



## Truly Free

Does anyone really seek the truth anymore? Does anyone believe in a higher, universal truth? If we find such truth, are we willing to allow our lives to be shaped by it? Our world today has become so polarized by ideologies. Conflicting ideologies and opinions have led to factions, and to vitriolic rhetoric in the media, and especially through social media. We find ourselves labeling others, or being labeled, as we are forced to choose which side we are on. And what most people are fighting over is a false reality to begin with. It is not a search for ultimate truth which causes such division, but instead the quest for power.

A true seeker of truth asks, “What is it?” Little children are true seekers of truth, constantly asking, “What is this, what is that, how does it work, why is it so?” As we grow, our natural curiosity develops into the question, “Who am I?” God created us to seek His truth, for as Jesus once said, “The truth will set you free.” (Jn. 8:32) The problem with ideologies is that they try to define all things, including the human person. The word “define” means “to make finite,” that is, “small.” Such defining of the world, and of life, and even of ourselves, shuts down the search for higher truth. But God placed the desire for truth in our hearts. Sadly, we often allow ourselves to be defined by all the ideologies around us, for they give us a sense of belonging and security.

Our reading from Hebrews says, “the Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from Him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must render an account.” To state it differently, the Word of God cuts through all that is false, exposes lies, and reveals things as they truly are. By God’s Word we come to know the truth about the world, about life, about ourselves, and even God. For God’s Word became flesh, and by His own life Jesus shows us what it means to be truly human, and how to live as sons and daughters of God.

Ideologies offer a sense of belonging, of what to think, and how to act, and a definition of who we are. But ideologies stop the thinking process and stifle the quest for truth. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a continual search for the truth, and a deeper knowledge of all that is revealed by God. Our reading from Wisdom demonstrates Solomon’s love for truth and wisdom, as something more precious than any earthly treasure, and more desirable than any worldly power, for the truth of God leads to eternal life. In our Gospel reading, a young man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus invites him to abandon his earthly wealth and become a disciple, the young man goes away sad, for he had many possessions. The young man loved his earthly wealth more than he loved the eternal truth of God. Therefore, he did not answer the call of Jesus to the truth which would have set him free.

Setting aside our ideologies is more difficult than setting aside wealth. We often identify ourselves with our ideologies. So how do we put away these false notions of reality and embrace the truth? Jesus tells us, “With God, all things are possible.” If we open our hearts and minds to Jesus and His teachings, then we will outgrow stifling ideologies, and touch infinite wisdom. We will begin to embrace God’s higher purpose for ourselves and His greater plan of salvation for all people.

As we reflect on our lives at this moment, what determines our behavior? Are we shaped by an ideology? Or are we, like Jesus, realists? As a realist Jesus enters into our fallen world: He meets us where we are, enlightens our minds, and shows us a more perfect way. The way of Jesus is not vicious, and does not lead to division; the way of Jesus calls all sinners to salvation. So, may we always seek the higher truth of God, for His truth makes us truly free.

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