

The True Vine

By Jared Eastley

It should not be difficult to realize that as finite and mortal beings, we only see, detect, and comprehend very little of reality. The proportion of our comprehension of truth to reality is so infinitesimally minuscule and abstract that it is not quantifiable. We see, detect, and comprehend almost nothing in proportion to the sum of all truth.

Truth and reality are so vast, so intricate, so infinite, and so eternal that any expression we have of truth in this sphere is just an echo and approximation of truth as it is comprehended by the mind of God. Our estimation of truth is never complete, is never entirely accurate, and it is never sufficient to tell the whole story.

Everything you think you know is either wrong or incomplete. There are always corrections that need to be made in our understanding and there is always more to learn.

Truth is all around us. It is in the light that shines, the empty darkness, the air we breathe, all of nature, our synthetic environments, and in all the people and beings around us, both seen and unseen. Truth and reality are as one. They are constantly manifest, intrinsically accessible, and everlastingly learnable by anyone with real meekness and humility.

One of the great purposes of God is to facilitate the acquisition of truth. He teaches truth, he reveals truth, and he provides environments and opportunities for the assimilation of truth, to include corrective truth.

Oddly enough, most people are highly resistant to receiving and accepting additional truth. And to a much greater degree, most people are expressly resistant to receiving and accepting new truths that contradict what they think they already know and believe, or that somehow incriminates them, or makes them feel sad or bad about things.

Cognitive dissonance is a very real thing. When people reject corrective ideas based on negative emotions or apparent incongruities, rather than introspective logic and reason, this is called cognitive dissonance.

Most people, most of the time, tend to reject corrective ideas that do not harmonize with their preconceptions or sense of self-worth. Rather than humbly and honestly evaluating the merit of what is being said, most people will follow their gut, their feelings, and their human dispositions. This becomes a huge problem when their beliefs are in error, their desires are evil, and their persuasions are corrupt and short-sighted.

Learning to discern good from evil, right from wrong, and truth from error, requires informed intelligence based on the light and truth that comes from God. When our thoughts, feelings, and habitual actions are compromised by selfishness, ignorance, and pride, then we find that following our gut, our feelings, and our human dispositions can really get us in a lot of trouble. When our feelings are informed by divine truth, this works well; otherwise, it does not.

Following your heart, as it were, only works well when your heart is filled with unconditional love, pure desires, and the truth of God. How many people have followed crooked paths, doing great harm and evil to themselves and to others, whilst honestly doing what they thought was right because they were incorrectly informed or selfishly persuaded?

It is like a bomber pilot dropping bombs on what he is told is a dangerous offensive target, only to learn later that he had just bombed a school full of children. At the time he dropped the bombs, he felt like his actions were good and necessary; but he was clearly mistaken and deeply regrets it afterward.

Similarly, how many zealous “Christians” have waged wars, ostracized others, and done great harm in the name of Christianity? The history of secular Christianity flows with rivers of blood and oceans of tears. This is where pride, self-righteousness, and cognitive dissonance lead you.

Goodness is that which leads to the best value, best benefit, and best outcome. Sin is anything less.

Lust is setting your heart on that which does not reflect reality and is not good. When we set our hearts on sin and in seeking happiness through sin, we lust.

Lust is the rejection of truth. God teaches truth. He leads us to that which will truly exalt us in joy and peace through pure knowledge and faithfulness to him. He leads us to do good continually.

When we lust, when we set our hearts on sin, and when we pursue happiness and pleasure in rejection of truth and goodness, we are numbered among those who “loveth and maketh a lie.” (Revelation 22:15) Of such the Lord has said that:

“...the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection.” (Doctrine and Covenants 63:17 - 18)

“These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God...” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:103 - 106)

Their suffering comes because their beliefs and actions did not maximize the best outcome and they are unable to be reconciled with reality.

Those who “loveth and maketh a lie” are those who refuse to live by the truth of God and to receive new truth, even corrective truth. These are they who are damned because they cannot be added upon. Their works were not good and now they cannot have goodness added to them. They are limited by their sins, false beliefs, and ignorance.

In our current lustful and fallen state, we cannot receive salvation. We are saved only as fast as we can receive knowledge of God and his laws and live in harmony with his virtue and truth. There is no other way.

Evil and corruption cannot coexist in the presence of God. We cannot dwell in the presence of God if we are evil and corrupt because we are ignorant. Ignorance breeds corruption. Corruption breeds sin. Only those who are without sin, who embrace the light and truth of God, who are faithful in doing good continually, only these can dwell in the presence of God. Only these are they who are saved.

We cannot embrace the light and truth of God when we love darkness and sin rather than goodness and light. The light shines the revelation of truth upon us, revealing our sins, revealing our false beliefs, and showing us how to improve and repent by obtaining and living in accordance with correct knowledge, which is truth. Our natural disposition is to reject that corrective light in favor of sin and darkness because of our fallen natures, which tend to love sin and darkness rather than goodness and light.

“And this is [our] condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:19 - 21)

Who among us desires to have our sins manifest? Who among us wants our false beliefs to be reprov'd and corrected? Almost no one.

As we consider the history of man, every time the Lord has sent prophets to teach, warn, declare repentance, and disseminate greater light and truth, in every instance these prophets have been reviled, rejected, and cast out.

So often we assume that if a great prophet were to come among us, that we would immediately recognize him for what he is, receive his teachings with gladness, and rejoice in the truth that he shares. In almost every case, such an assumption could not be further from the truth.

Man is egocentric. He desires affirmation, ease, pleasure, and fun. The last thing he naturally wants is to be corrected, humiliated, called to repentance, and told he is going to hell if he does not repent. And yet, this is undeniably true of every human who has ever sinned.

If you are not willing to endure and embrace correction, humiliation, and the call to repentance, with perfect faith in Christ, then you cannot be saved in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The quest for truth requires that we receive greater light and truth through every avenue the Lord sends it. Truth can be gleaned from every sinner, every prophet, every encounter, and every experience in life.

When we impose requirements upon God in terms of how and by whom we can receive corrective truth, we limit what God can give and what we can receive, and we are summarily damned.

One of the biggest problems religious people have is that they impose vast restrictions on God in terms of the requirements by which he may convey new truth, to include corrective truth—that the window through which that truth must pass is so impossibly small that he cannot effectively reveal hardly anything at all!

So often, professing Christians will only consider teachings from their recognized church leaders, institutional leaders, bona fide experts, and those that they agree with. This is incredibly prideful and narrow-minded. And it is terminally debilitating.

Even the vilest of sinners can inadvertently convey approximations of truth.

Even Satan mixes truth with error.

Truth can be found everywhere and anywhere—even in hell—especially in hell! Hell is where those go who have been exposed to the full light of truth and are in agony because of it. Hell is a place where truth is eventually reconciled. In this sense, hell is merciful; it is a good thing. Most people must needs pass through hell in order to accept and compensate for justice and truth. What I am saying is nothing new.

We should not limit the ways and means by which God can and will reveal to us new truth, especially corrective truth. If we do, we will assuredly be damned. To be damned is to be stopped in our progression in acquiring new truth.

God is the great revelator of truth. If we push him away, then we cannot progress and we are to that extent damned.

Be not damned.

There is always more truth to learn and to apply in our lives. And this truth can come from any vector, any source, and any aspect of our lives.

All things considered, even false prophets and false messengers often have something in their doctrine that reflects the truth and will benefit us when applied wisely and correctly. False prophets and false messengers are in abundance, but there are also true prophets and true messengers. These are usually found in the most unlikely places and in the most unlikely individuals. Be on the lookout for these.

When a prophet messenger comes among us with a message of warning, crying repentance, advocating faith, and a departure from false beliefs and sin, if we are wise and humble, we will give honest consideration to what they have to say. But this is not what we do. In almost every case, we reject all true messengers, all true prophets, and all warnings that in any way offend us. Of this natural propensity of man, the word of God boldly declares:

24 ...wo unto this people, [that] cast out the prophets, and do mock them, and cast stones at them, and do slay them, and do all manner of iniquity unto them, even as they did of old time.

25 And now when ye talk, ye say: If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets; we would not have stoned them, and cast them out.

26 Behold ye are worse than they; for as the Lord liveth, if a prophet come among you and declareth unto you the word of the Lord, which testifieth of your sins and iniquities, ye are angry with him, and cast him out and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil.

27 But behold, if a man shall come among you and shall say: Do this, and there is no iniquity; do that and ye shall not suffer; yea, he will say: Walk after the pride of your own hearts; yea, walk after the pride of your eyes, and do whatsoever your heart desireth—and if a man shall come among you and say this, ye will receive him, and say that he is a prophet.

28 Yea, ye will lift him up, and ye will give unto him of your substance; ye will give unto him of your gold, and of your silver, and ye will clothe him with costly apparel; and because he speaketh flattering words unto you, and he saith that all is well, then ye will not find fault with him.

29 O ye wicked and ye perverse generation; ye hardened and ye stiffnecked people, how long will ye suppose that the Lord will suffer you? Yea, how long will ye suffer yourselves to be led by foolish and blind guides? Yea, how long will ye choose darkness rather than light?

(Helaman 13:24 - 29)

These scriptures are hardly complimentary, but they are accurate. If we only accept prophets that drip honey from their forked tongues, lulling us into carnal security, then we fully deserve the fruits of our lusts, which are ultimately misery, regret, and pain.

“And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.”
(2 Nephi 28:21)

We would be wise to question the authenticity of any prophet that preaches easy doctrine, affirming doctrine, or doctrine that condones the continuance of just a little sin.

We would be wise to question the authenticity of any prophet that teaches that we should give obedience to their counsels, their precepts, and their policies, over and above what the scriptures may say, or what any may receive by revelation from God. Such as these are expressly anti-Christ.

Would-be prophets who claim to supersede dead prophets, who invalidate the scriptures in favor of their own precepts, and who claim precedence over anyone’s rights or claims of personal revelations—all these are anti-Christ and should be quickly shunned and rejected.

True messengers and true prophets will always teach the hard doctrine. They will teach the need for perfect repentance, complete faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the need to connect with Jesus Christ directly. They will point to Christ and not themselves. They will teach that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father, but by him. They will teach line upon line, and in all things point to that higher-resolution truth that is only in and through Jesus Christ.

Truth deeper and richer than what we have is always difficult. For the carnal-minded, it is always hard to find. It is always punitive. It is not flattering or nice. It always comes with a price and with a responsibility. But it is always worth it. Anyone who says differently is selling something and cannot be trusted.

Be on the lookout for graduated truth that is greater and deeper than what you currently have. This truth will seem to contradict the truth you already think you know. Do not flippantly disregard new ideas because they do not seem to harmonize with what you already understand, or which does not reflect well on you or those you respect and admire. Do not forget that all have sinned, and all fall short of the glory of God.

Paradoxical truth is often the most valuable. And very often you must first believe in order to understand. As we believe when God speaks to us, the Spirit of God enables greater comprehension and understanding.

When the Spirit of God whispers to your mind a view of reality that seems to conflict with your present understanding, your task is then to keep asking questions, keep searching, and keep digging until the entire concept is at last understood and revealed under the full light of day. Invariably, as we do this, we cannot help but confess that the truth was evident all along, but we were blinded by our inequities, and were past seeing. But now, in truth and in righteousness, we see!

“But behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen. They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noonday.” (Doctrine and Covenants 95:5 - 6)

Those who are ordained as teachers and priests have the holy scriptures in their hands. They are held accountable for the truths and the commandments they contain. As are they whom they teach. They are, as it were, exposed to the full light of noonday.

“Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.” (Alma 13:20)

What a glorious thing it is, how the light of truth shines upon all! None are forbidden. All are invited to receive. And where some let slip the treasure from their hands, others will scoop it up again and run with it.

“For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide unto another brought:
For there is nothing lost, that *can’t* be found, if sought.”
(Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, syntax fixed: “*can’t*”)

Upon close inspection, we find that there are levels of truth. There are layers of truth. There is always higher-resolution truth. The truth of God is vast, deep, and intricate beyond the imagination of man. We should never underestimate or undervalue that.

Truth is like the ocean: powerful and beautiful, full of wonder and mystery. We should always respect it, be humbled by it, and never take it for granted. As we search, listen, and hearken, the tides of truth will yield to us the riches of eternity.

But as we pollute our perception of truth, with vanity and lust, then we lose a very great treasure indeed!

High-resolution truth is what we are after.

Knowledge of truth is power.

Our redemption and salvation come by power, even the power of truth.

“...wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men...” (Moroni 10:7)

“For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost...” (1 Nephi 10:19) “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.” (Moroni 10:5)

A fullness of truth is only revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost. This power comes incrementally as we repent and perfect our faith in Jesus Christ. It comes to those who have truly taken upon them the name of Christ by covenant with him. This is how we are to receive a fullness of truth. This is the beginning of the path. Those who follow this straight and narrow way have it in their power to receive eternal life inasmuch as they continue in faith.

The covenant path taught by the true prophets of God consists of complete repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We are to connect with Jesus Christ directly, keep his commandments directly, follow him directly, and become unified with him.

This covenant path does not include following a corporate prophet, being faithful members of a corporate church, or allowing any man or group of men to redirect us from following Jesus Christ. We should only follow prophets and kings that are true, legal representatives of Jesus Christ, who are perfect in Christ, who maintain strict doctrinal integrity, and who faithfully point to Christ in all that they do. Those who teach differently are anti-Christ because they demand obedience to men rather than Christ. Be warned. Following such men, promoting such men, and denying the truth of God that such men reject will not produce the fruits you desire. This will only lead to great sadness and regret.

My message is that all are invited to come unto Christ, to have faith in Christ, to repent, and to receive all that he offers, even a fullness of all truth.

I, myself, am only beginning on this path, but what I have thus far experienced and been taught is delicious to me. I am hungry for more. I make no pretenses. I am but a novice beginner. But I testify that what I have shared and the message that I bare comes from God. It is not from me.

I invite you to inquire of the Lord directly. Search the scriptures. Pray. And receive for yourself directly from him the truth of these things.

Be connected with the true vine, even Jesus Christ. In this, there is life, even life everlasting.

1 I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

(John 15:1 - 11)

Amen.