



## Clarity in a Confused World

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What an honour and a pleasure it is to be with you again, this is now I think my third time addressing a crowd like this. Not all of you have been here in the past, but some of you have. I see some familiar faces as well. But it's such an august and accomplished group, it is often very humbling and very daunting, to be able to stand up here and say anything of significance on such importance cultural issues.

As I was thinking about and praying about what I might share this afternoon with you, I was very humbled, because we live in times now where things are not as clear now as they once were. We used to value clarity as a virtue. We are currently in a situation now, culturally speaking, where clarity is becoming something of a sin and confusion is considered a virtue.

**As you look around the world and see the questions we're being asked, not only politically, but even culturally, societally, things that were once very easy to say we know what the answers are on these issues, are now up for grabs.**

What I mean by that is just to say is this. That as you look around the world and see the questions we're being asked, not only politically, but even culturally, societally, things that were once very very easy to say we know what the answers are on these issues, are now up for grabs.

Questions like – baseline questions – what does it mean to human? Now we, of course, should be analyzing and examining these questions and understanding them. But we used to come at these questions like:

- What does it mean to be human?
- What does it mean to be male?
- What does it mean to be female?
- What does marriage mean?
- What does sexuality entail?
- What are the limits or the boundaries of human freedom?

- What are certain religious rights and these various things?

We used to come at these and look at them and say, “What are these subtleties in these issues?”

Now, we are challenging the issues themselves. We’re saying, “There is no definition of human. There is no definition of gender. There is no definition of marriage. And sexuality for example, is all up for grabs. Everything can be changed.”

Now this is a phenomenon that is happening strongest in the West. But as I’ve seen things happening all over the world – and you hear and you read about these things – you begin to see something. This is a phenomenon that is taking root in nearly every single society.

With the advent of social media, we can now spread ideas, whether it’s through *Facebook* or *Twitter*, or other things that you might be engaged in that you see people doing...or *Youtube*, whatever it might be. Ideas that were once localized, that were once limited to a certain country, or a certain type of a culture, are now being spread very very quickly. And of course certain governments and other things are trying to regulate what goes in and what goes out of their countries. And that’s up to them. But there is no stopping the flow of information. Which means there is no stopping the flow of ideas, good or bad, which can be of course, a very serious challenge.

What I have noticed though, is that in this culture of confusion, there is a root to it all. And I will get to it in a moment. But it reminds me of something that happened to me a few years ago. I was travelling to go speak in a place called Wallaceburg, Ontario, and I’m from Michigan, so in order to get there I have to cross a river. Normally you can go over the Blue Water Bridge near Sarnia, or the tunnel near Windsor, Ontario. But this particular engagement in Wallaceburg required me to cross the river at a relatively unfamiliar place to me, at a town called Algonac. And in that town there is no bridge that goes over the river. You have to take a car ferry.

Now I’m from the Great Lake State. We have these huge lakes that are sea sized lakes. They are just salt free and no sharks, which makes them wonderful to swim in. So I’m used to these large car ferries that can hold thirty, forty, fifty cars at a time. They are ships. To call them ferries is a bit of a misnomer or a mislabeling. They are these ship-sized things.

Well, I was crossing this river near Algonac, and this was not one of those boats. This is a tiny thing that held two cars maximum, and it was rickety and this white rusty thing. And I was like, “I don’t know if this is going to make it across.”

I thought maybe the guy would get one of those ropes they use to pull boats across the river. This is the worst boat possible for this kind of a trip. I got out of the boat and my car was the

only car on the boat [...]. And the boat operator said, “Just stay in your car. It’s a short trip. It’s super hot outside. Just stay in your car.”

And I obliged him, because I didn’t want to get sweaty. But I’m terrible with directions. I can get lost in my own backyard. So I’m terrified that I am not going to be able to find where I am going, once I cross over the border into Canada. So I look at my GPS system in my car to make sure I’m going in the right direction. It was at that exact moment when I looked down at the GPS, that the boat left the dock.

Now, because I had been looking down, I did not see the boat leave the dock. But because I was in the car, the suspension of the car and the mass of the car absorbed the energy of the boat leaving the dock. So I didn’t feel us leave the dock either. So I didn’t see it. I didn’t feel it. When I looked up, I had that vertigo that happens, that sort of confusion, and maybe even that panic that happens when you are not sure you are moving or not.

You know you have been there at the intersection of two streets, where there is a bus next to you and the bus begins to move forward and you are not quite sure if the bus is moving forward, or you’re moving backward. There is that momentary panic that happens, and that nausea. That, “Oh my goodness, am I moving or not?”

What do you do at that particular moment to make sure you are not backing up into somebody and kill them? What do you do? You look up for a point of reference: something that is fixed, that doesn’t itself move. You look for a sign, or a mailbox, or a building, or the stop light. Something else to see if you’re moving relative to that fixed point of reference.

Well, I was on a river; everything’s moving. There was no fixed point of reference. Where I was awash in the flow, and so my nausea and my panic persisted for quite some time. In order for it to go away, I had to find a fixed point of reference. And my only reference, really, was the distant shore that was approaching. So I looked at it and I examined it carefully and I thought, “Ah it is getting larger and larger and I feel the vision. I am in fact moving.” And all of a sudden the confusion went away.

**The culture we currently live in, is the river. All points are moving.** Whether they are religious points. Whether there are spiritual claims, or the growing number of people who are called nones, N-O-N-E-S. Not nuns, like Catholic nuns. But N-O-N-E-S. It’s people who say that their religious affiliation is “none of the above.” They’re spiritual, but not religious. And they can define spirituality or God however they like. Questions about who we are as people, all of these things no longer have fixed points of reference. They are all in the river.

In fact what I would say to you, especially in Western culture, is we have left dry land – the foundation – so long ago, that we suddenly feel better in the river. And we when we get to dry

land, we feel the stability that comes from it and we sort of resent it. Because the dry land represents a foundation that we have to orient ourselves towards.

In other words, if there is a foundation, then we are moving relative to the foundation. The world suddenly doesn't revolve around us. And we don't like that, because we're entering into a phase of human culture across the world where we talk about freedom a lot. We use this word freedom quite often, but I don't think we actually mean freedom. We mean something else. And there is a confusion that is happening and I will get to that in a moment.

In the 1980s...I'm a child of the 1980s [...] I remember there was a phenomenon that was occurring, especially in the United States. It was called Nuclear War Neurosis, or Cold War Neurosis. Where children were walking up in the middle of the night screaming, because they had nightmares that the United States and the USSR had finally done it. [They] had finally pushed their buttons and the Cold War became suddenly very hot. And they were terrified. There was an anxiety growing amongst our children, because of the confusion that was attending to this whole thing.

And amidst this, there was a song that was written by a rock band called *Genesis* and the song was called *Land of Confusion*. Of course, in English it rhymes and the song lyrics go like this,

*Oh Superman where are you now  
When everything has gone wrong somehow  
These men of steel, these men of power  
Are losing control by the hour*

I want you to translate from the 1980's, thirty years ago, to today. And so many of you are working on solutions and trying to foster relationships among different nations whose systems of beliefs sometimes are very different. And we're trying to find a common ground, while we discuss our differences.

**We are seeing this culture of confusion, that is not just being driven by the men of steel and the women of steel, but it is also being driven by the culture undergirding the nations we represent. They are fostering the confusion. It is not just the powerful.**

Yet we are seeing this culture of confusion, that is not just being driven by the men of steel and the women of steel, but it is also being driven by the culture undergirding the nations we represent. And the businesses we represent. And the cultures we come from. They are fostering the confusion. It is not just the powerful. We are all in this together so to speak. But as we try to become the men of steel and the women of steel, we are losing control by the hour it seems. And that sounds very bleak, but I am actually an optimist. I really am, because I think that there is an answer to all of this.

This culture of confusion, as if to prove my point, *Oxford English Dictionaries* named its [English] Word of the Year [...] in 2016. Now every year *Oxford English Dictionaries* actually names a Word of the Year. And the Word of the Year is meant to capture what is fascinating the culture at that particular time, or that particular moment. And it's not a new word [...] they made up. Often times it is an old word that suddenly becomes used a lot more. And in 2016 the word "post-truth" had been used 2000 times more than it had in the previous fifteen years. 2000 times more. So they said "post-truth" was the Word of the Year.

A post-truth society is a society that elevates feelings and preferences above facts and truth. It elevates feelings and preferences above facts and truth. Now that is very different, friends, than a postmodern culture. And many of us have been dealing with, I think for awhile now, the idea of a postmodern culture.

A postmodern culture is one that says there are no objective truths, there are only subjective truths, or truths based on human opinion. And so whatever things I happen to believe, whether they are religious or political or social, those are my beliefs. And they are equally valid for me, just as your opposite beliefs are equally valid for you. But don't try to tell me if yours are true or not. You keep it to yourself, because there is no objective truth, it's all a matter of opinion.

See the problem with that is that it is logically untenable. You can immediately see the problem, can't you. When someone says there is no objective truth. That statement has to be objectively true. So [...] when they say that there is no objective truth, I ask the question, "Is that objectively true?"

They have to say yes. If it is objectively true, then their belief system is objectively false. And they can't possibly hold onto it. See what I am saying here, is that you can actually begin to have a discussion with somebody who is a postmodern person.

**A post-truth society is a society that elevates feelings and preferences above facts and truth...A post-truth person says there are objective truths, but my opinions and my preferences matter more.**

A post-truth person is different. **A post-truth person doesn't say there are no objective truths. A post-truth person says there are objective truths, but my opinions and my preferences matter more.** And if those truths line up with my opinions, great. But if they don't, then I don't care. You see the problem: you can't actually have – it seems to me – a logical dialogue with someone who is post-truth, where their preferences matter more.

Why are we at a place where our preferences and our opinions and our emotions matter more than the actual factual verifiable truths? Why are we there? I think in order to deal with that kind

of a situation and find hope, we have to actually diagnose how we got here and what to do about it. Now the diagnosis is not a happy diagnosis. It really isn't.

From a Christian point of view, I will tell you this. This is not a new thing. The strength of it is new. But the the idea, the seed of the idea of a post-truth society was planted in the Garden of Eden. From the Christian perspective, our first parents, Adam and Eve, were post-truth people. They were given this wonderful garden and God said to them, "Do not eat from this certain tree, because the day you eat of it, you shall surely die."

And they live with that rule, I don't know (for) how long. In fact, the Bible says that Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in the cool of the day in the garden. They literally had fellowship, relationship, with the one who is the Source of all truth. And they lived with that rule: do not eat of this one tree, everything else is yours, but this one. And they lived with it for who knows how long.

And then along comes Satan and he misquotes God. He doesn't quote God's words accurately back to Adam and to Eve. God said, "Don't eat of this fruit."

Satan said, "Did God say..." and then he misquotes God.

Then Adam and Eve respond, "Oh God said, 'Don't even look at it, don't even touch it.'"

Well (God) never said that. But do you see the problem? They added to what He had said. They misinterpreted what He had said and so in doing so, they showed themselves not to be committed to the truth. And now Satan knows, "Ah now I can get to them here, because they don't actually stick to the truth."

And then Satan lies to them again and he says to them, "God knows that in the day you eat of that fruit, you won't die but you will be like God."

Now that's when suddenly this fruit, that never really tempted Adam or Eve before, that's when it became tempting. Because they realized something. They thought, "If I eat of this fruit, I will be like God."

**You see their purpose – their God-given purpose – wasn't to be God. Their God-given purpose was to be *with* God.** You are created. I am created. We are created as human beings. We are incurably relational beings. We have a relationship desire, each one of us. You have, want, covet, or mourn the loss of relationships. Every single person in this room. You were meant for relationship. And so, the Bible says that we were meant for that relationship.

**Adam and Eve didn't want to be *with* God, they wanted to *be* God. Their preferences were to *be* God, but the truth was that they were meant to be *with* Him. And so their preferences took precedence over the truth.**

Adam and Eve didn't want to be *with* God, they wanted to *be* God. Do you see the problem? Their preferences were to *be* God, but the truth was that they were meant to be *with* Him. And so their preferences took precedence over the truth. They were post-truth people, and every single person in this room is the inheritor of a post-truth mindset.

So we elevate feelings and preferences over truth. Why? And this goes back to the freedom question. See we talk about freedom a lot. Whether we're involved in politics, whether we're involved in business, or anything, we talk about freedom. Freedom of contract. Freedom of religion. Freedom of relationships. Freedom of association. Freedom of expression.

All kinds of freedoms. We no longer mean that. We don't think about freedom, what we mean is autonomy. Two different things. Autonomy comes from a Greek word, two Greek words actually. [...] The English word "autonomy" has at its root two Greek words: "*eaftós*," which mean "self" and the second word is "*nómos*," which means "law."

When we are autonomous, we are a law unto ourselves. Now that is a problem. Because if I'm a law unto myself, and if you're a law unto yourself, and my law happens to conflict with your law – my moral law, my religious law, my cultural law, whatever it might be – and there is no more truth as the determiner of who's right and and who's wrong.

**What's going to happen in that situation when my law and your law conflict and truth is on the bottom shelf, not the top shelf? The figure that will determine who's right and who's wrong – if either of us is right or wrong – is not going to be truth, it's going to be power.**

What's going to happen in that situation when my law and your law conflict and truth is on the bottom shelf, not the top shelf? The figure that will determine who's right and who's wrong – if either of us is right or wrong – is not going to be truth, it's going to be power.

Because no one's truth is any more valid than anybody else's truth. Because it's all a matter of preference. And the person with the loudest microphone, or the most guns, will be the one whose opinions will become the dominant. And that is not the law of civilization, that's the law of the jungle. That is how lions dominate gazelles. That is not the way human beings are to interact. And it resulted in chaos.

**The way to move forward, is to point out the negative consequences of a post-truth culture that sacrifices clarity and truth on the altar of human autonomy.**

So I think the way [...] to move forward, is to point out the negative consequences of a post-truth culture that sacrifices clarity and truth on the altar of human autonomy. You see, we are worshipping ourselves. We've become gods, even though we don't want to say that. We've become gods to ourselves, because we want to do, say and act, and be whatever we want.

How do you respond to this? First I think you point out the consequences and second, you offer hope. And I will be offering hope from a uniquely Christian perspective. I realize that not everyone in this room is Christian and I'm perfectly fine with that. But you signed up for the Christian Embassy lunch, so you knew what you were getting. But I do want to respect that I think all of us recognize that there is a need to respond.

The first part, the diagnosis of the problems is not a specifically Christian issue. [...] **The first thing that happens in a post-truth culture is that we lose our ability to reason. We lose all sense of reason and wisdom altogether.**

I was speaking at a large group of people on religious and cultural differences. And I was talking about the value of different religions, but I was also highlighting the differences between those religions. And there was a guy in the front row taking very furious notes. He wasn't made at me, but his notes were going so fast across the page that smoke was emanating from that page. I was like, "Where is the fire extinguisher, because that guy's going to burst into flame!"

Well usually when that happens, that's one of the first people to spend a lot of time talking to me afterwards, and he did. He said, "Hey I have something to show you."

He showed me this diagram he had drawn. And in the middle of the diagram was a big capital "T", which stood for the truth. And surrounding it were little lowercase "t"s that stood for partial truth. And he said to me, "There is an objective truth. There is a truth that is out there, but we don't know all of it."

I said, "Good. You and I agree that we don't have all of it. Because if I knew all of it, I would be all-knowing...I am not all-knowing...which means I am not God. So far you and I would agree that I am not God."

So we are off to a good start. He says, "The truth is here, but all of us have little versions of the truth, but they are incomplete."

I said, "Well, I don't think all of us do."

He said, "Well all of us do."

I said, "Like Hitler? And Stalin? [...] You name your horrible figure of history...These men had versions of the truth...are you kidding me?!"

And this is what he said, "Because I only have a partial view of the truth, I can't disagree with those people. I can tell you I don't prefer their version of the truth...I don't prefer it. But I can't say I disagree."

I was like, "Buddy, if you want to disagree with somebody, it's okay to disagree with Hitler. No one gets mad at you for that, and those who do get mad at you...well then who cares! But you can disagree with some people. You really can."

He said, "No. I can't disagree with anybody."

I said, "Sure you can."

He said, "No I can't."

I said, "You're doing it now."

You see what I am pointing out here. This is a very bright and intelligent man, who's well meaning. See what is happening? His preference is that we all get along and no one's view is better or worse than anybody else's view.

We don't do the hard work of trying to come to our differences and say, "Do our differences make a difference?"

That is not easy work, that's hard work, especially if you want to do it in a civil manner. But he didn't want to do that, he wanted to gloss over. So his preferences mattered more than the truth. And an otherwise very brilliant man was willing to go to a very, I think, non-brilliant conclusion.

But it has societal consequences as well. And you see it at universities all across the West, maybe even all across the world, where very bright people are sacrificing their God-given ability to reason, at some of the best universities in the world, on the altar of their preferences. They are sacrificing this on the altar of their preferences. So the first thing to go is our ability to reason, or our wisdom.

**Every time you murder the truth, or you sacrifice it, or you put on the bottom shelf, your good intentions are, as they say, the road that paves our way to hell.**

**The second thing to go is our integrity.** See in a post-truth world, where truth is not the most important thing, but preferences are, I can lie or twist the truth a little bit to advance my agenda. Whether it's a political agenda, or a business agenda or a personal agenda, or a social agenda, whatever it might be. I can twist the truth a little bit, or outright lie, in order to foster an

agenda that I think is more important than my integrity. And sometimes this is done actually with good intentions in mind. But every time you murder the truth, or you sacrifice it, or you put on the bottom shelf, your good intentions are, as they say, the road that paves our way to hell.

We see this in the scientific sphere. A study was done recently and published by *Smithsonian Magazine*: that only 40%, less than half of the findings that were published in academically, peer-reviewed journals, could be reproduced.

What I am saying here is this. That (of) these findings that are told to you and to me as scientific fact, only 40% of the studies those facts are based on could be reproduced. In other words, the tests aren't reliable, or at least the published tests, aren't reliable. Why? Because there is a sense now of a preference of "I need to get published. I need to get funding. I need to get all these things. And so maybe I won't establish my protocols as well as I should. Maybe I won't report the findings exactly as they were."

Because there is a higher agenda – the advancement of science.

Now, what I'm pointing out is not that scientist are all liars. I'm not saying that at all. What I am saying is that nobody, whether you are a Christian, whether you're a non-Christian, whether you're an Atheist, whether you're a scientist, no matter what your worldview is, whether you're a business person. The minute you don a lab coat does not create an immunity from the human condition. Everybody is subject to it. So we lose our sense of integrity.

**The third, and probably the worst thing, is we lose our sense of accountability and human value.** It was Protagoras that said, that man is the measure of all things. [...] Centuries ago, [...] he said that gods are these petty gods...he was referring to Zeus and Athena, [...] Aphrodite, etc. He was saying these gods are not worthy of our worship and therefore there are no gods. And so humanity is the measure of all things. There is no standard above us.

**If there is no standard above us and we become the measure of all things, then we not only determine what's true, but we determine who is valuable.**

Here the problem with that. If there is no standard above us and we become the measure of all things, then we not only determine what's true, but we determine who is valuable. And we are saying this today. And I can quote for you many many thinkers – thoughtful people – who would agree with this statement that there is no god above us and therefore there is no standard above us. We are the standard. And they would say it over and over again.

It was Tom Flynn who said that through a process of value inquiry informed by scientific thought we can reach, in his words, "rough agreement concerning values and ethical systems."

We don't need God for this. I would venture to say this though – if you look at the past 1900 years, or even the past 2000 years, especially the last 100 years where we've had all this advancement in technology – our brilliance is on full display.

This little machine that each one of us holds, that we laughingly call phones. No one makes calls on these things anymore. This machine holds more computing power than the first rockets that went to the moon. And that's the kind of genius we have now and the kind of creativity we have now and yet we have not reached this rough agreement concerning values. We've not come there. We use these little machines. We're in love with these things. I want you to think about, if your phone dies, do you get twitchy? Do you get a little nervous? Sometimes – and this is a phenomenon that actually happens – if your phone is sitting on the table, and you feel it vibrate in your pocket? This is actually a phenomenon. It happens. People are so connected with these things.

In other words, what's happened is we've personified our machines. We even call them names! We've personified our machines and we have objectified people. We use these machines sometimes to watch and look at the most heinous things that make people into commodities. Because Tom Flynn says, "we can reach a rough agreement concerning values," when the reality is, all we've done is agreed to be rough. We have not come to this rough agreement concerning values.

If the protests across universities are any indication, it's pretty bleak out there. And we've lost our sense of human value. In fact there are ethicists who are coming out of our major universities, who are making the claim that parents should be able to kill their newborn babies. Not pre-born – newborn. Because if the baby can't actually value itself cognitively, then the baby has no value, unless the parents give it value. And if the parents don't give it value, then the baby has no value and the baby can be discarded. (They are) arguing this with a straight face in published medical journals.

**Because man is the measure of all things, we've become the determiner of who is valuable. So we lose reason, we lose integrity and we lose accountability and value.**

[...] Because man is the measure of all things, we've become the determiner of who is valuable. So we lose reason, we lose integrity and we lose accountability and value.

If there is no God above us to whom we are accountable, then we can determine who is valuable or not. And we have done this over the course of human history and we are terrible at it. We say certain people, because of their ethnicity, because of their religion or because of where they happen to be born across a border, are less valuable than us. We can kill or enslave them. We are not very good at this.

It was Yuval Noah Harari who said, that we are petulant gods who do not know what we want...Is there anything more frightening? Now that is a very bleak picture.

But let me tell you this, I might seem very positive. When we go to universities all across the world, our team and other people, see thousands of people show up at the most secularized [...] universities that are out there. They come by the thousands and they ask questions. And they ask questions in search for answers.

So the answers I want to give you in the short time we have remaining, are from a Christian perspective. The Diagnosis has been from a non-Christian perspective – or at least, a not-specifically-Christian perspective. Here's the way the sociology works.

The solution, I think, does come from a Christian perspective. The Gospel actually offers hope. Now we are talking freedom and autonomy. The Bible is seen as this document that is supposed to be against freedom. And a lot of people in the West want to reject it as a source for human flourishing, because they are saying it has all these rules and regulations and things that restrict human freedom. And we don't want [...] those restrictions. We want to be, and say and do and think whatever we want. So get rid of this arbitrary rulebook.

**The reality is this, the Bible does actually stand against human autonomy. The ability to do whatever you want, because that results in chaos. But the Bible is very much in favour of human freedom. That is different. Freedom always requires a boundary.**

The reality is this, the Bible does actually stand against human autonomy. The ability to do whatever you want, because that results in chaos. But the Bible is very much in favour of human freedom. That is different. Freedom always requires a boundary. Always. Every single time without exception. I want you to think about this.

Here's an illustration. I have this wonderful backyard and it's very large, but it backs up to a main road. And I was nervous about it. When we moved into this house, my kids were very very young. In fact I only had one child at the time, now I have three beautiful kids.

When they were young, I didn't want them to be able to play in the backyard wherever they wanted. They had to have a certain boundary they couldn't go past. Because if they played without boundaries, the ball would bounce into the street that's behind our house – this busy road, where cars and truck wizz by at very very high speeds. If they didn't have a boundary, then they could play in the whole backyard. The ball would bounce into the street and, kids being what they are, would run into the street and they'd hurt themselves, or die. So I would be terrified of that.

So if there was no boundary, than they couldn't play in the backyard. And if they couldn't play in the backyard, they would have no freedom to play in the backyard. In other words, just

enough boundaries are necessary for the purpose of my backyard to be effectuated, so they could enjoy the freedom to enjoy that backyard.

**“If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

**Purpose and freedom are always linked, which means truth and freedom are always linked.** It was Chesterton who said, “You may feel in your creative way, you are free to draw a giraffe with a short neck, but you will find out you are not free to draw a giraffe at all. You might try to free a tiger from his cage, but do not free a tiger from his strips. If you try to free a camel from his humps, you will find you have freed him from being a camel at all.”

Whenever you are dealing with facts, you are always dealing with limitations. But facts and freedom are linked and this is where I think Jesus comes in. In John chapter 8 verses 31-36, Jesus is talking to those who come to Him. And He makes a remarkable statement. He says, *“If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

See the coupling? Truth and freedom. You can't have freedom without truth. “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

Their answer is really funny to me, because they answered Him, *“We are the offspring of Abraham and we have never been enslaved to anyone, how is it you say you will become free?”*

I find this hysterical, because they say they have never been enslaved to anyone. Really? Did you forget the 400 years of bondage in Egypt? You forgot that convenient little fact. The fact that you celebrate literally every year at the Passover. Your freedom from bondage...never been enslaved to anyone...come on! And by the way, they are saying this while they are under Roman occupation. So how much truth matters to these people.

Then Jesus in His amazing way says, *“Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave the sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever. The Son remains forever – meaning the Son of God – so if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

**“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” You will know the Son and the Son will set you free. The Son is the truth.**

Did you catch it? “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

“You will know the Son and the Son will set you free.”

The Son is the truth. That's what He is saying. Now you can't just say that kind of thing and let it hang out there. You can't claim to be the truth that sets humanity free and just not expect someone to say, "Oh yeah, why you?"

You've got to back that kind of a thing up.

I did a debate with an Atheist at Western Michigan University – you can view it online – on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus as a matter of fact. You see they asked (Jesus), "Why should we trust you?"

And He says, "I will raise My body up. You will kill Me. You will destroy this body and I will raise it up again in three days."

And the evidence is, I think very strong historically – both from the Bible, and outside the Bible – that not only did Jesus die, but He rose from the dead three days later to prove that He was right.

People often ask me, "Why do you trust Jesus?"

And I say this simply, "He rose from the dead and guys who rise from the dead have credibility."

So He says, "I am the truth that sets you free."

**Freedom is linked to truth, and truth is linked to purpose...Our purpose was to subject ourselves to the One who determines all truth and in that we find a freedom.**

Now what does that mean? What that means is this: freedom is linked to truth, and truth is linked to purpose. You and I were created for the purpose of relationship with God. We weren't created for the purpose of being little gods ourselves and elevating our preferences above truth. That is not our purpose, that is antithetical to our purpose. Our purpose was to subject ourselves to the One who determines all truth and in that we find a freedom.

The Bible says, I think uniquely, that we are made in the image of God and we were meant to have that in perfect harmony with God's existence Himself.

But we took that and we twisted it. And we twisted it horribly, and we left ourselves estranged from God.

And Jesus comes and says, "I will die on the cross to pay the debt you owe."

Because each one of us owes God something, because of our sin against Him. And all we have to do is search our own hearts to recognize our impurity and our lack of sufficiency before God. He comes and He pays that price.

Why do I believe that when He died He actually did something that paid for my price? Because He rose from the dead, to prove He was right. If He was wrong, He would have stayed dead. But He wasn't wrong. And I know that, because He didn't stay dead.

And He tells you and me, "You have an infinite value."

Every person that you represent – whether it's in business, whether it's in your political career, whether it's in your social life, as a head of a family, or part of a family – every person you represent, God says, is infinitely valuable. No matter what they believe, think, say, or do. They all are infinitely valuable. A cold, pitiless, indifferent universe, where there's no God, can't tell you that. But a God, who creates all things – including you...I want you to image a universe that is billions and billions of light years across, and yet He creates you.

Now, that isn't enough to prove that you have value, because He could do that as a big cruel joke. But He doesn't. Someone once asked me, "How do I know that I have value and I have this purpose?"

**You and I can know – not just hope, but know – that we have an infinite value because the infinite God paid an infinite price at the cross, so He could spend an infinite heaven with you. You know how valuable something is by what you are willing to pay for it.**

And here is what I say, from a Christian perspective, you and I can know – not just hope, but know – that we have an infinite value because the infinite God paid an infinite price at the cross, so He could spend an infinite heaven with you.

You know how valuable something is by what you are willing to pay for it. And you can know objectively that you and everyone you love and represent and hope to honour in your [...] sacred callings, everyone has value, because it's been demonstrated. You weren't told you had value, you were shown you have value, and that I think is a unique Christian perspective that offers us hope in a world that wants to find fulfillment...that elevates personal preference over facts and truth.

We look for fulfillment in things that are neither personal, nor true. We look to pornography which isn't personal. It's a horribly de-personalizing affair. And we try and find fulfillment only finding ourselves wanting more, or different, or weirder expressions of this.

We look to our relationship with other people, only to be let down by other people, because they are just as broken as we are.

We look to various experiences whether it's parties or career or all these things, thinking they will fulfill us.

None of these things is actually personal, yet we elevate the personal over the truth. So none of these things are personal, nor are they true.

**You weren't told you had value, you were shown you have value, and that I think is a unique Christian perspective that offers us hope in a world that wants to find fulfillment...that elevates personal preference over facts and truth.**

The unique Christian perspective is this. It is that you and I, and everyone in the world can find fulfillment in Jesus, because in Jesus, the truth is a person.

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