

**Sermon Series: Finding Truth****Sermon Title: Truth is Core****Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry****Sermon Date: 11-22-20****Sermon Summary:**

This message examines the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians by looking at four core truths of Christianity presented in the text. Paul had his work cut out for him with the church at Colossae. The surrounding culture had adopted a weird mix of secular and religious philosophies! They had basically decided they could make up their own spiritual truth to suit their wishes and whims. This was beginning to creep into the church, so Paul addressed these major "truth" issues with the Colossians in a letter. While his letter was not a sermon, it was his heartfelt message to them, and is of such depth that many sermons could be preached from the four short chapters as it has been divided. This sermon examines just 20 sentences of his four page letter under the headings: God's Word is truth/God's Word is transforming/God's Word became flesh/God's Word Motivates. Each point has a practical application section.

**Full Sermon Notes**

"You put Your love on the line to bear the weight of sin that was mine  
Washing my rivers of wrongs, Into the sea of Your infinite love"

Folks, those words speak the truth of the gospel in a beautiful way! The truth of the gospel! Why is the word truth so important when it comes to the Gospel or the good news of Jesus? Because if the gospel is just a fairy tale, just a feel good story, just a religious superstition, among many, then it has no real power to cleanse the past, transform the present or change the future! Truth matters and is core to everything about the gospel. There may be some here today who are just not sure about this whole Jesus thing. I simply ask you to consider the truth claims of the gospel message today. Let's pray and ask God to help us find life changing truth in today's message. Pray!

**Introduction**

Spirituality is the only school of thought where people say you can make up your own truth! Did you hear that? Some people say just make up your own truth when it comes to God. Hey kids, I'm so glad you're here. Let me ask you a question! Can you just make up something in your mind and make it be true, just because you want it to be? Can you just make up things about God and it be true? Of course not. Even children know that. In engineering school, architecture school, medical school, and pretty much every school of thought, there are basic truths that are foundational and serve as guides in discovery for these disciplines! Of course there's also a lot of theory involved, some proven, some not! Trial and error, over time helps establish what theory is accepted as truth and which are rejected. Without reliable things like mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and scientific method, much of our advancement in aerospace, computer technologies, medicine, and a host of other pursuits in life would not be possible! I believe very strongly that spirituality, as well, must have a foundation or core that is based on truth, if it is to be effective, and helpful not hurtful. There have been a lot of things done down through the years in religion that were not based on truth, but false ideologies and have caused

great harm. So I can tell you that there is truth and there is false when it comes to the spiritual realm and this is the most important school of thought in which to get truth right! Your spiritual well being in this life, as well as your eternity depends on it!

Paul had his work cut out for him with the church at Colossae. The surrounding culture had adopted a weird mix of secular and religious philosophies! They had basically decided they could make up their own truth to suit their wishes and whims. This was beginning to creep into the church, so how would Paul address these major “truth” issues with the Colossians? He wrote them a letter. This letter was not a sermon, but it was his heartfelt message to them. It was so profound that entire sermon series have since been preached on these four short chapters. Our message today will examine just 20 sentences of his four page letter. So why is his message so relevant today! Well, let me just say that if you haven’t noticed, the core values and truths of Christianity are being questioned, lampooned, belittled and even viciously attacked in our world today, so it’s mission critical for us to know what we believe, why we believe, and that our beliefs are based and founded on truth! Core, by the way, means central, or the most important thing. Our core, physically speaking, is central to our whole body’s strength. Core truths are central to our spiritual well being in this life and for finding eternal life! Paul gives us four core truths central to a proper understanding of Godly spirituality and our message today takes a look at these core truths! As we begin reading our text we discover the first core truth...

## **1. Core Truth: God’s Word is Truth!**

How do we know this? For starters....

### **A . God’s Truth is Revealed!**

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,  
Colossians 1:2 To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:  
Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Colossians 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

Colossians 1:4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—

Colossians 1:5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard about in the word of truth, the true message of the gospel  
Colossians 1:6a that has come to you...

Our faith, our love and our hope find their reality in the truth of God’s Word! You see, genuine Christianity is not based on superstitions, opinions, feelings, experiences, or philosophies, but on the revealed Word of God that has come to us in the Gospel message! It comes down to this: If there is no revelation, then all we are left with is speculation! But, as we’ve seen this year, in our Bible reading plan, the truth of the Gospel, the good news of what God has done for us through Jesus on the Cross, is found even in the Old Testament through the many detailed prophecies which Jesus fulfilled as the Messiah! More than 100!! When Paul wrote this letter to

the Colossians he would have had access to the writings which comprise the Old Testament, but the New Testament had not yet been written in its entirety or collected together. The Gospel truth, or the word of truth that Paul was referring to was still being taught and passed along through the testimony of the disciples and the followers of Christ! This very letter would eventually be brought into the canon of Holy Scripture! These things have been written down and preserved for us in The Holy Bible! Now someone might say, "But Pastor Larry, other religions have books too!" And to that I would say yes they do, but there's a big difference! Most of those books can be traced back to one individual, usually the founder of that religion. The founder of Christianity, Jesus, never wrote a book! A book was written about Him by others. There are 66 books of the Bible written by around 40 authors, written over thousands of years. When you take that into consideration and study the absolutely amazing consistency, cohesion, reliability, and intricate detail that run throughout Holy Scripture, it becomes extremely difficult to dismiss the Bible as just another religious book! And when you study Biblical history, it's also amazing the painstaking, and meticulous way in which the books of the Bible were vetted and verified to be authentic and allowed into the canon of Holy Scripture! Many who have sought to prove the Bible was not a divinely inspired book, upon investigation, have come to embrace the Bible for what it claims to be! And what does it claim to be?

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So we know God's Word is truth because it was revealed, but also because...

## **B. God's Truth is Proclaimed**

Colossians 1:6b ...In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.

Colossians 1:7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Colossians 1:8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Here's a powerful bit of information. You know how we talked last week about Paul's evangelistic efforts in Ephesus and how difficult it had been for him? It may have been difficult, but it was nonetheless effective. One of the men he reached with the gospel and disciplined was named Epaphras. Epaphras, is the one who took the gospel to the Colossians as a representative of Paul!

God wants us to know His truth! One of the amazing things about Christianity is that it is not a secret society holding on to secret and hidden truths! God has always wanted people to know

the truth and as such He has commissioned people down through the years to proclaim the truth and to make it known. In fact, just before Jesus was crucified He prayed for His disciples and for us. Listen to what He prayed, it undergirds this entire series...

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

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

John 17:19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

John 17:21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

John 17:23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Jesus was sent into the world and we have been sent unto the world to proclaim the truth of God's love for the world! So God's truth is revealed, it is proclaimed, and...

### **C. God's Truth is Inspired**

Paul continues...

Colossians 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

The spirituality of many of the people of Colossae was based on human philosophies, human reasoning, human traditions, and a salad bar of human religions! Paul wanted the people of the church to base their spirituality upon revealed truth from God and the inspiration of The Holy Spirit! To be sure, God has given us natural revelation, but He didn't leave things up to our imagination, He gave us the written revelation, along with the inspiration of The Holy Spirit to aid with interpretation so there would be no question as to what the truth was! Paul was facing a similar situation in his time that we are facing today. There was a truth crisis in the area of spirituality! There was a prevalent spiritual worldview called Gnosticism which was somewhat like the humanistic philosophies of today, although Gnosticism incorporated highly superstitious views of spirituality combined with an elevation of human wisdom. Theologian R.E.O. White, has one of the best descriptions of Gnosticism I've ever found. He says Gnosticism...

"...combined philosophic speculation, superstition, semi-magical rites, and sometimes a fanatical and even obscene cultus....The body, the tomb of the spirit, may be rigorously suppressed or indifferently indulged as irrelevant to the life of pure spirit."

So these Gnostics thought they had superior wisdom and so they concocted their own "truth!" This led many of them to believe that the body was purely evil and only the spirit mattered.

Therefore they “logically” decided it didn’t matter what you did with the body, as long as your spirit was right. So they decided they could indulge in the most immoral behaviors with the body, because it was evil anyway and it didn’t matter! This led to unimaginable depravity! Any similarities with our culture today? When people try to create their own super spirituality apart from God’s truth and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, things can go bad very quickly. Jesus told us this...

John 14:26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**Practical Application:** So the Word of God is God-breathed Holy Spirit inspired truth! Pastor Larry, that’s pretty amazing information and thank you for sharing, but what does this have to do with my life practically? I’m so glad you asked! Practically speaking, your acceptance of these truths, or rejection of these truths, will affect what you end up basing your life upon! Here’s what’s at stake: your morality, your principles, your ethics, your meaning in life, your purpose in life, your inspiration for life and your hope, or lack thereof, for eternal life. Because many people reject the possibility of absolute truth, or revealed truth when it comes to spirituality, they are left with conjecture, superstition, various philosophies, or just plain old guessing! Without a foundation of established truth, you send your children out into a big, confusing, and even deceptive world, without the benefit of a baseline of truth! Let me just say this, even if your children eventually decide to go a different direction than the Christian foundation you gave them, they still have that baseline of truth in their hearts and minds. Many young people today are looking for truth in all the wrong places. Many are swept along by the famous personalities they follow on social media, Youtuber’s, the instagramers, twitter feeds, or whatever the newest social app! Others are carried along by the latest trends of hollywood. These things are so artificial and are based on fads, temporary popularity, trends, and are media driven. Because of the constant sensationalized way popular people’s personal struggles are broadcast to the world, a lot of young people think it’s cool to be on meds, or have to go to rehab. Others define themselves by their psychological evaluations. I’m not against things like personality tests, and they usually peg me pretty spot on. However, I am not defined by those things. I am defined by my identity in Christ and the personality deficits I have are more than made up for by God’s grace and power! I understand there are still young people who consult their horoscopes! And here’s the thing about that. The people who write those things make so many generalizations that they are bound to get something right sometime, and when that one thing just happens to turn out right, no matter how non-specific, you’d be surprised how many people will then swear by their horoscope readings and turn to them on a daily basis instead of seeking God’s wisdom in His Word! So Core Truth - God’s Word is truth! Second...

## **2. Core Truth: God’s Word Is Transforming**

Why do I say God’s Word is transforming? Because...

### **A. God’s Truth empowers our lives!**

Paul continues in his letter...

Colossians 1:9... We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

Colossians 1:10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Colossians 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

Colossians 1:12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Want to know God's will? Know truth! Want to live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way? Know truth! Want to bear fruit in every good work? Know truth! Want to grow in your knowledge of God? Know truth! Want to be strengthened according to His glorious might so you may have great endurance and patience? Know truth! When we are filled with the knowledge of God's will through the understanding the Spirit gives, we are able to live a life pleasing unto the Lord! A life that bears fruit! We grow in our knowledge, are strengthened by His glorious might, find endurance and patience, and give joyful thanks to The Father for qualifying us to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light! You can't qualify yourself to share in this inheritance! We are qualified when we believe the truth of the Gospel which is this: Jesus did the work to qualify us to live in His kingdom of light! I love the way Jesus put it in John 3:21...

John 3:21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done through God.

And this leads another way God's Truth transforms our lives...

### **B. God's Truth rescues us from Darkness!**

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Colossians 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

These two verses could be a whole sermon on their own! God's truth found in the gospel rescues us from the kingdom of darkness and brings us into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the Son He loves! Paul put it this way in his 2nd letter to the Church at Corinth...

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

And in his letter to the Church at Ephesus...

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

And good ole St. Peter weighed in on the subject...

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

**Practical Application:** God's Word transforms the way we live by giving us principles of truth to base our decisions on, our actions, our attitudes, our relationships, and our pursuits in life! And by living in the light of God's truth we are rescued from the dominion of darkness. And make no mistake about it, the dominion of darkness is a place where evil dominates and dictates your life in a terrible way. Sometimes people think they are doing their own thing, their own way, but the truth is they are under the control of sin and only the truth of God found in the Gospel can set them free. And this is made possible because of the third...

### **3. Core Truth: God's Word Became Flesh**

#### **A. God's Truth was illuminated and illustrated in the life of Jesus**

Colossians 1:15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Colossians 1:16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

You see, Jesus was God in the flesh! Jesus was the embodiment of the truth of God. Jesus had come to show us the Father and was the living revelation of God's Word, God's truth. John stated it very clearly for us in his gospel...

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

And then down in verse 14 we read...

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus illuminated and illustrated the truth of God in the life He lived, and by doing so He was setting the stage for us to be reconciled in our relationship with The Father. Listen to what Jesus told His disciples...

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

So Jesus illuminated and illustrated God's truth by being the way, the truth and the life! But how did He make it possible for us to come to the Father through Him?

### **B. God's Truth was made available through the sacrifice of Jesus**

Paul's letter continues...

Colossians 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

Colossians 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Colossians 1:22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Colossians 1:23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Paul makes the truth of the gospel so clear in these verses. Jesus came to reconcile us to The Father by making peace through His blood shed on the cross. We needed to be reconciled because we were alienated from God and were enemies in our minds because of our sin. But through Jesus' death we can be presented to God holy, without blemish and free from accusation! What a powerful truth from God's Word! However, Paul knows there were still some folks in the church who were trying to make up their minds whether or not to trust the truth of the gospel message about Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for their salvation or continue in their superstitions. Paul tells them, "Do not move from the hope held out in the gospel!" Here's the truth of the gospel: We owed a debt we couldn't pay, so Jesus paid a debt He didn't owe because He loved us that much! But here's another truth of the Gospel, God offers you salvation, but you have to be willing to receive it! It's a God-given choice. The Bible says...

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

**Practical Application:** So if you are willing to admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and trust that Jesus gave His life for you on the Cross and call on His name you can be saved!!! You

could do that right now! In your heart, just admit to Him you've done wrong and need forgiveness! Let God know you believe that His Only Begotten Son, Jesus, sacrificed His life in order to be your Savior! Now make a commitment to allow Jesus to come into your life by calling on His name! God's Word says...

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So I hope I've made it perfectly and practically clear how a person is forgiven, cleansed, and saved to live a new life here on earth and a forever life in heaven! And once this happens, a follower of Christ obeys his or her Lord and remembers the costly sacrifice Jesus gave in order to make their salvation possible! In fact we will do this now.

If you will take your cup. If you don't have one and need one, simply raise your hand and one of our ushers will bring you one. There is a piece of unleavened bread on the top. Go ahead and take the bread out. This bread represents the flesh of Jesus which was broken and torn so that Jesus could take the punishment we deserved! Let's remember His painful sacrifice as we now eat this bread! Now take the cup of juice. Remember that the blood which flowed from Jesus' head, His back, His hands, and His feet, that blood represents the perfect life He lived in order to be the sacrifice for our imperfect lives. As we now drink the cup, remember the love Jesus poured out on us when He shed His blood to wash away our sin and make us clean before God!

And now that we have remembered the truth of Jesus' loving, and yet very costly sacrifice, we discover one last Core Truth in this portion of Paul's letter...

#### **4. Core Truth: God's Word Motivates!**

##### **A. God's Truth motivates us to share the Gospel!**

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Colossians 1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

Colossians 1:26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.

Paul was saying that when you know spiritual truth you want to share it, because truth brings light to those in darkness! However, truth should be shared not forced and truth should be shared in love! I read the following article just a few days ago in the National Review, and it was eye opening. A man who is Jewish by birth and culture, although admittedly not religious, made this statement...

“As a Jew, I’ve had a number of Christian friends try to turn me toward Jesus — Lutherans, Catholics, and Evangelicals. Though denominations seem to adopt different philosophies on how best to proselytize in a secular world, they have all been exceptionally polite about it.

My assumption is that they wouldn’t be very good Christians if they weren’t spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is, from what I gather, one of the central premises of the entire enterprise. To be honest, I’m often surprised at how shy Christians are at performing this task. As a heathen, though, I am flattered by the attention. And as a person in possession of free will, I am also unconcerned. Never once have I found such efforts to be “anti-Semitic.” The very universality of the endeavor tells me it is not. I simply assume that my friends are troubled that I have forsaken salvation. Maybe they’re right. I’ll find out soon enough.” By DAVID HARSANYI  
National Review

Say a prayer for David and let God’s truth that has changed your life, motivate you to share God’s truth with others who need to know the truth! And let’s never forget that...

### **B. God’s Truth motivates us to mature as Disciples!**

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

Colossians 1:29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

What does maturity for a disciple look like? It looks more like Jesus! I love what John the Baptist said about Jesus...

John 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.

**Practical Application:** God’s Word motivates us to share Jesus with others and to live a life that is becoming more of Jesus and less of me!

Let’s pray!