

Turning Back Time

20 - Walking with Jesus
Church on the Park | Sunday, 31 May 2015
(Matthias' Baby Dedication)

Text: Exodus 34:6-7

Theme: Truth is like a scalpel. At first, truth hurts, but it's purpose is to heal.

Intro: Over the last few weeks we've been studying God's name and glory. As we've seen, he is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and truth. Today, we will explore that God is truth. The truth may be painful for us, but it's purpose is not to inflict pain but to heal. A surgeon's scalpel needs to be sharp, but it's purpose is not to butcher you but to restore you.

*Use an inexpensive, good-size and open-faced clock, the type you can move the hands with your fingers.

1) Truth hurts (John 3:16-21)

- The Hebrew word for truth **emet** comes from **aman**, where we get the word **amen**. It means something **solid, sure** and **certain**. The picture is that of a **foundation** or **pillar**. It also means **faithful** and **true**. From this word comes the Hebrew word **faith**.
- I learned a **painful** lesson as a child
- My dad was a paratrooper in the special forces and fought in the Vietnam war. Because of his military background, he was disciplined. And the most important discipline for him was getting to church. I finally got fed up with going to church every Sunday, so I devised a way to get out of it. There's was a **clock** on the wall and I noticed that I could move the hands. If I could **turn it back** an hour, we'd miss church. All would be well. The only problem was to get to the clock I had to stand on a **rocking** armchair. I got up on the wobbly armchair and as I was turning back the time I fell off. My head cracked into the brick fireplace and began to bleed profusely. Needless to say, we missed church because my parents had to rush me to the hospital.
- Here's the lesson that stuck with me the rest of my life: It doesn't pay to **lie**, it only causes **trouble**. Oh yeah, and don't try to get out of missing church. Unfortunately, because of that act of lying, God banished me to be a pastor for the rest of my life :-). Watch out if you don't want to go to church, God may just call you to be a pastor.
- **John 3:16** gives us so much **hope**. Jesus came and died to give you eternal life.
- But the next verses 17-21 have a **sting** to them. Many don't receive Jesus because the light hurts them.
 - You know the experience of coming out of a **tunnel** and into **bright light**—a swift shift from darkness to light hurts your eyes.
 - When a **honey bee** loses its **sting**, it **dies**. You cannot remove the sting from truth or the truth will die.
- The problem is truth is what many (like myself) try to avoid. We want life to suit our desires. We want **everyone** to **revolve** around **our clock**. We want to deceive people with a false impression of the way things are. Like myself, you may want your family to think it's five o'clock when it's actually six o'clock.

2) Truth heals

- Truth **stings** only **momentarily**. God's main **purpose** is to **heal**.
- I wanted to turn back time so that I did **not** have to **do** something.
- But, at others times, I have wanted to turn back time because I **did something** I deeply **regretted**.
 - Have you ever felt like turning back time.
- Today, I want to metaphorically turn back time to an **event** that **changed time** and can also change your life.
 - If you take this clock and turn it back over and over again (24hrsx365daysx2000years = 17,520,000 rotations) approximately **17.5 million times**, you'll go back to a day in which God split time into half.
- Let's go back in time to the **cross**. The cross **turns** everything you have done around—it turns you around. What was once your enemy, now becomes your testimony.
- **John 18:33-19:16**
 - Jesus **testifies** of the **truth**. Jesus is the **truth**. (John 18:37; John 14:6)
 - Everyone who is of the **truth listens** to Jesus' voice (John 18:37, John 17:17)
- Here **Pilate** is **seeking** the truth, but in the end Pilate bows to public opinion rather than truth.
- Pilate is full of **questions** and reminds me of a seeker. I counted Pilate asking eleven questions while Jesus is before him.
- It's **seems** like Pilate is **convinced** Jesus is **innocent**, but then he **allows** him to be **crucified**.
- It's like he's **wavering** between two **options**, saying yes to Jesus or saying no to him. It's like a gauge swinging back and forth.
- Why did Jesus allow this to happen?
- He experienced the **ultimate pain** for your healing. He took all your pain and sin on himself on that cross.
- He **wrestled** with wanting to **escape** from this **hour**. Look at **John 12:27-28**

3) Truth Liberates

- **Truth** is the only thing that will truly set you **free**.
- Jesus **liberates Barabbas** (John 18:39-40) by choosing to go through the cross.
- The truth of God's Word makes you **free** (John 8:31-32)
- All the sin you have committed is turned around. It not becomes your testimony.
- David and Goliath's sword
- Samson and the honey in the lion.
- Jesus is truth: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)

END NOTES

- 116 אָמַן (*'āman*) **to confirm, support, uphold (Qal); to be established, be faithful (Niphal); to be certain, i.e. to believe in (Hiphil).** ASV, RSV usually the same. One notable exception is Gen 15:6 where RSV has “believed,” while ASV has “believed in.”)

Derivatives

- 116a אֱמֻנָה (*'ōmen*) **faithfulness.**
116b אָמֵן (*'āmēn*) **verily, truly, amen.**
116c אֱמָנָן (*'ommān*) **steady-handed one, artist.**
116d אֱמוּן (*'ēmūn*) **faithful, trusting.**
116e עֲמֻנָה (*'ēmūnâ*) **firmness, fidelity, steadiness.**
116f אֱמֻנָה I (*'omnâ*) I, **bringing up, nourishment.**
116g אֱמֻנָה II (*'omnâ*) II, **verily, truly.**
116h אֱמָנָה (*'āmānâ*) **faith, support, sure, certain.**
116i אֱמֻנָם (*'ūmnām*) **verily, indeed.**
116j אֱמֻנָם (*'omnām*) **verily, truly.**
116k אֱמֶת (*'ēmet*) **firmness, truth.**
116l אֱמוֹן II (*'āmôn*) II, **artificer, architect.**

This very important concept in biblical doctrine gives clear evidence of the biblical meaning of “faith” in contradistinction to the many popular concepts of the term. At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. And this is borne out by the nt definition of faith found in Heb 11:1.

The basic root idea is firmness or certainty. In the Qal it expresses the basic concept of support and is used in the sense of the strong arms of the parent supporting the helpless infant. The constancy involved in the verbal idea is further seen in that it occurs in the Qal only as a participle (expressing continuance). The idea of support is also seen in II Kgs 18:16, where it refers to pillars of support.

In the Hiphil (causative), it basically means “to cause to be certain, sure” or “to be certain about,” “to be assured.” In this sense the word in the Hiphil conjugation is the biblical word for “to believe” and shows that biblical faith is an assurance, a certainty, in contrast with modern concepts of faith as something possible, hopefully true, but not certain.

Following from this we find the word in the passive Qal participle used with a passive meaning “one who is established” or “one who is confirmed,” i.e. “faithful one” (II Sam 20:19; Ps 12:1 [H 2]; 31:23 [H 24]).

In the Niphal conjugation the meaning is “to be established” (II Sam 7:16; I Chr 17:23; II Chr 6:17; Isa 7:9). The Niphal participle means “to be faithful, sure, dependable” and describes believers (Num 12:7; I Sam 2:35; Neh 9:8). This form is also

used to describe that upon which all certainty rests: God himself (Deut 7:9), and his covenant (Ps 89:28 [H 29]).

One interesting illustration of the relationship between “belief” and “being established” is seen in Isa 7:9. Ahaz is told that unless he believes (Hiphil) he will not be established (Niphal), i.e. without faith he has no stability.

The various derivatives reflect the same concept of certainty and dependability. The derivative *’āmēn* “verily” is carried over into the New Testament in the word *amēn* which is our English word “amen.” Jesus used the word frequently (Mt 5:18, 26, etc.) to stress the certainty of a matter. The Hebrew and Greek forms come at the end of prayers and hymns of praise (Ps 41:13 [H 14]); 106:48; II Tim 4:18; Rev 22:20, etc.). This indicates that the term so used in our prayers ought to express certainty and assurance in the Lord to whom we pray.

אָמֵן (*’ōmen*). **Faithfulness, truth** (ASV, “truth”; RSV as an adjective, “true”). The noun is used once to describe God’s counsel (Isa 25:1).

אָמֵן (*’āmēn*). **Verily, truly, amen.** (Generally, the same in ASV, RSV.) The word expresses a certain affirmation in response to what has been said. It is used after the pronouncement of solemn curses (Num 5:22; Deut 27:15ff.; Neh 5:13; Jer 11:5) and after prayers and hymns of praise (I Chr 16:36; Neh 8:6; Ps 41:13 [H 14], etc.). Twice the term is used to describe the Lord (Isa 65:16), and once simply to approve the words of a man (I Kgs 1:36). Finally, Jeremiah uses the term once sarcastically in response to the false prophets (Jer 28:6).

אָמֵן (*’ēmūn*). **Trusting, faithfulness.** (Basically the same in ASV, RSV.) The term is applied to nations as a measure of their righteousness and acceptability to God (Deut 32:20; Isa 26:2). It also applies to individuals who are contrasted to the bad (Prov 13:17) and the false (Prov 14:5). One to whom the term applies is rare indeed (Prov 20:6).

אָמֵן (*’ēmûnâ*). **Firmness, faithfulness, fidelity.** (ASV, RSV generally the same. Both give a marginal note in Hab 2:4 where they translate “faith” instead of “faithfulness” in accord with Paul’s use of the verse in Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11.)

There are at least ten distinct categories in which this noun is used in Scripture. In its first occurrence in Scripture it expresses the sense of steady, firm hands, a very basic idea (Ex 17:12). From this mundane sense, Scripture moves almost entirely to a use of the word in connection with God or those related to God.

Basically, the term applies to God himself (Deut 32:4) to express his total dependability. It is frequently listed among the attributes of God (I Sam 26:23; Ps 36:5 [H 6]; Ps 40:10 [H 11]; Lam 3:23). It describes his works (Ps 33:4); and his words (Ps 119:86; 143:1).

’ēmûnâ is also used to refer to those whose lives God establishes. He expects to see faithfulness in them (Prov 12:22; II Chr 19:9). Indeed, such faithfulness or a life of faith is characteristic of those justified in God’s sight (Hab 2:4). God’s word of truth establishes man’s way of truth or faithfulness (Ps 119:30).

From this we can also see the concept of a duty being entrusted to a believer which becomes his trust (faithful responsibility, I Chr 9:22; II Chr 31:15, etc.) or office.

הַנְּמָן (’*omnâ*) I. **Brought up, nurtured, sustained.** (Same in ASV, RSV.) This noun speaks of Esther’s having been sustained (strengthened and guided) by Mordecai as a child (Est 2:20).

הַנְּמָן (’*omnâ*) II. **Truly, verily, actually.** (The same in ASV, RSV.) In the two contexts in which this adverb occurs, the speaker is perhaps seeking to excuse his wrong, therefore “actually” may be the best translation (Gen 20:12; Josh 7:20),

הַנְּמָן (’*āmānâ*). **Settled provision, support.** (ASV, RSV same.) This noun is used in connection with a firm commitment on the part of the people of Jerusalem in Nehemiah’s day (Neh 9:38 [H 10:1]) and also applies to a fixed provision for the singers of that day (Neh 11:23).

וַיִּנְמָן (’*ūmnām*). **Indeed, really.** (Same in ASV, RSV.) This word is always found in interrogative sentences and always suggests doubt on the part of the asker: Sarah’s doubt of bearing a child (Gen 18:13); Balaam’s doubt of Balak’s power to promote him (Num 22:37); Solomon’s doubt of God’s dwelling only on earth (I Kgs 8:27; II Chr 6:18); the Psalmist’s doubt that pagan gods judge righteously (Ps 58:1 [H 2]).

אֱמֶת (’*ēmet*). **Truth, faithfulness, verity.** (ASV and RSV usually the same.) This word carries underlying sense of certainty, dependability.

We find it used in several categories of contexts, all of which relate to God directly or indirectly.

First, it is frequently applied to God as a characteristic of his nature. In Gen 24:27, for example, it describes God who leads Abraham’s servant to the right wife for Isaac. In Ex 34:6, it is given as one of the verbal descriptions of God which constitute God’s goodness. Other examples are Ps 25:5; 31:5 [H 6]; Jer 4:2; 10:10.

It is a term fittingly applied to God’s words (Ps 119:142, 151, 160; Dan 10:21).

As a characteristic of God revealed to men, it therefore becomes the means by which men know and serve God as their savior (Josh 24:14; I Kgs 2:4; Ps 26:3; 86:11; Ps 91:4; Isa 38:3), and then, as a characteristic to be found in those who have indeed come to God (Ex 18:21; Neh 7:2; Ps 15:2; Zech 8:16).

Because it is an attribute of God which is manifest in man’s salvation and life of service as God’s child, the word is often coupled with another attribute of God related to our salvation, “mercy” or “love” (*hesed*, Gen 24:27; Ps 61:7 [H 8]; 85:10 [H 11]; 115:1; Prov 14:22; 16:6; 20:28).

And because these attributes of God’s truth and mercy lead to God’s peace toward sinful men, saved by God’s grace, the word is also often coupled with peace (Isa 39:8; Jer 33:6).

As we study its various contexts, it becomes manifestly clear that there is no truth in the biblical sense, i.e. valid truth, outside God. All truth comes from God and is truth because it is related to God.

אֱמֶת (’*āmôn*) II. **Master-workman?, people?** (There is considerable uncertainty about this word and its use and whether it is to be read as ’*āmôn* or a variant of *hāmôn* “people.” Therefore translations differ.) The word occurs only twice. In Prov 8:30, the

meaning seems to be that of an artificer (one true in hand and skill). In Jer 52:15, it may mean simply “people” or perhaps “the skilled ones” (who remained in Jerusalem).

Bibliography: Bright, John, “Faith and Destiny,” *Interp* 5:3–26. Napier, B. D., “On Creation—Faith in the Old Testament,” *Interp* 16:21–42. Perry, Edmund, “The Meaning of *’emna* in the Old Testament,” *JBR* 21:252–56. Ramsdell, Edward T., “The Old Testament Understanding of Truth,” *JR* 31:264–73. Richardson, TWB, pp. 75, 269. TDNT, I, pp. 232–38; 335–36; VI, pp. 183–91; 194–202. TDOT, I, pp. 292–322. THAT, I, pp. 177–99.

J.B.S.

Today, we will focus on God as truth.

Deception is at the heart of your sinful nature.

The word for truth in Hebrew is very insightful. It doesn’t merely mean truth as in the right facts. Instead, truth transcends facts—it has to do with who God is and who we are. (*See END NOTES).

The word truth comes from *amen* (*aman* in Hebrew). It means something that is firm, supported, confirmed and solid. From this word comes the Hebrew word for faithful and the word faith. It means something certain and dependable. The picture is that of pillars or foundations, not something weak, but something strong.

Jesus & Pilate. John 18:33-37

Truth means facing what God has for you.

I tried to turn back to clock to not do something. But often, we want to turn back the clock to do something right.

Sin leaves you in a mess. It makes you want to turn back the clock. You wish you can do things over again.

You can go back in time. While you can’t change what you have done, you can be redeemed and forgiven. God can come into your life and make your bitter waters sweet.

Redemption means you were in the hands of the enemy, but God has bought you back.

“Now my soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name” (John 12:27-28, cf. 27-33).

Jesus was tempted to turn back the clock, to not face the hour of the cross. But for your sake, he did not turn back the clock so that your life could have a new beginning—so you could start over, rewinding time.

Truth hurts. Truth changes. Truth redeems. Truth sticks. Truth frees.

You cannot stop time.

Jesus can turn back time.

[If I Could Turn Back Time, Cher (Lyrics), written by Diane Warren (1989)]