

# THE VALUE OF TRUTH

Presentation by Dallas Willard

# WHAT IS TRUTH?

Truth is very simple. It is **accuracy of representation.**

A statement, belief, idea is true provided that what it is about is as that statement (etc.) says it is.

“Snow is white,” for example, just in case snow is white.

# TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE IS ESTABLISHED TRUTH.

YOU KNOW SOMETHING IF YOU ARE  
ABLE TO REPRESENT, THINK OF IT,  
DEAL WITH IT, AS IT IS, ON AN  
APPROPRIATE BASIS OF THOUGHT  
AND/OR EXPERIENCE.

# TRUTH IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE BECAUSE...

IT ALLOWS US TO DEAL WITH REALITY  
SUCCESSFULLY, IF WE KNOW IT AND  
ACT UPON IT.

IT IS LIKE THE SIGHTING MECHANISM  
ON A GUN.

PEOPLE GENERALLY PREFER TRUTH  
TO FALSITY. THEY LIKE IT FOR ITS  
OWN SAKE.

# HENCE TRADITIONAL DEVOTION TO TRUTH

*VERITAS AS HARVARD SLOGAN—AND  
ITS CHANGES.*

*W.A.S.C. HANDBOOK: “AN INSTITUTION  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS, BY  
DEFINITION, DEDICATED TO THE  
SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND ITS  
DISSEMINATION.” (“Standard One”)*

# THE BITTERNESS OF TRUTH

TRUTH DOES NOT ADJUST ITSELF TO  
OUR WISHES, BELIEFS OR CHOICES.  
IT IS UTTERLY RELENTLESS.

NO ONE HAS EVER MADE A BELIEF  
TRUE BY BELIEVING IT. BELIEF IS  
RELATIVE TO INDIVIDUALS AND  
GROUPS, BUT NOT TRUTH

# KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH

CONFERS THE RIGHT (AND RESPONSIBILITY) TO ACT, TO DIRECT ACTION, TO FORMULATE AND SUPERVISE POLICY, AND TO TEACH.

HENCE IT IS “POLITICALLY” POWERFUL AND CLAIMS TO IT ARE DANGEROUS.

WHY PEOPLE PERISH FROM LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.

# PEOPLE REJECT KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH --

BECAUSE IT RESTRICTS THEIR  
FREEDOM AND DOES NOT SUIT THEIR  
FEELINGS.

IT TELLS THEM THEY ARE NOT IN  
CHARGE AND MUST SUBMIT TO  
THOSE WHO KNOW.

GOD HAS LEFT A GAP BETWEEN  
REALITY AND CHOICE THAT THAT  
HUMAN BEINGS CAN CHOOSE.

# CHARACTER IS THE ISSUE

OUR HUMAN CHALLENGE IS TO MASTER  
DESIRE ON BEHALF OF WHAT IS GOOD AND  
RIGHT.

THE CASE OF CAIN. "SIN'S DESIRE IS FOR  
YOU, BUT YOU MUST MASTER IT." (Genesis  
4:7)

GOD'S PLAN FOR EACH OF US IS THAT WE  
SHOULD GROW TO THE POINT WHERE HE  
CAN EMPOWER US TO DO WHAT WE WANT.

# JESUS AND TRUTH

HE IS COMPLETELY ON THE SIDE OF TRUTH IN ALL THINGS.

HIS WORDS TO PILATE. John 18:37

“Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.” What a remarkable claim!

PILATE’S EVASION—“WHAT IS TRUTH?—IS EXACTLY THE POSTURE OF THE LEARNED WORLD TODAY.

# THE GREAT QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS REALITY?
2. WHO IS WELL OFF?
3. WHO IS A REALLY GOOD PERSON?
4. HOW CAN ONE BECOME A REALLY GOOD PERSON.

JESUS ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS,  
WITH ANSWERS THAT INFORMED  
TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY LIFE.

# NOW NO INTELLECTUALLY RESPONSIBLE ANSWERS

THE UNIVERSITY IS NOT EQUIPPED TO  
ANSWER THE GREAT QUESTIONS NOW, OR  
TO DEAL WITH THEM HONESTLY. (A. T.  
KRONMAN)

IT INHERITED THE ISSUES FROM THE  
CHRISTIAN PAST OF THE UNIVERSITY BUT  
HAS NO RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THEM.

IS MORE INTERESTED IN HUMAN  
RESPECTABILITY THAN IN TRUTH. TRUTH IS  
AN EMBARRASSMENT. "RESEARCH" IS ALL.  
DEFINED BY SOCIAL PRESSURE.

# THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE!

THIS SAYING OF JESUS (John 8:31-32) IN  
ITS PROPER CONTEXT IS STILL TRUE  
AND TESTABLE IN LIFE.

HIS PRAYER TO SET HIS DISCIPLES  
APART BY THE TRUTH: “SANCTIFY  
THEM IN THE TRUTH; THEY WORD IS  
TRUTH.” (John 17:17)

HOW TO LIVE IN TRUTH IS THE  
UNRESOLVED PROBLEM OF MANKIND.

# THE TASK OF HIS PEOPLE

TO RESIST THE SECULAR DEFINITIONS OF  
“KNOWLEDGE.” DEFINITIONS THAT MAKE  
KNOWLEDGE GODLESS.

TO PRESENT JESUS’S ANSWERS TO THE “BIG  
QUESTIONS” AS KNOWLEDGE, IN THE  
SENSE EXPLAINED.

TO STAND AS TEACHERS OF THE NATIONS,  
BRINGING KNOWLEDGE TO LIFE.