

SERMON FOR SUN., MAY 16, 2021

(Guest Pastor Fish) **2021 Easter 7B 1 John 5:9-15**

“Fake News or Real News?”

During the 2016 Presidential campaign a popular phrase appeared that has become part of common usage-**fake news**. The idea was that if one could make something seem to be newsworthy even if false, and repeat it often enough on the media and internet, enough people would believe it to make an impact. It took patience and diligence to sort things out. Fake news was about politics. But what happens when fake news is introduced concerning Jesus, and especially our eternal life?

I. It should come as no surprise that Satan is the source of fake news about Jesus.

A. Martin Luther once wrote, “*the devil often suggests a false Christ to me.*”

B. To paraphrase Jesus’ words to some Jews, “*the devil has no truth in him and he is the father of fake news.*”

C. The key, of course, is that if Satan can create doubt about who Jesus is, he can create doubt about our eternal salvation.

II. Fake news has always been around concerning Jesus that continues to this day.

A. Think about the fake news spread about his identity. (not fully divine, not fully human, a divine spirit came upon him after birth, left before death.) A pastor named Matthew Richard recently wrote a book called *Will the real Jesus please stand up?* In it, he identifies 12 false images of Christ which people create to suit their own needs (like the giver of bling, the good teacher or the moral example.) All deny that Jesus is the Son of God/Savior.

B. think about the fake news spread about His resurrection: (the women went to the wrong tomb, disciples stole the body, Jesus was not fully dead, he was taken from the cross alive.)

C. All these testimonies are Satan inspired from the mind of men and they are all **FAKE NEWS!**

D. But Satan can also spread fake news within us. within us. Because we continually sin, that little Satanic voice within us tries to make us feel that somehow we are so bad God will never forgive us. Or that as we compare ourselves to other “Christian people” we are not the Christian we should be and don’t deserve forgiveness and eternal life.

III. But John offers us a word of comfort this morning. Best news-It' real!

A. We have the real word of God, offered by men who saw Jesus, heard Jesus/ words, touched his mail scarred body. In his Gospel John wrote, "*these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and by believing have life in His name.*"

B. But more the true human testimony about Jesus, we have the testimony of God Himself. In the verses just before our text, John writes, *for there are 3 that testify, The Holy Spirit, the water and the blood.* The Holy Spirit is truth and guides us into the truth. The water refers to the Baptism of Jesus which marked Him **as God's beloved Son.** The blood is true evidence of The Father's love for us as Jesus willingly and obediently shed His blood for us on the cross covering our sin and bringing to us the full forgiveness of all of our sins.

C. Which is the greater testimony man's or God's? Which is fake news and which is always the real news? John is quite clear. "*If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater...and this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life and this life is in His Son.*"

D. The fake news about Jesus comes from liars and keeps us in darkness and doomed to eternal death. But we have the real news, the truth inside of us. It was placed there in the water of our baptism, water stained with the blood of Christ given to us through the Word.

E. The Word and Sacrament we receive again this morning assures us we have forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. But it means as we leave this place of grace, We have a mission. To go into a world where fake news is everywhere, where unbelieving professors, cult religions like the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, pop culture icons feel open and free to share their brand of fake news. Peter once said, *Lord to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life.* Having them is not enough. We need now more than ever to share the real news of the Gospel with our family, friends, neighbors. It is a matter of eternal life and death importance.

In the time of Joshua, because parents failed to teach their children, it only took 1 generation to forget about God and how He had blessed them and fall under the fake news of idol worship. What a message we have to share. The good news, the real news is this "**God gave us eternal life and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life.**" Amen.