

# Editorial

Last weekend was Easter. An opportunity to take a break from ordinary life, but also an opportunity to think of the life and death of Jesus. Among other things, I went to the Melbourne Passion Play, dramatising Jesus' teachings, his suffering, and his death on the cross. I found it surprisingly moving. Even when you know the wounds lining the actor's back, the stumbling walk, the brutality and the jeering are pretence; that the three crosses are not holding corpses; and that everything will be OK, even then it is hard to ignore how sad the event was. Particularly when it is shown that his death was largely due to the jealousy and fear of the authorities, in spite of his good teachings rather than because of them.

At one point during Jesus' trial there is an interesting exchange between Jesus and Pilate:

*Then Pilate said, "So you are a king!" Jesus replied, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world – to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked, "What is truth?"*

John 18:37 - 38

Part of the reason Jesus was on trial was because he was teaching the truth, and there were too many people who felt threatened by it. Sometimes we talk confidently about having "The Truth". But do we ever feel threatened by truth, like those who heard Jesus but preferred to condemn him rather than to change? Would we try to get rid of voices of truth if their messages made us feel uncomfortable?

It is certain that Jesus' teachings were not meant to be abstract doctrines, lines on a piece of paper to be argued over, re-interpreted, then upheld as true. If they are true, they must be put into practice. Jesus taught this in his story of the wise man and the foolish man, now immortalised in song. *Both* the wise man and the foolish man listened to Jesus. What set the wise man apart was that he then *did* what he had heard.

Sometimes, as a young person, searching for truth seems like a very theoretical subject. Something that those older and wiser than us can worry about while we just get on with our lives. Just do what our parents taught us or what other young people are doing, and everything will be fine. But it's

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actually really practical, because it is meant to change our behaviour. Yes, Jesus said truth could give us freedom, but it can also give us the responsibility to do what we know to be right, no matter what the cost. Are we ready for this truth?

A comment I've heard many times is "I'd like to believe such-and-such about a particular Bible character or event". Such discussion can be useful (I do it too), but it is not truth. Truth is about what we have reason to believe, not what we'd like to believe, and it should lead us to action.

Sometimes we need to ask questions. To explore new things. To challenge ourselves. And sometimes that can be really hard. Yes, we may end up with the same conclusion as everyone else who has looked at the same evidence and the same scripture. But that doesn't mean it is wasted time. It is hard to overestimate how valuable it is to understand *why* something is true rather than just being told it is true. And if we find a thing to be false, it is better to know it now rather than continuing to pass it on to others.

If we see a problem, it's not enough to say "Everyone else seems OK with this, so maybe it's not really a problem". We need to look, because if we stand by and do nothing, we are actually encouraging others to also stand by and do nothing.

So let us speak about and follow truth as Jesus did.

JON MORGAN

*Test everything; hold fast what is good.*

1 Thessalonians 5:21