

TRUTH MATTERS!

[COG General Conference Workshop](#)

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Welcome! I appreciate you coming. Let me just ask *why* you have chosen to come to *this* seminar when there are so many others?? *My* goal is to understand the *importance*, the *essentiality* of truth. This is an *important*, much *neglected* doctrine! We'll consider what exactly was the gospel *Jesus* preached, as opposed to the gospel preached by so many today! We'll also realize what exactly was the gospel preached in the *book of Acts*! 90 minutes seems a long time to focus, so I'd like us to stand up and stretch maybe at 30 minutes, and again at 60 minutes. If you think it's time, please just stand up, and the rest of us will take your cue. I do have a handout, Truths About Truth! Pick one up if you like. It's not exactly a handout for today's workshop, but it's somewhat related. I didn't have time to get together a handout for what we'll cover today, so I encourage you to take notes. If you'd like a copy of *my* notes, give me your email address, and I'll send them to you.

- I. God is a God of Truth!
 - A. How many would agree with that statement? How would you support that statement??
 - B. A few scriptures . . .
 1. In Ps. 101:7 God says, "*No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence!*" *Truth matters to God!*
 2. Pro. 6 lists 7 things God *hates!* Included are a *lying tongue*, and a *false witness* who pours out lies! *Truth matters!*
 3. Pro. 12:22, "*The Lord detests lying lips, but delights in men who are truthful!*" *Truth matters to God!*
 4. I Peter 3:10 tells us, "*Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech!*" *Truth matters to God!*
 5. Rev. 21:8 includes a list of people who will burn in hell. It doesn't just say *liars*, but *all liars!* *Truth matters to God!*
 - C. What's the very first lie in the scriptures?
 1. *Brief* review . . .
 2. Here are some of the very *first* and most *important* lessons learned after partaking of the forbidden fruit . . .
 - a. The *serpent* found out there are serious consequences when you don't *tell* the truth!
 - b. *Eve* found out there are serious consequences when you don't *believe* the truth!
 - c. *Adam* found out there are serious consequences when you refuse to *love the truth enough to stand up for it!*
 - D. Can you think of other incidents in the scriptures where there were *serious consequences* for lies and deceit?
 1. Ex. 8, flies, Pharaoh, promised, ultimately his firstborn son, and he lost his army in the Red Sea.
 2. King Ahab, Queen Jezebel, Naboth's vineyard.
 3. Naaman, Elisha, Gehazi.
 4. Ananias and Saphira.
 5. Truth matters to God!
- II. Truth Matters to Jesus!
 - A. The word *truth* is in the gospels 105 times. Eighty of those times it's Jesus saying, "*I tell you the truth!*" That would suggest truth matters to Jesus! Probably his favorite phrase!
 - B. John 8:31,32. According to this passage . . .
 1. To whom was he speaking?? (Jews who had believed him.)

2. What exactly does it take to *really* be Jesus' disciple?? (To hold to his teaching!)
3. What do you think it might mean to *hold to his teaching*??
4. What do you suppose this means for those who do *not* hold to his teaching?? (*not really his disciples!*)
5. What will you *know* if you hold to his teaching?? (The truth!)
6. What will knowing the truth accomplish?? (The truth will set you free!) If we had time to read on, we'd find that he's talking about being set free from sin. There is a correlation between knowing the truth and being set free from our sin!
7. John 8:42-47

C. Does anyone remember what Jesus said in John 14:6? "*I am the way, the truth, and the life! No one comes to the Father except through me!*" What does that tell us?? (Jesus is not *one* way among many. He is *the* way! He is the *only* way! He is not *one* truth among many. He is *the* truth! He is the *only* way to have life eternal in the KOG!) (Tell about Jerry's discussion with the Episcopalians at Camp Mack, about Muslims.)

D. John 17:17,18.

1. This is part of a prayer by Jesus. Does anyone remember the circumstances?? (If I knew I was going to die tomorrow, and if I knew I was going to leave my life's work in the hands of my associates, I'd be praying about things really important!!)
2. He's praying for his disciples, then and now. What does the word *sanctify* mean? What would it mean in this context??
3. How important would you say truth is to Jesus?
4. How confident are you today, that you, your church, our college, our conference are *sanctified by truth*??

E. Matt. 7:15-23.

1. What's V. 15 talking about??
2. We don't have time to work our way through the entire passage but notice Vs. 21-23. These are clearly people who *claimed* to have taught in the name of the Lord, and even *claimed* to have performed miracles in his name!
3. What does Jesus have to say to them? "*I never knew you! Away from me you evildoers!*"
4. Identify three charges that condemn them??
 - a. False prophets! (V. 15)
 - b. They didn't do the will of the Father in heaven! (V. 21)
 - c. They are evildoers! (V. 23)
 - d. Consequently, Jesus rejected them, sent them away!

III. Truth Mattered to Paul!

A. Acts 20:29-31

1. What do you see here?
2. His warning sounds *just like that of Jesus!*
3. Savage wolves! What does that depict??
4. They will come in among you, even from your own number!
5. They *distort* the truth. What's the anatomy of a good lie?? (It's a *distortion* of the truth. It won't be a *blatant* lie. A good lie will have an element of truth! If I set out to counter-feit a \$20 bill, I would make it *as close as possible* to the real thing. That's why counterfeit bills fool so many people. Would it fool anyone if I put *Donald Duck's picture* on it instead of *Andrew Jackson*? Jesus and Paul each warned that false teachers and doctrines would arise up *within* the church. Teachers that would *talk* like Christians, *walk* like Christians, *look* like Christians, but their teachings do not sync with those of Jesus, Paul, John, etc.)

6. Paul warned the Ephesians! He didn't just teach them. He warned them for three years about this very concern!
7. What was Paul's counsel?? *Be on guard!* Truth mattered!
- B. I Cor. 11:2. Paul was pleased here with the Corinthians because they were holding on to what he had taught them. Important!
- C. II Cor. 11:1-4. This is less than a year after Paul had expressed *praise* to the Corinthians because they had held on to the things he had taught them! What's he saying now??
1. He's fearful they are being deceived!
 2. Is he talking about Hinduism? (2000 BC) Buddhism? (600 BC) Or Islam? (yet to come)
 3. I don't think so! This is perversion *within* the church!
 4. He's talking about another *Jesus!* Another *spirit!* Another *gospel!*
 5. "*You put up with it easily enough!*" Truth mattered to Paul!
- D. II Cor. 11:13-15.
1. Paul describes those who would preach another Jesus, spirit, gospel, as *false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ, masquerading as servants of righteousness!* Truth mattered to Paul!
 2. What do you suppose he had in mind when he said, "*their end will be what their actions deserve?*" He tells us in Gal. 1!
- E. Gal. 1:6-9.
1. He was astonished! They were turning to a *different* gospel which is *really no gospel at all!*
 2. Here's what their *end* is – "*Let them be eternally condemned!*" What is he saying?? In today's vernacular?? "*Let them go to hell!*" He's talking about those who would teach *any other gospel!!* His warning is *not just for the perversions of his day!* Does this not indicate the seriousness of teaching *any other gospel?* Is there any application for this today??
 3. Why do you think he repeats it in V. 9?? Emphasis! This is a matter of life and death! Salvation issue! Truth mattered!
 4. Again, what did he counsel the Ephesians? "*Be on guard!*"
 5. Does this have any bearing on us today??
- F. Where do we read Paul instructing about the armor of God? (Eph. 6) What's the *very first item* Paul said to put on? (The belt of *truth!*) Why do you suppose?? The belt of truth holds everything else in place! Truth mattered to the Paul!
- G. II Thess. 2:9-12.
1. Why do they perish?? (They refused to love the truth!)
 2. How might they have been saved?? (Love the truth!)
 3. Of course there must also be love, repentance, baptism, living like Jesus, etc. (You can't teach everything in every passage!)
 4. What does it mean that God sends them a powerful delusion?? Why would he do that??
- H. I Tim. 2:3,4. (Hebrew parallelism) Vs. 5,6. Here's a truth to come to, and it appears to relate to salvation. So far, we haven't really looked at any *particular* doctrines, other than the *essentiality* of truth. But he here emphasizes . . .
- I. II Tim. 2:15 Truth *mattered* to the Apostle Paul!
- J. II Tim. 4:1-5 Truth *mattered* to the Apostle Paul!
- IV. Truth Mattered to the Apostle John!
- A. I John 2:18-27. John challenges his readers, who know the truth, warning that they allow no one to lead them astray.
- B. I John 4:1-6. Test the spirits/teachers. V. 6 identifies the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. He give 2 telling tests . . .

1. The actual *humanity* of Jesus (Vs. 2,3),
2. Do they listen to/accept John and (I think) the other Apostles? (V. 6)

C. II John 1-11

1. In the early church, the gospel was taken from one place to another by apostles, evangelists, and other believers, much like what's done in the Philippines and Russia, Africa, etc. John praises the support of such ministers but warns *against* support or help of those *who do not teach the truth!*
2. Notice how many times John talks about *truth!*
3. There was perversion of the truth even at this point in the early church. Some said Jesus had come in the spirit, but not in the flesh, not as a human!
4. But, does that really matter?? Why should that matter, as long as you believe in Jesus?? The false teachings about Jesus have evolved even further in the last 1900 years, but does it matter??
5. John says it *does!* He says such teachers are *deceivers* and *antichrist!* He counsels us to not *partner* with them, to not *welcome* them into our homes, to not *bless* them, to not *help* them. He counsels us to discern between truth and deception, between the *spirit of Christ* and the *spirit of antichrist!*
6. If we *welcome* them, if we *partner* with them, if we *aid* them, if we fail to use *discernment*, we *share in their wicked work!* John saw the preaching of untruth as wicked, and warned against partnering in their wicked work! There are consequences for untruth! This is where the rubber meets the road. How do we apply these teachings of Jesus? Paul? John?

D. III John 2-4. John's greatest joy . . .

V. Let's Review The Gospel Jesus Preached!

- A. I realize that for many people the gospel is summed up by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If you believe Jesus is God, and if you invite him into heart, you'll go to heaven when you die. That's simplistic, and there are variations, but that sums up what many, many people teach and believe. I can tell you, that is *not* the gospel Jesus preached. Those who preach such things are doing a *wicked thing*. We need to use *discernment* to recognize that, and we should never partner with those who teach that or *any perverted gospel!*
- B. I love this quote from Pastor Don Ward, back in 2010. I think he had it in one of his church bulletins. He said, "*the notion about going to heaven when you die is nothing like what the Bible teaches! It's not about our going, but about Jesus coming! It's not about living on at death, but being raised from death! It's not about already having immortality, but about putting on immortality! It's not about reward at death, but at the resurrection! It's not about shedding the body, but transformation of the body! It's not about receiving eternal life in this age because we die, but eternal life in the age to come because we're resurrected!" Truth matters to Don Ward!*
- C. John the Baptist was the forerunner, the advance man for Jesus. Can anyone summarize John's message?? ("*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*")
- D. Mark 1:1. Then Mark talked a bit about John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism and temptation. Let's read Vs. 14,15. This is the *beginning* of Jesus' ministry. We find here his first *topic*, and his first *command*. "*The KOG is near!*" First and favorite topic! First command? "*Repent and believe the good news!*" There's more to repent of besides sin. Sometimes we need to repent of a belief system, values, attitudes, etc. *Everyone* should heed Jesus' first command! BTW, if Jesus *began* his ministry teaching about the KOG, does anyone know how he ended it?? (Acts 1 - 40 day intensive seminar on the KOG!)

- E. Anyway, Matt. 4:17 says, *“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”* V. 23 says, *“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”* BTW, it’s frequently called the kingdom of *heaven* in Matthew. Any idea why that is?? That in no way suggests the *location* of the kingdom, but rather the *origin*! Matthew wrote to the Jewish people, and they were hesitant to use God’s name or even title in vain, or lightly. They often substituted the word *heaven*, meaning God.
- F. Back to Jesus’ main message . . .
1. There were four times in the Beatitudes that he referenced the coming kingdom.
 2. We pray in the Lord’s Prayer, *“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven!”*
 3. Matt. 6:33, that we used to sing, *“Seek ye first the KOG, and his righteousness!”*
 4. In Matt. 9:35 it again says, *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages preaching the good news of the kingdom . . .”*
- G. Turn to Matt. 13. It’s here he told 7 parables, all about the kingdom of heaven! We’ll just look briefly at the first.
1. A farmer went out to sow seed. The seed fell on different types of ground.
 2. Matt. 13:18-23. Seed = the message about the kingdom = the word! You’ll find this clarified elsewhere as well! The *seed* is the *message about the kingdom*, and it’s often simply called the *word*! Interchangeable terms!
- H. In Matt. 24:14 Jesus said, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come!”*
- I. Matt. 25:34, *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom . . .’”*
- J. This is all especially true in Matthew, but the other gospels show this as well! When he instituted communion, he expressed plans to partake together with us in the *kingdom*!
- K. Luke 4:43. That is why I was sent!
- L. Luke 8:1 explains, *“Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the KOG!”*
- M. In Luke 9 he sent the twelve out to preach! Care to guess what he told them to preach? The KOG!
- N. Any idea what he’d been preaching when he fed the 5,000? KOG!
- O. What did the thief on the cross request of Jesus? *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!”* Even the thief had a better understanding of the gospel than many today!
- P. I don’t think anyone can deny that the *heart* of Jesus’ message, the *thrust* of his preaching, the very *center* of his ministry, was the *good news of the KOG*!
- Q. Then, for how long was Jesus on earth, with his disciples, after his resurrection?? (40 days – Acts 1) What did he teach about?? It was a KOG Intensive Seminar!
- R. I wish we had time to look up all these verses, but here’s a passage we *have* to take time to consider. I want you to join me in reading from Luke 18. This is a most *telling* passage, also much neglected! This is toward the end of Jesus ministry. Jesus and his men had been preaching the gospel, the good news of the KOG for nearly three and a half years. Jesus knew what was to come to pass when they went to Jerusalem. The end was near. He needed to give his men a heads up, to prepare them. Luke 18:31-33.
1. He warned them as to what was coming. He’s be handed over to the Gentiles. They would mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him! On the third day he would be

resurrected. Of course, this is pretty basic to us! Without the death, burial and resurrection, we would have no hope for the KOG!

2. But notice the reaction of the disciples! Luke 18:34. These twelve men, and any others who may have heard as well, *didn't know anything about any of this!* They didn't understand *what he was talking about!* How could that be? They had been preaching *the gospel* for three and a half years! But *this* was news to them. This is the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would have put it. To be certain, this is now an *essential part of the gospel* message, but Jesus' focus was on the KOG. May we *never* emphasize the death, burial and resurrection *over* the basic gospel of the KOG! May we never *neglect* the gospel of the KOG. May we use the brains God gave us to *discern and reject* any gospel message that does not *include and emphasize* the KOG!

S. Here are *five basic truths about the KOG* . . .

1. What? (king, dominion over people and land)
2. When? (when Jesus comes)
3. Where? (here on earth)
4. Who? (all who come to God through Jesus)
5. Why? (because God so loved the world)

VI. Now There's *More* to the Gospel than the KOG! Add the NOJ!

A. This is *apparent* in the book of Acts, *and the rest of the NT!* Preaching the gospel still *of course* included the KOG, but now much focus is *also* given to the NOJ. That doesn't suggest we drop the KOG!

1. Day of Pentecost – Peter's sermon in Acts 2.

- a. His listeners were Jewish people celebrating Pentecost. They were already convinced of the KOG. They just didn't think *Jesus* had any part of it. But when Peter preached the NOJ, and reasoned with them . . .
- b. Acts 2:36-39. 3,000 became convinced that Jesus was the Christ! That's all it took. They were baptized.
- c. BTW, you see here that baptism is part of the process of salvation. They were baptized *for the forgiveness of sin!*

2. In Acts 6 & 7 Stephen preached and witnessed about *Jesus being the Righteous One, the Christ*. Because of that, they brought false witness against him, and stoned him to death! Great persecution then broke out. Acts 8:4-14.

- a. They preached the *word!* Remember from Matt. 13 what would that suggest?? (The message about the KOG!)
- b. What did Philip proclaim?? (The *Christ!*) Apparently *now* to preach the *word* is not only to preach the KOG, but also to preach the *Christ*.
- c. V. 12 details it clearly! KOG / NOJ
- d. It was upon belief in the KOG/NOJ that they were *ready* for baptism. I would take from that that one is not yet ready for baptism until one has a solid belief and understanding of both the KOG and the NOJ! I won't baptize anyone until they believe and understand both! And, I would *rebaptize* anyone who has been immersed, *prior* to understanding and believing the KOG/NOJ!
- e. Notice V. 14 says they had accepted the *word of God!* To preach the *word* is to proclaim the *Christ*, which includes the good news of the KOG and the NOJ, and to accept all that is to accept the *word of God!*
- f. BTW, I don't know if the scriptures *ever* speak of *accepting Jesus as savior*, but it does speak of accepting the *word of God*, which is the good news of the KOG and the NOJ!

3. In Acts 8 Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch. He was a god fearer. He had been to Jerusalem to worship. He would already know about the KOG. V. 35 says Philip *“told him the good news about Jesus!”* He was then baptized, which was clearly *water* baptism, and clearly *immersion*.
 4. In Acts 9 we read of Saul, a Pharisee of Pharisees. If anyone was convinced of the KOG, it was Saul, but he viciously *denied* Jesus could be the Christ. But he converted. He became a believer in the NOJ! At this point he was baptized, calling on the name of the Lord!
 5. In Acts 10 we read of another God-fearer. This time it was Peter who went to witness to Cornelius. He spoke mostly about the NOJ. Cornelius and others were then baptized.
 6. The entire book of Acts is a testimony of *who* Jesus is, and *what he is about!* It’s a really interesting read! We don’t have time to hit every chapter, but you can be sure the good news of the KOG and the NOJ were preached. In some places one is emphasized; in others the other. But the full message of the KOG/NOJ was preached. We’ll do just a few more.
 7. Acts 19:8-10
 8. Acts 20:25
 9. Acts 28:23
 10. Acts 28:28-31
 11. Let me suggest that *any* preaching of the gospel that does not include the good news of *both* the KOG *and* the NOJ, is *suspect, incomplete, inadequate, insufficient!* We have to take a hard line on this because *Jesus* did! *Paul* did. *John* did. How can *we* do any differently??
 12. Do you remember the five basic truths about the KOG?
 - a. What?
 - b. When?
 - c. Where?
 - d. Who?
 - e. Why?
 - f. Let’s wrap this up with . . .
- B. Five Basic Truths About the Name of Jesus . . .
1. *Who* he is! (The Christ, the Son of the living God!)
 2. *What* he *taught!* (The KOG!)
 3. *What* he did at the *cross!* (Died for our sin . . .)
 4. *What* he’s doing *now!* (Right hand of God, building his church, perfecting his people!)
 5. *What* he *will do* when he returns to earth! (Establish the KOG, transition from what we have now to the perfect age!)
- VII. Let me tell a story about a little boy that all of a sudden stopped eating. He not only wouldn’t eat his vegetables, he wouldn’t eat meat, wouldn’t drink milk, wouldn’t eat bread, wouldn’t eat anything! They tried everything – his favorite foods, ice cream, candy, etc. He simply wouldn’t eat. He was getting weaker and thinner. They were understandably worried. One day he was playing out in the sand box. His Mom and Dad were watching him play, worried about him not eating. As they watched, for some reason he picked up a handful of sand, put some water in it, and some grass, and pushed it all into his mouth. They looked at each other, smiled, and said, “Well, at least he’s eating!” What is the moral of the story?? Discussion
- VIII. Closing Prayer