

I AM THE TRUTH

Jesus' "I AM" (7)

Banská Bystrica, 23th March 2014

John 14:1-10 "Your heart must not be troubled. Believe¹ in God; believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places;¹ if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. ⁴ You know the way where I am going."¹ ⁵ "Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where You're going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ "If you know Me, you will also know¹ My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." ⁸ "Lord," said Philip, "show us the Father, and that's enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?^a The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works.

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2.1. TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE

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0. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH

- When Jesus says that He's the Truth, he's not using a metaphor – it's an expansion of the usual understanding of the word "truth" (truth as a sentence)
- = Jesus is the Source of truth
- The question of truth has been talked about a lot, but only few people are really interested in the truth... Children – our example (Matt 18:3) = open to information, teachable, willing to be molded
- As we get older we get more skeptical – on one hand, it's a protection against lies (e.g. in politics), on the other hand we need to acknowledge the truth that can only be found through God's grace
- "I am the Truth" – I speak the truth + I will set you free from all the lies
- "Thy Word is truth" John 17:17
- = truth: not just experience and not just words

- Jesus sets us free from the bondage of lies

0.1. POWERFUL LIES

- **2Thes 2:9-11** But the coming of the wicked One will be marked by Satan being at work in all kinds of *counterfeit miracles and signs and wonders*,¹⁰ and every wicked deception aimed at those who are on the way to destruction because *they would not accept the love of the truth* and so be saved.¹¹ And therefore God sends on them a power that deludes people so that they believe what is false,
- the lie of MONISM; the lie of VISUAL CULTURE - virtual reality...

0.2. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO THE FATHER - JESUS

0.2.1. JESUS IS EXCLUSIVE!

- → an offence! arrogance? unjust? unfair?

0.2.2. THE CROSS

- the *only* possible transformation of humans → the attraction of the Crucifixion

1. TRUTH: THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE → MEET JESUS!

1.1. TRUTH AND WORDS

- Socrates: definitions: definition of the beautiful; of temperance or wisdom; of courage; of piety and impiety; of virtue; of justice; of true philosopher; of love; of knowledge; of being; of the essence, and the name...

Wittgenstein: language games: "The word "language-*game*" is used here to emphasize the fact that

- the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."¹

...the situation itself seems to be 'pregnant' with meaning, to precipitate itself towards the Word, to wait for the Word, to be in search of the Word which will name it - yet once the Word is pronounced, it never fully fits, it necessarily brings about the effect of disappointment, the charm is lost, every birth of meaning is an abortion...²

- **Ps 12:4** With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?"
(לְלִשְׁנֵנוּ נִגְבִּיר שְׂפָתֵינוּ אִתָּנוּ מִי אֲדוֹן לָנוּ)

- Common opinion: when I define a concept, I'll be able to live it out (e.g. Socrates)
- God: not only describes reality, He CREATES reality
- Ps 12:4 – foolishness of such an attitude = truth is not found solely in words

1.2. JESUS: A NEW ABILITY TO KNOW

- **1 John 5:20** the Son of God has come and has given us understanding (δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν), so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life
- **John 17:17** ...your word is truth: not *descriptions* of reality but *creating* reality and *prescribing rules* for life
- Jesus - the Logos
- regeneration through repentance (μετάνοια)
- → ability to communicate with the one true and real God
- When Jesus sets you free, you'll be free – **John 8:36**
- Gospel – foolishness to the world limited to human reasoning (1 Cor 2:14), BUT the power of God for the salvation (Rom 1:16)

¹ WITTGENSTEIN, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 15.

² ZIZEK, S. *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 58.

= Jesus sets us free from the bondage of logics and rationality (that doesn't mean the gospel is irrational or illogical)

2. TRUTH: THE PROBLEM OF EXPERIENCE → LOOK AT JESUS!

- BRUNNER *Truth as Encounter* - although it must be built on the faith "Thy word is truth" - not just existential ambiguous "something"

2.1. TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE

- empirism: "There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses" (ARISTOTLE) → LOCKE, HUME;
- I can show and "*prove*" that all of you have entered this room through the windows - one small problem remains - none of you really did so! We can *prove* that all ideas come from the senses, the problem remains - is it true? (The same is true for Big Bang, evolution etc.)
- scientism: Excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge and techniques. (Oxford Dictionaries) - The belief that the investigative methods of the physical sciences are applicable or justifiable in all fields of inquiry (American Heritage Dictionary). - the uncritical application of scientific or quasi-scientific methods to inappropriate fields of study or investigation (Collins) -
- Ps 4:6 *There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?"* (מִי־יַרְאֵנִי טוֹב) LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
 - We are often not able to see the good around us, we face negative situations and ask – Who will show us any good?
 - Yet, we can believe in God's goodness despite our experience = believe in the cross!
 - My Christianity starts at the cross, where my own sins have been carried by Jesus

2.2. JESUS: THE REVELATION FROM/OF GOD

- Beware of religion! - "religion" as human effort to "create worship" in man's image - real Divine worship must come from the real God
- 2Cor 5:7 we walk by faith, not by sight
- 2Cor 4:18 we look not to the things (μὴ σκοπούντων ἡμῶν τὰ βλεπόμενα) that are seen but to the things that are unseen
- John 3:3 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- John 6:40 For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."
- Faith is a miracle = we believe in what we don't see (2 Cor 5:7)
 - Jesus sets us free from the bondage of experience

3. TRUTH: THE PROBLEM OF MAJORITY → STAND IN JESUS!

3.1. TRUTH AND CULTURE/SOCIETY

- Ex 23:2 You will not be *led into wrong-doing by the majority* (אַחֲרֵי־רַבִּים) *nor*, when giving evidence in a lawsuit, side with the *majority* (אַחֲרֵי־רַבִּים) to pervert the course of justice
- "Homo sapiens is always, and in the same measure, homo socius."³
- "Saying that *concepts* express the manner in which *society* represents things is also saying that conceptual thought is coeval with *humanity* itself."⁴
- "Might is right"
- Truth decided by the majority

³ BERGER, P. - LUCKMANN, T. *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 69.

⁴ DURKHEIM, E. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 438.

3.2. JESUS: THE ONLY NORMAL MAN

- **John 5:44** How can you believe? While accepting glory from one another (δόξαν παρὰ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες), you don't seek the glory that comes from the only God (δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε).
- Jesus is God's "majority"
- Jesus: the power of God to follow: **1Cor 1:30-31** But from Him **you** are **in Christ** Jesus, who for us became *wisdom* from God, as well as *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*,³¹ in order that, as it is written: *The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.*
- **Col 1:27** the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.
- **Gal 2:20** I no longer live, but Christ lives in me
 - When I face the opposition of other people: I need to stand in humility and with love, yet I need to know that truth is not defined by the majority but by Jesus who sets me free from the bondage of the social opinions and attitudes

4. CONCLUSIONS

- You cannot find the truth in *definitions*! (and you cannot flee from God through them either!) Open your heart and meet Jesus in repentance!
- You cannot find the truth in any *experience* without Jesus! (and you cannot prove there is no such thing as truth through experience!) Receive sight and LOOK at Jesus in faith!
- You cannot find the truth using *statistics*! (and you cannot find refuge from truth in numbers!) Submit to the norm of God revealed in Jesus!