



Word Notes: Sunday 15/09/19

Still Standing: Powerful Words

What's the biggest threat to society today: the end of truth. Truth is under attack. One consequence is an increase in mental health challenges as people lose meaning and purpose. Each generation has its challenges, for my parents it was successive world wars, in my generation the Cold War and living with the very real threat of nuclear annihilation. For younger generations replacing truth with narrative, each to his own with no absolutes has led to a loss of optimism, lack of future and lowered self-worth. The Truth about who we are as Christians, brings significance, security and acceptance – three basic needs, the lack of which contribute to poor mental health, low self-esteem and lack of purpose.

We need a way to defend ourselves and refute the many truths we are confronted with by the world, the flesh (our thoughts) and the devil – and in the armour of God we have some key pieces of kit.

- 1) Read John 8:31 and Romans 12:1-2 then discuss these questions:
 - a) What truth does Jesus offer us to know?
 - b) What role does obedience play in our being set free?
 - c) What might restrict us from knowing God's purpose and will for our lives?
 - d) How do these texts relate to putting on the helmet of salvation?

- 2) Read Matthew 4:1-11 and Hebrews 4:12. Paul and Tony re-enacted Jesus' temptation by the devil as a sword fight with the usual banter seen in many Hollywood films.
 - a) How does Jesus deal with the enemy's attacks? Is he under stress, bothered or quietly able to deal with any thrust? What clues do you find in James 4:7 for how we might deal with the enemy in the same way?
 - b) The devil tries to pervert the Word and tempt Jesus. Looking at Hebrews 4:12 why would you conclude he is doomed to fail if we are adequately submitted and rehearsed in the truth?
 - c) Hebrews 4:11 sees the enemy depart – in the words of James 4:7 he "flees". Is the enemy's defeat final at this point? See also Luke 4:13. How does this match up with Paul's instruction to the saints in Ephesians 6:13?

- 3) What do you now understand Paul to mean by his encouragement to "stand"? Are you to battle to the death, defeat Satan on your own or something else? What therefore does spiritual warfare for the Christian look like?

Share your struggles with being able to stand with particular reference to your mind and thought life and being able to disarm the pointed attacks of the enemy. Encourage each other in how to grow, pray and where appropriate set up prayer and accountability partnerships in twos and threes.