

SCRIPTURES FOR 1/8/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

John 18:38

³⁸"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."

John 8:31-32

³¹To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 14:6

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

Genesis 2:4-3:24

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- ⁵ and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground- ⁷ the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸ Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are

free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was

with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Romans 1:2-4 and 16-17

² the gospel he promised beforehand, through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴and through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (*this is Paul quoting from Habakkuk 2:4-ed.*)

Psalms 11:3

When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

INTRODUCTION:

To live in the presence of great truths and eternal laws, to be led by permanent ideals - that is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him. - *Balzac*

In John 18:38, Pilate responds to Jesus' claims with, "What is truth?" which, in Pilate's case, could be sarcastic or serious, but all thinking people before and after Pilate have asked the same question. How do we respond to His claims? What IS truth?

TRUTH IS BASED ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Truth is incontrovertible, malice may attack it and ignorance may deride it, but, in the end, there it is.

- *Sir Winston Churchill*

In John 8:31-32, Jesus said if we are His disciples, we will "know the truth." What do you think He meant by that?

Then He says knowing the truth will set us free, what does He mean by freedom? (see vv. 34-36)

MAKE YOU THINK...

In John 14:6, by pointing to Jesus as the only way to the Father, God is being:

- a. unfair
- b. narrow-minded
- c. merciful
- d. shortsighted
- e. old-fashioned
- f. other: _____

I am persuaded to believe that Jesus is the Way because:

- a. He said so
- b. it makes sense
- c. I've read about what He did
- d. of His miracles
- e. of the changes I've seen in myself
- f. there is no alternative
- g. other: _____

How would you respond to someone who says, "There are many ways to God?"

In Romans 1:16-17 (backed up by verses 2-4), Paul gives us a slightly different perspective designed to appeal to the non-Jew (Gentile). Based on these scriptures, how would you explain to an unbeliever the

relationship between "righteousness" and "salvation" and "truth". (*hint: start at the end and work backward*)

SATAN UNDERMINED TRUTH, THEN ADAM AND EVE REJECTED GOD'S ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

As always, looking out for our best interests, God set rules in motion right from the git-go in Eden. If they had followed those rules, Adam and Eve would have lived happy and comfortable forever, enjoying full communion with the Lord and all the benefits of His creation without any of the negatives we see today. But you can almost hear Satan using his most slippery snake-oil-salesman voice,

"You will not surely *die*. God just doesn't want any competition. Eat this and, not only will it taste *really* good, but you will be like The Most High; you will be the makers of your own destiny; the writers of your own story; you will be able to make your *own* rules and no one will be able to tell you what to do. How great would *that* be?"

So they ate it. And everything changed...

Read Genesis 3:16-19. They messed it up for the rest of us. But they also set the stage for Jesus' redemptive work on the cross, which gives us all the chance to choose whether to follow in the footsteps of Adam and Eve or of Christ. Until His return, there is not much we can do about the state of the world that Adam and Eve set into motion, but, as individuals, we can make a difference in our own lives and the lives of those around us.

What is one way that rejecting God's truth affects our society? What can we do to make a difference by following His truth?

How does rejecting God's truth affect our individual homes? Following His truth?

How does rejecting God's truth affect our own testimony and the message of the church? Following His truth?

CLOSING:

Read Psalm 11:3. Indeed, as "the righteous", what can we do? Perhaps these steps are a good place to start. Next week, we will talk about the mystery of how a person can be the personification of truth.

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything. - *Mark Twain*