

Today we are going to talk about the Battle for Truth. There is a battle raging for truth. *Have you ever thought about what you really believe? Why do you believe what you believe?* Did the city or town you grew up in affect your belief? Was it the culture you were raised in? For instance if you grew up in the 60's you might have been influenced by the Beatles or the hippie culture. By the way, have you ever noticed how music affects people's worldview? Here are a few country song titles that have special meaning to me. They're real I'm not making these titles up. I am sure that you can download these to your iPod if you like.

10. *How Can you Believe me When I Say I love You When You know I've been A Liar All My Life?*
9. *You Done Tore Out my Heart And Stomped that Sucker Flat*
8. *I Don't Know whether to Kill Myself or go Bowling*
7. *I Fell in a pile of You and Got Love All over Me*
6. *I'm Just a Bug on the Windshield of Life*
5. *If the Phone don't Ring , Baby, You'll know it's Me*
4. *My Wife ran off with My best friend, And I sure Do Miss Him*
3. *If Love were Oil, I'd be a Quart Low*
2. *I'd rather Have a Bottle in Front of Me than a Frontal Lobotomy (and the #1 Special Song that might have influenced your worldview)*
1. *If My Nose were Full of Nickels, I'd Blow It all On You*

Today we are in the second of 12 weeks of "the Truth Project." How many of you saw the first week of the The Truth Project Video? Did you enjoy it? Dr. Tackett does a great job laying out the worldviews of life.

How many of you remember the Astronomer, Carl Sagan? In 1981 he produced a television series called "Cosmos", taken from his book of the same title. I believe PBS ran it and many schools used it as a curriculum. Here is the first 2 ½ minutes of the series. Listen to his opening comments

Clip: Carl Sagan – cosmos – 2 min 32 sec

"The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be. Our contemplations of the cosmos stir. There is this tingling response that captures the voice of faint sensations of a distant memory of falling from a great height. We know we are approaching the grandest of mystery." Carl Sagan – 1981

When Dr. Sagan says, "***The Cosmos is all that is, or was, or ever will be***", what is he saying? There is no God. Belief systems are called by many names... **Humanism or Naturalism is the belief that man is a product of this universe.** Carl Sagan received the "Humanist of the Year" award in 1981 for this *Cosmos* series. For fun, let's replace the word "Cosmos" with the Word, "God" and read it again.

"(God) is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be. Our contemplations of (God) stir. There is this tingling response that captures the voice of faint sensations of a distant memory of falling from a great height. We know we are approaching the

grandest of mystery.”

Carl Sagan was so close. Everything he believed was trying to draw him to God, but he refused to go outside of what he could see, feel, and listen to.

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus”

~ [Blaise Pascal quotes](#) (French Mathematician, Philosopher and Physicist, 1623-1662)

1. The Apostle Paul _____ (warns) us not to be taken _____ (captive) by deceptive philosophies.

Colossians 2:8 “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” NIV

What is being captive?

Webster’s Dictionary defines Captive , coming from the Latin *captivus*;

1 a : taken and held as or as if a prisoner of war b (1) : kept within bounds : [CONFINED](#)

2 : held under control of another but having the appearance of independence ***THE WARNING IMPLIES WE CAN BECOME A PRISONER IN OUR THINKING.***

What is the definition of Philosophy?

1a: pursuit of wisdom b : a search for the underlying causes and principles of reality

“**A search for reality.**” Do you remember last week, Dr. Tackett defined Truth;

Truth = That which is real = Jesus, says; “I am the Truth.”

Why doesn’t the humanistic reasoning of Carl Sagan and other Naturalists find the ultimate truth? Because of the “Cosmic Cube” as described by many philosophers, astronomers, and physicists.

Illustrate: Cube = the cosmos, matter, Energy, man is in the Cube =

Naturalism/Humanism/Post-Modernism (Dr. Tackett will go in depth on this.) Every answer to every question can be found within the cube. There is no God in this view.

The Biblical Worldview presents God as being both in and outside the box. ***He is transcendent*** to the “Cosmic Cube.” He is the driving force from all that is contained within the box. He is the answer to the bigger questions that Aristotle and Plato asked, “Who is man?”

Col 1:15-18 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Paul knew about naturalism. Paul knew about Aristotle, a student of Plato, living 300 years before Christ. Paul faced this Battle for Truth everyday with the Greeks. It's the same battle that we have today, so Paul warns us, as believers, to be careful.

Colossians 2:8 "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." NIV

1ST, BELIEVE THERE IS A BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND. We can be taken captive and our non-believing friends can be taken too. Paul's friend Timothy was involved in bringing people to the truth of a transcendent God. He instructs him in dealing with friends and family who have been deceived by deceptive philosophies.

2 Tim 2:23-26

24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Be gentle in sharing your beliefs. Don't argue with friends and family who don't follow God, but rather, picture them as prisoners from an ongoing battle, prisoners of war.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE TAKEN CAPTIVE?

2. When we are taken captive, _____ (destruction) can come.

Let me tell you a true story about a town named Pergamum. Today, it is the town of Bergamo, Turkey, south of Istanbul and about 15 miles from the Aegean Sea, directly across from Greece. Pergamum sat on a hill 1000 feet above the sea. You could see for miles. Although this city was not on the major trade route of the old world, it was a cultural center. It had the largest library in the world boasting of 200,000 books. It had a large medical center. It was a highly educated, high-society city known for its mix of Greek religions, immoral lifestyles and world renowned scholars.

In its early history Pergamum was a city-state and in 197BC they defeated the Gauls. Because of this, it stood as a symbol of Greek superiority over the barbarians. Great buildings were erected along with sports arenas and that huge library. The Egyptians, who also had a large library in Alexandria, refused to ship papyrus to Pergamum. As a result, a new form of writing material, Pergamena charta, or parchment, was developed.

During the Apostle Paul's days Pergamum became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was the center of Roman government in this area. It was also the site of the temples of As-klepios (the Greco-Roman god of medicine and healing), Athena (the goddess of wisdom) and the temple of Zeus (the king of the gods) with an altar showing Zeus defeating snake-like giants.

When the church began in Pergamum the intent was for them to impact this city and for a while they did. Finally, the city had enough of these Christians. They arrested their pastor, a man by the name of Antipas, for refusing to honor the Roman Emperor, Domitian. As punishment, and to deter this Christian behavior, they burned the pastor to death in a bull shaped altar.

The deterrent worked. The people of the church stopped their work and began incorporating some of the local beliefs of the Pergamum culture.

The great evangelist, DL Moody once said, ***“The place for the ship in the sea. But God help the ship if the sea gets into the ship.”*** The sea got into the church in Pergamum and it began to sink. God revealed to the Apostle John, in his book of Revelations, what He would do.

Rev 2:12-16

12 "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live — where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city — where Satan lives.

14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam... committing sexual immorality. 15 Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Even though they still believed in Jesus, there were some who were mixing their belief in Christ by sacrificing to idols and committing sexual immorality with the pagan temple priestesses. The problem was, they were holding to the teachings of Balaam (talking donkey.) Balaam, an Old Testament figure, called on the name of God to get what he wanted. As long as God supplied his needs he believed. But when Balaam didn't get what he wanted, he went and got it his way. God was kind of a Genie in the bottle. Balaam wasn't as much interested about God as he was about Balaam. So, now God reminds the church in Pergamum that they were behaving the same way. They believed in Christ but were not any different from the locals. Having faith in Christ had no REAL meaning to them.

What amazes me about this story is that God didn't turn His back on these believers. He understood and would show them the truth of their ways. (vs16) ***“I will comeand will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”*** THERE IS HOPE!

3. God will not _____ (leave) His children alone in fighting _____ (sin).

Heb 13:5 "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." NIV

The people of Pergamum were taken captive by its culture. God knows the danger

we are in.

Ps 69:33 *The LORD hears the needy and does not despise his captive people.*

God will find us no matter the circumstance. Like a shepherd who lost his sheep, He will come to rescue from the trouble you are in.

Luke 15:4-6

4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? **5** And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders **6** and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' NIV

There is hope for the believer in Pergamum. Let's hear finish up with the writings to people of Pergamum.

Rev 2:17 *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.*

"Hidden manna" represents the hidden presence and provision of God. He will supply their needs AND be with them. The "white stone" was given to a defendant at a trial when he was acquitted of his crimes. The people of Pergamum were forgiven. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

4. Embrace the _____ (true) _____ (proclamations) of God.

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV*

Can we really offer our bodies to God? Is this what pleases Him? Is this ultimate expression of TRUST really considered worship? Is this Really REAL? Can we really know God in a REAL way. IF WE DO THIS PAUL SAYS WE CAN KNOW GOD'S WILL!

This is not easy. It goes against our very nature. We have been trying to be independent since we were born. Watch a 2 year old. How many remember the teen years? Being independent comes to fruition in adulthood. How can we give that up?

Rom 12:2 *..but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

We have to think differently. Does God really have the best for me?

Transformation is not easy. Transformation comes from the word “metamorphous.” Like a butterfly that has to struggle to be freed from a cocoon, we too have to struggle from the way we think.

As we end, I guess the question that we all need to ask ourselves is, “*Are we in danger of being taken captive and if so, are we ready to be set free?*” Do we really want to offer ourselves to God and become dependent again? If so, the Apostle Paul tells us how.

Col 2:6-7 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. NIV

Do you really believe what you believe is really REAL?

Communion

Jude 20-21

20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Building takes time...Be patient...Praying in the H.S. is just repeating to God what he proclaims to us!

22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Be Merciful to those who doubt...people are captive by this world...love them...allow them to TRUST you.

I'll end with the words of Jude verse 24, 25 and then we will be served the Lord's supper
24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.