something that contradicts the Gospel, BUT still changed their lives, we now have to say, "Maybe the Gospel ISN'T the only way... who can know?" If so, then relativism may be effecting your faith.

What is [Relativism](#)? The [doctrine](#) that knowledge, truth, and [morality](#) exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

It does beg the question, is there absolute truth? **Absolutely!**

There is a distinction to the "doctrine" or teaching of the worldview or Narrative or relativism vs. a proper way to use the word relative or relatively.

Is it cold outside? Relative to our usually perfect weather, "Yes," but not compared to the South Pole, which is currently -52*, with a wind chill of -78¹.

"Many examples from our daily speech could be given. My father was old when he passed away. True, relative to men. False, relative to civilizations or Redwood trees. That car was speeding. True, relative to the thirty-five-mile-per-hour speed limit. False, relative to a NASCAR race. That baby's cry is loud. True, relative to ordinary human conversation. False, relative to a thunderclap. And so on."

"This is a good and indispensable way of thinking and speaking. If you are unable to speak of truth claims being relative in this sense, you may accuse people of error who have in fact spoken truth because you have not clarified the context or the standard they are using for measuring the truth of the statement."²

¹ <https://www.usap.gov/videoclipsandmaps/spwebcam.cfm>

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-challenge-of-relativism>

BUT, when we say **knowledge, truth and morality** can only be defined **relative to culture, society or historical context**, this is **ABSOLUTELY FALSE**.

Is child molestation wrong? But what if a majority of culture says it's ok? Can we still say it's absolutely wrong? Or does it become "in my opinion?" Or, for me it is wrong"

Have you heard it said, **"You can't know anything for sure"**. The simple response is, **"Are you sure about that?"** Explain-self refuting statement, for that statement to be true, they have to be sure about at least one thing; that you can't know anything.

What about **"There are no absolute truths"** The simple response is, **"Are you absolutely sure?"** (Explain)

If only there was a universal being outside of culture, society and historical context that gave us a way to know an ultimate standard by which we could know truth and the distinction of right and wrong.

Oh wait, there is! (Hold up BIBLE) Let's check it out. Romans 1:18

Why has this Narrative become so prevalent? From the beginning of this series I have referred to the FALL.

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5

Like God, knowing good and evil... When we remove God, we are left to define morality ourselves. But who gets to decide? Is it survival of the fittest? A majority of culture like a democracy? Is a dictatorship the answer? These would be options IF we were not broken within. But because sin has entered the room, we are incapable of creating a system that brings justice without corruption. Romans 1 speaks to this condition.

ROMANS 1:18-23 TITLE SLIDE

Vs. 18-For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. (Explain; beach ball)

What does this look like?

And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?"

And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Matthew 21:23-27

This is not full blown Relativism, but what John Piper calls de facto relativists; which are the most common. In other words, they were asked to make a simple truth claim, but instead of answering, they came up with another truth to fit their unrighteousness. "We do not know". But is that true? No, they had a clear opinion of John. But because of shame on one side and fear on the other, they suppress truth.

-By their unrighteousness, suppress the truth.

ROMANS 1:18-23 TITLE SLIDE

Vs. 19-20 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

The Gospel Bridge to the "ism's", Relativism, humanism, atheism, agnosticism...

-This truth is fight to arise...

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. Ecclesiastes 3:11

In other words, it's not our eternity, it's God's. He is outside of time and space and is ultimately truth... we need God to help for us to understand!

Vs. 21-23 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. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Romans 1:18-23

Man or created God's after their image is what the result is... Based in foolishness, and it all starts with unrighteousness!

Now it's easy to say, "them"; those guys who believe such outrageous things, but what about us? Do we really believe God and his word to be ultimate truth?

Here's an easy one...

Jesus-Is he true because he changed your life or is he true and therefore changed your life?

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

The Word-Is it true because it changes your life or is it true and therefore changes your life?

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

The Church-Is it true because it changes your life or is it true and therefore changes your life?

the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15b

Buttress- Support or foundation.

Communion