

March 24 – 30

Sean McDowell | Truth and Reliability

Icebreaker: Many people in our world do not believe in absolute truth. Where have you experienced this? Why do people react against the notion of absolute truth?

Sermon 1: True For You, But Not True For Me

The fight for truth

- Sean talked about the confusion that exists in our culture. What are examples of this confusion?
- Have you lost something because of standing for the truth or have you ever failed to stand for the truth because you feared losing something?
- Read Hosea 4:6. How have you seen people destroyed because they do not believe the truth?
- Read John 8:32. How has the truth set you free? How have you seen it set others free?
- How would you explain the connection between truth and belief?
- Sean talked about the Correspondence Theory of Truth: A statement is true if it matches up with reality.
 - What happens when someone abandons this definition of truth?
 - Sean talked about how everyone uses truth like this in their everyday lives, but changes when it comes to moral values or religion. Why is this?
- Sean spent time differentiating between subjective and objective statements.
 - Subjective:** Personal and private claims that depend on the beliefs of an individual who holds them; preferences; internal to the one who holds them (e.g. ice cream flavors)
 - Objective:** Claims about the external world independent of what someone believes; external to the individual; (e.g. insulin helps control diabetes)
 - What are some subjective things you believe are true? What are things people take as objective reality that are not?
 - Where do moral and religious claims fit in this paradigm? Are they objective or subjective?
 - How do all people demonstrate a believe in objective moral truth claims? How could this open a door to them believing the moral claims of the Bible as true?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:17. Why is this true? How does it give you hope?
- Sean's sermon was logical, engaging, and educational. So why would people dispute his conclusions?
- How do we approach people who do not believe in absolute truth?
- How can the person of Jesus be the answer for someone who disputes the belief in absolute truth?

[OVER for Sermon 2]

Sermon 2: Reliability of the New Testament

You may want to show your group some of the slides from Sean's presentation. Find the slideshow on the Discussion Guide page of our website. cfdowntowntown.com/discussionguide

Three Key Tests

1. **Character Test:** Were the documents put together with honesty?
 - Read the following passages: What do they tell us about how the NT was written?
– Luke 1:1–4; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1; Luke 3:1
 - Key questions: Does the document contain embarrassing material?
 - Read the following passages: Why could these be considered embarrassing to the authors or the subjects? – Mark 14:70; Matthew 16:23; Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 4:1–12; John 20
 - Deaths of the Apostles: Why are their deaths evidence of the veracity of what they wrote?
 2. **Copy Test:** Have the documents reached us accurately?
 - Key question: What is the time gap between the original copies and the copies we have today?
 - What did we learn from Sean?
 - Key question: How many manuscripts do we have?
 - What did we learn from Sean?
 3. **Corroboration Test:** Do other historical materials confirm or deny the testimony provided by the document itself?
 - Archaeological Evidence: What did we learn from Sean?
- Would evidence like this convince the average non-Christian? Why or why not?
 - What does this evidence do for your confidence in the New Testament?
 - Why is it important for us to have evidence that strengthens our faith?