

January 15, 2023
The Second Sunday after Epiphany
Pastor Matt Duerr

“The Road Less Traveled”

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. Epiphany, we heard last week that it means “to make manifest” and we saw that it is at the very core or heart of the Great Commission. Then I told you that we would begin a journey now; a journey to make Jesus manifest. What I didn't tell you is that we would be traveling down the road less traveled. Too often the church has grasped hold of and embraced gimmicks. Gimmicks of trying to bring people in so that they can make Christ manifest. Give people pies, give them gift cards, etcetera. All in all, it is an enticement to try to get them to come back because; well, we're so nice, and we give you gifts, and goodies. Which really comes down to the person being able to say; “well I got this from this church. And that really troubles me when I put it into the context of scripture and specifically Isaiah 55:11 where we read, “so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

So, what is God's purpose or purposes? Well again we'll take the road less traveled we'll look in the Bible. First Timothy 2 verses three to five. “This is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” So, the first purpose of God is that all people will be saved. You might say, “really?” Oh yes, that is what John 3:16 “for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” That's what that is all about. That's God's purpose. He wants everyone in His creation to be saved. But, secondly He wants them to come to the knowledge of the truth because that is what saves them.

So, what is truth? Again, what does scripture say? What does Jesus Himself say? In John 17:17 Jesus makes what we call His high priestly prayer, and He prays for His disciples, and for us. And He prays; “sanctify (or set apart) sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth.” His word? Yes, His word! You know John chapter one verse one in the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God. He was with God in the beginning and through Him all things were made that were made. God's word is Jesus. That's the word in the flesh and that's why Jesus was able to say; “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

But I also want you to think about what Jesus prayed. “Sanctify them in the truth;” and what was the second purpose of God? That people would come to the knowledge of the truth. The truth is God's word. The truth is Jesus himself, the very embodiment of that word, and fulfillment of that word. And when Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life in John 14 verse 6; He also says no one comes to the father except through me. And that is definitely, the road less traveled and learned. A road that I believe this is so important, that I've printed all these scriptures out for you. Because the truth makes it very evident that salvation only comes through Christ, no other way. And that message right there is definitely, the road less traveled.

But the other half of making manifest; well it's the exact opposite- it's making manifest the lie. We're going to take a look at this. We're going to do it the same way as we looked at the truth. We're going to God's word, the written word, the word in the flesh of Jesus, and what is the opposite? This is where gospel comes in from John chapter 8. Jesus was having a dialogue, an argument with the Pharisees and the issue of truth comes up. The Pharisees made a claim to Jesus; “Abraham is our father,” but they then insinuated, we don't know who you are Jesus, we don't know where you came from, we were not children of an illegitimate source. In other words, they had heard of the virgin birth, and they were saying, ‘oh, come on that's not real. You were born out of adultery.’ And Christ's response to that is; “You are of your father, the devil, and your

will is to do your father's desires.” Now notice the contrast God's desires, verses Satan's desires.

Time for a contrast but first who is Satan? Well Jesus tells us he was a murderer from the beginning. What? I mean we've all heard he was cast out of heaven, but was he cast out for murder? No, no, he was cast out because he challenged God and wanted himself to become God. But Satan brought death into this world. He murdered mankind and so we take a look at what Jesus has to say about Satan and his temptation of Eve. What does he say? He Satan, has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks of his own character or nature. For he is a liar and the father of lies. But now we have the contrast truth verses lies. And it is not politically correct, this road less traveled; nor is it very woke at because the road last less traveled is not only from the bible but focuses on the Old Testament; something people today want to say is so old fashioned.

But we have to go back to the very beginning. Genesis one, verse one. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And that word created in the Latin is “exnihilo,” which means from out of nothing. And I'd like you to consider the impact of the lie. What is the lie? it's what Ken Ham, a favorite apologist of mine, calls evolution. The lie, now I am going to do a little interaction here with the congregation. Raise your hand if you have heard of Charles Darwin and his book, **Origin of the Species** which was published on November 24th, 1859. Raise your hand if you've heard of that book by Charles Darwin. Ok, I want everyone who has raised their hand to go ahead and put it down. No, you haven't, because that book does not exist. You see, there was a book published by Charles Darwin on November 24th, 1859, but the title was this: and please listen carefully- **On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.** And as you've heard that, you probably have a little bit of a reaction to favored races. Wait, that's racism! You think? That is a very inconvenient truth about the very premise of evolution. It's the preservation of favored races through natural selection. And so, since

that's a very inconvenient title, we've shortened it to "Origin of the Species."

It's a lie. Scientifically it doesn't work. There is this thing called the law of abiogenesis that says life forms only from pre-existing life. But I'm not going to spend this time to go into the science part. If you want that, please talk to me. I will talk to you at length about it it's a favorite passion of mine. But I want you to think now of the ramifications of Satan's lie called evolution. No longer are you a human, or is any human created with a purpose to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the earth, to tend the earth. No, you are a product of random chance. You are a product of survival of the fittest. Your purpose is to survive. It's all about you and what you feel is why, and what you feel you need to do to survive. Therefore morals are based upon what people do to survive and what the survivors believe therefore it is morality. It's called morality or truth by force. This is the real truth of origin of the species. The strongest win, and it comes from the father of lies and his ways and his purpose.

What is his way? We'll look at what we see in Genesis as he talks to Eve. Step one, question the truth. Did God really say you shall not eat of the tree? Step 2, lie. You shall not surely die; even though God said they would. Step 3 and twist the truth. "God knows you will be like him knowing good from evil." And with that third one, twisting the truth, comes two subsets of his ways. Number 1- defame the opposition. In other words, God doesn't want you to know good from evil because He will be jealous. He wants to have that. He doesn't want to share it with you; bad, bad God; and replace the truth with a lie. It's all about you Eve. It's all about you Adam. You deserve a break today. You deserve to be better. You deserve to be like God, who's trying to withhold that from you. It's all about you! Which by the way, those of you who are going through the revelation Bible study or those who have already gone through it, know that that is the basic foundation of 666. When man says it's all about me instead of it's all about God. The lie, you will not surely die, it's going to be better and hence the name murderer. Murderer because death entered as a result of sin because we know the wages of sin is death.

That is Satan's personal purpose. To bring death is and to hurt God because God desires all men to be saved. So, God reacted. He reacted when Satan came into the garden. He reacted when Satan tempted Eve and Adam and they sinned. And when He reacted, He addressed Satan and He said to Satan I will put enmity between you and the woman in between your offspring and her offspring.

So, what is the offspring of Satan? The offspring of Satan is those who follow his lies, those who embrace the concept of 666, it's all about you. Those who want to embrace evolution and say God's not creator and it all came about by random chance. Those who employ the cancel culture to stop anyone from speaking God's truth.

The offspring of Eve is the Church, the followers of God, those filled with his Holy Spirit. But Satan here's a very specific message from God. He, the promised Messiah, Jesus, the seed of the woman, he shall bruise your head. You shall bruise His heel. How does your head get bruised? Someone strikes a blow to your head. Heads don't bruise, they die. The heel, if you bruise the heel, it hurts, it hurts bad. But over time it goes away. Over 3 days, Jesus would rise. This is what we make manifest. God's purpose is for us to be saved. He sent His Son. His Son to everything for us. The lie it's all about you. You deserve to be like God. Don't listen to God. Don't follow His word. Follow what man says, follow Charles Darwin because after all the experts really know.

But we make manifest the truth of God's word that says that Jesus is the way. The way to heaven, He is the truth, the very embodiment of the truth of God and the life, eternal life. No one comes to God except through Him. Welcome to the journey, we have only just begun. But we will continue down this road less traveled the road that is paved with God's Word.

In His Name, Amen.