1 John 4:1-6 – "Knowing The Truth"

- ## The Aim of this Session

At Jesus' trial, Pontius Pilate asked the incredibly profound question "What is Truth?" We live in a world which says there is no "absolute" truth – that "your truth may not be the same as my truth." So how can we say that Jesus is <u>THE</u> Truth – and what does that actually mean?

- ## Welcome

What was a lie you told that you will admit to? Did you get found out?

- ## Worship

Read Revelation 4:8-11. If you have the possibility to sing a worship song or play some worship music, do so and imagine the scene around the throne in Heaven. Respond to what you see and Worship the King!

One thing to note – when a word is repeated in the Bible, it means the writer wants to emphasise it. When it is repeated for a third time, the writer is saying that it is an "absolute" … so John, writing of what he saw in Revelation notes that the living creatures are saying God is absolutely, totally and utterly Holy!

- ## Word

This Holy, Holy Holy God says in Exodus 20:16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour."
  - ❖ Is there such a thing as a "white lie"?
  - ❖ Is there such a thing as "absolute truth" or is "your truth different to mine"?
  - ❖ How would you answer Pilate's question "What is Truth?" (John 18:38)

In his Gospel and in his letters, John is very concerned about the word "Truth" …
  - ❖ The word "Truth" appears over 50 times in John's Gospel.
  - ❖ On half of those occasions, it is Jesus saying "I tell you the truth …."

John quotes Jesus as saying …
  - ❖ John 14:6 "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"
  - ❖ John 8:32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

So we get to the key questions …
  - ❖ If Jesus is "Truth Personified", then what does that actually mean in life?
  - ❖ If we have the intelligence and ability to decide what we think is the right thing, how do we engage with Jesus in a way that will guide us into "True" thinking?
  - ❖ In a complex world of constantly changing ideas, how can we work out what we need to be?

If we live a spiritual world and believe in the ideas of good and evil, and that of an "evil one" who opposes God at every opportunity, then it is not difficult to see that "truth" is going to be something which is going to be under attack. So how do we work out what are ideas from God and what are ideas from the Devil?

Read 1 John 4:1-6
  - ➢ When we are instructed to "test" the spirits, what would you understand that to be meaning?
  - ➢ How might a spirit acknowledge that Jesus Christ is from God (v2)?
  - ➢ Why is this an important measure?

The argument is very simple:

- ✓ If we are wrestling with an idea, the first question is whether it is consistent with all that we know about Jesus and what he taught in the Gospels.
- ✓ As Jesus is "Truth" personified, then if the idea is consistent with what Jesus teaches, then it is consistent with an absolute, Holy Truth.
- ✓ As Jesus has come from a Holy, Holy, Holy God, then the Truth must be of God …

We are sometimes tempted to think that there is no spiritual battle and that we should be able to work out what the answers are for ourselves. There is a battle going on and it often involves things we do not understand and need help to see (v3). But we are on the winning side (vv4,5) and so we can be confident. But, first and foremost, we need to listen to God (v6) so that we will be able to understand Him.

- ## Walk

As you look around the world today, what Spiritual Battles do you see …

- ❖ Across the world?
- ❖ In our nation?
- ❖ In our town?
- ❖ In your Church?
- ❖ In your family?
- ❖ In your road?

Take some time to identify these things and be honest about what they are.

- ✓ Are you seeking to find the Truth in each them?
- ✓ Talk about one or two and see how this study might help in this.
- ✓ Pray!

How is your prayer diary going?

- ## Next Time …

John: 1 John 4:7-21 – "God's Love And Ours"
God is Love. Full Stop. Unpack!