

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *Spoken: The Rhythm of God's Word* these sermon outlines will use the same Scripture passages as the small group study, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit.

Introduction: The philosopher Blaise Pascal said, "Truth is so obscure these days, and lies so well established, that unless we love the truth we shall never know it." Pascal spoke those words in 1670. How much more are they true today.

People search for the truth. The postmodernists would have us believe that truth is socially constructed and variable. We wouldn't talk about *the* truth with the definite article; we would talk about truth in the plural. Everyone, every culture has a different angle on truth. The skeptics would say that truth is out there somewhere but we don't know what it is. We don't have the intellectual resources to find it to attain certainty. The philosophical materialists believe that there is objective truth but there is no defined truth. They believe that everything in existence is material. There is no supernatural, no God, no angels, no demons, no soul, no afterlife. Reality is exhaustively explained in term of chemistry, biology, and physics. There is no purpose to an individual life, no purpose to the universe.

Fortunately, we can know the truth and The Truth can know us. The Bible is truth from start to finish and from the beginning of time to the end of time (if it were to end). It not only contains the truth; it *is* the truth. And, it speaks of One who is the embodiment of truth. Knowing the truth will set us free from our fears, hang-ups, and from death itself. For the truth gives life.

This text repeats three times the phrase, "Give me life" (vv. 154, 156, 159). Truth is the source of life; it gives life. From this text we can learn the value of knowing the truth and applying the truth of the Bible so we can find life.

1. Truth gives life in the arena of painful circumstances. (vv. 153-155)

The world we live in is hard on faith and hard on truth. The circumstances and situations that we find ourselves in can be painful, leading to harm and discomfort. As we walk through the hard patches and over the rocky ground of life, it is easy not to see the truth. The Psalmist knew all too well affliction.

The Psalmist invites us to do two things in those circumstances:

- A. *Allow God into your painful circumstance and distressing situation* (v. 153). Look at your situation through His eyes. Not all affliction is punishment and not all sickness is caused by sin. God may be using the trying times of your life as a means to strengthen you for larger battles, to discipline you for greater purposes, or to define you for more Christ-like character. During those difficult circumstances, we must not forget God's Word, remembering His promises,

recalling how He delivered and rescued His people in the past. As God has been faithful before, He will be faithful now. As God has been true to His Word in the past; He will be true to His Word in the present.

- B. *Appeal to God for involvement* (v. 154). The Psalmist was pleading for a defender, a redeemer, a savior. He was asking for God's intervention. He knew that some situations and circumstances were more than he could handle alone. He needed God's help. These are strong words: *defend . . . redeem . . . give me life*. The Psalmist was wanting for more than just an innocent bystander; He was wanting God's involvement. He was wanting God's active intervention in his affairs.

The Psalmist was confident in his appeal. He was standing on God's promise as recorded throughout His Word. God's promise gives us our confidence to face and walk through our painful circumstances.

2. Truth gives life in the assault of wicked people. (vv. 155-156)

The Psalmist moves from talking about painful circumstances to addressing wicked people. The wicked are those people who seek to harm us. They are spiritually lost. They don't live their lives according to God's Law. In fact, they have contempt for God's Word and those who follow it. These people distort the truth. They assault anyone living by biblical principles.

The Psalmist reminds us that logic, argument, and debate will not win over these people. The best apologetic for dealing with wicked people is love. As God loved us, spiritually wicked people before our conversion; we are to show compassion to the wicked people in our lives. The apostle Paul reminded us, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in doing so you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good" (Romans 12:20-21).

The Psalmist was confident in this tact. He knew that God judges everyone in the end. We all will receive our just rewards and punishments for our actions. Truth and love always wins, eventually.

3. Truth gives life in the attack of persecuting foes. (vv. 157-160)

The Psalmist moves deeper to not only addressing wicked people to speaking of those who persecute us for our faith. The persecuting foes are those who seek to destroy the truth. They will use anything and everything at their disposal to defeat God and attack God's Word. They are an ever-present enemy seeking to devour and to destroy.

The Psalmist challenges us to make three declarations toward the persecutors:

- A. *Declare your disgust* (v. 158). The Psalmist felt disgust for these people. *Disgust* is a deeply emotional word. He was repulsed by their actions. It angered him, causing a deep reaction. Anger reveals our hearts. For we only get angry over those things that matter to us. The Psalmist was angry over how these people treated God's Word. So should we. We must "be angry and sin not."
- B. *Declare your devotion* (v. 159). The Psalmist would not be moved by his persecutors. He was standing strong on the truth of God's Word. He was fervent about God's Word. He loved Scripture. It consumed his life. It was bread and water to his hungry and thirsty soul. It was the salve to his wounds. It was the love of his life. He could not imagine life without God's Word.

C. *Declare your confidence* (v. 160). The Psalmist was confident in God's Word. Even though attacked and maligned, God's Word would stand. And why not? It was entirely trustworthy, from start to finish. And, it was eternally enduring, from the beginning of time to the end of time.

The Psalmist was assured of these declarations. As God had been faithful in His love toward him, God would be faithful to the Psalmist as he stood boldly and confidently against his foes.

Conclusion: Painful circumstances, wicked people, and persecuting foes caused the Psalmist to focus on his relationship with God, and His Word. Rather than feeling sorry for himself, he realized how blessed he was to know God and to stand upon His promises. Truth would prevail. God would win.

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