



Sermon Discussion Questions
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Series: Fake News
Week 5: That's Just Your Interpretation

1. ICE BREAKER: Share a time when you have misinterpreted something someone said, whether you just misheard someone, or misunderstood what they were saying. Or perhaps someone has misinterpreted or misunderstood what you were saying. Example: "Soup or salad?" can be heard as "Super salad?"
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 15:26-16:15:
*"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.
"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I*

am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

3. Talk about the use of the term "Advocate" - if possible, look at other translations of this scripture using a Bible app such as YouVersion, and talk about the different names used to name the Holy Spirit. Why do you think that is?
4. French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) was the founder of the idea of 'deconstruction' when he basically stated "Everything is just an interpretation."

What does he mean by this? What are some implications to this concept in different areas of our lives (especially in regards to our faith journey)?

5. Can you think of a time when your interpretation of something in your faith journey was based on your interpretation, based on your stage of life, experience, or understanding at the time? (Example: As a child or youth, your interpretation was framed in the context of immature understanding). Share if you wish. And share how your interpretation has matured or changed over time.
6. Review John 16:1: "All of this I have told you so you will not fall away."

Jesus is clearly stating the reason he is teaching this truth - so that his disciples (his followers then and now) do not "fall away".

What does Jesus mean when he uses the phrase "fall away"? Why would he think his followers are in danger of falling away?

7. Read John 14:26: *But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.*

How can this be an encouragement to you and to anyone who is searching for Truth in these days of deconstructing faith?

8. Review John 15:26: *When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father - the Spirit of Truth goes out from the Father - he will testify about me.*

What does Jesus mean by that? How does that help us not just understand Truth but also to know it in our hearts?

9. Review John 16:8: *When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.*

How does convicting the sinful world help us know Truth?

10. When examining our belief systems to determine what parts are "interpretation" and what parts are Truth, we can use the following roadmap as a guide.

1. Jesus - the real life events of his life, death, and resurrection.
2. Scripture - the Bible is a unified story pointing to Jesus.
3. Tradition - 2000 years of the Spirit of Truth teaching, testifying, convicting generations of followers of Jesus.
4. Experience - Personal experience along with the experience of Christian community in the present day.
5. Reason - Reason is faith trying to understand itself - rely on the Holy Spirit!

Discuss this roadmap, and give examples if you can.

11. PRACTICE: Throughout the week, consider any areas of interpretation that you may need to measure up to the roadmap above. Ask the Holy Spirit - the Advocate - to help you determine if your interpretation lines up with Jesus' life, with Scripture, with Tradition, Experience and Reason. Share with your small group anything the Spirit of Truth reveals to you.