

WELCOME 16th October 2022 – 19 Pentecost '22 C

John 14:1-14 & Isaiah 5:20-24

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! We're continuing our worship/teaching series Spiritual Intelligence as a family of disciples... **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups** on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week... True or False. I used to love those questions on exams. Nothing easier. No working out. No equations. Even a wild guess had equal chance of success. You were right or you were wrong. $2+2 = 4$...Filling out a form & you were an M or F. We used to know that one too.

We've been told over the last couple decades that simple straightforward truth is no longer so. Truth is personal...yours/mine/theirs. Truth is relative/fluid...suits the need of the moment...desire of the day. To challenge the prevailing version is akin to violence. To hold a culturally unaccepted version of truth is said to be bigotry... hatred...or worse...

"I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Jesus reveals himself as unique & universal. Only in & through him (crucified risen & ruling) is there real life, sustaining truth, the way of the Father toward wholeness fullness & joy. Outside of Jesus, distant from him, to stand against him...is only loss, sorrow & death.

This week...in a world that scorns fixed known knowable truth, Jesus comes 1st w/ a word of assurance that the truth is God has a place in his kingdom for each of us now & eternally & 2nd w/ a promise of transformation: that our lives will be made new in his image for his purpose here & forever.

We'll explore & experience that together today... Truth in a World of ^{fake} Relativity
Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Heavenly Father, You are God, Your word is truth, and You have promised good to Your servants...to all who turn to you for strength refuge & salvation. Make us willing & obedient so that your blessings flow through us unhindered as blessings to the world. Speak so we hear. Open our hearts so we understand. Move in our lives so that we reveal your power in us to those around us & your grace claims this city as your own. Let it be in us according to your word...In Jesus' Name... Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. Where do you see truth under assault in today's world?
2. What do you do when you see lies being passed off as truth?

Spiritual Intelligence is **NOT** how much you know: SI is learning to discern right/wrong, good/evil, beautiful & true/horrendous & false...It's wisdom leading you to what is life-giving & God-honouring. It's walking the path of abundant life & impact in Jesus' Name. Spiritual Intelligence is celebrating & participating together in the transforming glory of God. Spiritual Intelligence is **you** maturing in likeness to Jesus Christ.

19 PENTECOST '22 C – SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: TRUTH IN A WORLD OF FAKE RELATIVITY

G.K. Chesterton, English writer, philosopher, lay theologian, & literary/art critic became a Xn later in life. He had, for a time, given up believing in God but eventually became convinced in, he says, the “solid objective truth” of a personal God, (which is true whether we like it or not) & the Christian faith where we find freedom/release from sin & **in which** there is the spiritual discipline & responsibility which he believed were needed in an increasingly decadent world. (1874-1936 “decadent world” WWI, roaring '20s, Great Depression) – Visionary in that sense...He wrote:

“We shall soon be in a world in which a man may be howled down for saying that two & two make four, in which furious party cries will be raised against anybody who says that cows have horns, in which people will persecute the heresy of calling a triangle a three-sided figure, & hang a man for maddening the mob with the news that grass is green.” Mr Chesterton **meet** Andrew Thorburn

Mr Thorburn, former NAB CEO was named CEO of the Essendon Football Club for < 24 hours. You know the story: He is also Chair of his congregation, City on a Hill, an Anglican-affiliated networked congregation w/ 8 locations in 5 cities across the eastern 1/3 of Oz. But because CoaH upholds a Biblical worldview w/ respect to sex, marriage, family & the protection of the not-yet-born, he was hounded out of the job: forced, he says, “to compromise beyond a level my conscience allowed.” **“They** made it clear that my Christian faith & my association with a Church are unacceptable in our culture if you wish to hold a leadership position in society.” He was given the option of resigning his servant-role in the church or his public role as CEO of a footy club. He’s still leading @ CoaH...not @ Essendon.

To hold to a culturally unaccepted version of what’s true, right, beneficial or good is said to be bigotry...hatred...unacceptable...Precisely what the VIC premier said & we **SHOULD NOT** be surprised. Jesus said it was coming: **“Look,** I am sending you out as sheep among wolves...you will be handed over to the courts...You will stand trial before governors & kings because you are my followers...A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child...All nations will hate you because you are my followers... Since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, the members of my household will be called by even worse names!” – Mt 10:16-25

“If the world hates you, remember it hated me first ...Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you.” – Jn 15:18-20

I teased last week I was going to change the theme...from **Truth** in a world of relativity to Truth in a world of **fake** relativity...because my sense is no one believes that truth really is up for grabs...changeable & changing. There is a preferred truth it

just bears no resemblance to the Biblical truth that we hold & that shaped our world & grants freedom & dignity – honour value & worth to every living being because we share God’s image, created according to his design & have been died for by his Son according to his plan to reconcile all things to himself free from sin death & evil. There is in our world a preferred version of “true” & it’s not negotiable or fluid or relative according to a large %-age of the folks all around us.

I am reminded of a short dialog in *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll b/t Alice & Humpty-Dumpty: **“When** I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.” **“The** question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” **“The** question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “to be master — that is all.” To be “master” - to call the shots - to determine what’s true – to control access to the corridors of life/influence in the name of true tolerance “the ultimate value.” Isn’t it strange that the more “tolerant” a culture claims to be, the more intolerant it is of anyone who disagrees? “Fake” relativity...

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come & get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” Which is why, when his enemies are about to cancel him for good, fully reject him & the truth of the Father’s redeeming love he reveals, cast him out among the criminals on the town’s rubbish tip...Jesus speaks hope reassurance & promise...not debate/anger/wrath. He offers relationship not retribution.

There is a place for you in the Father’s “home” – his kingdom his presence where his glory & love are unrestrained. There’s a place for you...set aside – chosen – exclusively yours so that you can always be with Jesus where his joy – his healing – his restoration – his perfect beauty is freely abundantly yours. There’s a place for you of peace unparalleled – contentment & satisfaction & wholeness unequalled.

As Isaiah prophesied: **This** is what the Lord says — your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is good for you & leads you along the way you should go. If only you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river & righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore — too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name.” – Is 48:17ff That which is best for you – allows your life to flourish is found only ^{w/in} the promise & presence & power of God...where faith & obedience guide you to him. He offers relationship not retribution...security not self-indulgence.

Ashley Nicolette Frangipane, better known as **Halsey** is an American pop singer songwriter & mother of a 15-month-old. news.com.au covered one of her posts on social media about 3 weeks ago "Halsey wonders whether they 'chose the wrong life'" NB "they"- classic post-modern self-conception/identification - choose-your-own-pronoun "I find that often there is a deep sadness inside me that no amount of worldly pleasure can touch, a loneliness, an emptiness...I wonder often if I chose the wrong life for myself...and the weight of it is suffocating. I set my own boundaries I call my own tune I am my own master & it's killing me I'm sorry that melancholy has penetrated my art in a way that hasn't served a greater purpose other than my own self-loathing. I am approaching my 28th birthday in a week & just now exhaling & gasping for air for the first time since I took a single breath in this new life at 18. A breath that was meant to sustain me for a decade... I'd hoped that stardom fame fans & fabulous wealth would make life awesome...but I hate myself & can't breathe...I am wandering lawlessly, & I hope to find my way somewhere meaningful soon..." I've got no roots no GPS no centre of gravity I'm aimed at nothing but hope to find something...

Ashley is someone's daughter & when she was knee-high to a grasshopper someone should have helped her to know...**I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.**" Someone should have said: All that you're looking for all that you need every genuine desire of your heart will find its perfect satisfaction in the One who gave his life so you would have a place in the Father's house. This One has your name carved in the palms of his hands by Roman nails. Only in & through him (crucified risen & ruling) is there real life, sustaining truth, the way of the Father toward wholeness fullness & joy. This One holds a destiny for you richer than any Platinum album, sold out tour, next set of piercings & ink. Outside of him, distant from him, to stand against him...is loss, sorrow & death...deep sadness loneliness emptiness suffocation self-loathing lawless wandering...Who wants to be her? Who wants to live in her world of fake relativity?

And that way truth & life will daily transform you until your life moves here in time to the life way & truth of Jesus: **I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, & even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.**" We aren't promised more or more spectacular "works" than Jesus, but that our lives, our witness, our works are founded on & backed by the power of his resurrection. From now on all we ever have to do in every situation circumstance or setting is point to the cross & empty tomb as the power of God to grant eternal life, forgive sin, destroy evil & reconcile us to himself. All we ever have to do is point to the risen reigning Jesus as the only hope of the world & the only name worthy of trust honour & acclaim. All we ever have to do is trust that because he lives we will also & his life

has conquered this world & as he lives in us he is stronger than the one who lives in this world...that he is risen & that grace & salvation endure beyond the end of time.

"Listen to me, you who know right from wrong, you who cherish my law in your hearts. Do not be afraid of people's scorn, nor fear their insults. For the moth will devour them as it devours clothing. The worm will eat at them as it eats wool. But my righteousness will last forever. My salvation will continue from generation to generation." – **Is 51:7-8**

Jesus reveals himself as unique & universal. The One for all time. Only in & through him (crucified risen & ruling) is there real life, sustaining truth, the way of the Father toward wholeness fullness & joy. In a world that scorns fixed known knowable truth, Jesus comes 1st w/ a word of assurance that the truth is God has a place in his kingdom for each of us now & eternally & 2nd w/ a promise of transformation: that our lives will be made new in his image for his purpose here & forever.

TAKE IT HOME – (all at once)

What truth of Jesus' life & way with the Father do you trust in your life?

With whom will you share that this week?

Provides hope strength comfort encouragement...Who needs to hear that?

Let's pray... Father, I pray to you in the name & by the authority of your Son, Jesus. Bless us as your people, sent into your world with a word of resurrection hope & eternal joy. Use us in mighty ways to bless others to your glory in ways we never dreamed possible. Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way, the truth, & the life. Hold us close & don't let us stray from your path. Strengthen our trust & lead us to rest & peace in you alone. Teach us by your Holy Spirit, what is true, what to do, & who you want us to reach with your word in our daily living. We ask all this & whatever you know we need but would never ask...for your name's sake. Amen