

“The Truth Shall Make You Free”

By Elder David Pyles

*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you
free. – John 8:31-32*

The above quote is a famous passage but one that makes an unexpected assertion. Most anticipated it would say that the truth will make you wise or that the truth will make you happy, but the actual claim was that the truth shall make you *free*. The implication is that freedom is a derivative of truth, and it is not apt to exist for those who live in a labyrinth of lies. Even if we are privy to the fact that we are surrounded with deceit, this can still leave us in the predicament of not knowing the actual truth, and this can place our freedom at risk.

Anyone who doubts this should consider our recent situation in America. There are credible claims that the recent elections were fraught with corruption, and the credibility of these claims has been furthered by the fact that there has been a widespread effort to silence or deride these claims instead of presenting a fact-based case against them. It is not my intent to either affirm or deny that the elections were fair. The point is that we cannot be acceptably confident either way, and this is precisely wherein the problem lies. Practically all Americans, both liberal and conservative, are resolutely committed to the principle that our leaders should be those who are truly and duly elected by the majority. There is no real issue here whatsoever. The problem is that we can no longer be confident that we are being told the truth about such.

This lack of confidence largely derives from bad experiences in the recent past. While many in the media and in national leadership insist that the elections were honestly done, the same people have abundantly shown themselves to be so politically prejudicial and unprincipled that their testimony has lost credibility with more than half of the country. The people in question are of course capable of telling the truth, but their behavior over recent years has rendered the remainder of us incapable of believing them even if they were to tell it. This is a potentially dangerous predicament that should not exist in our country.

Our present circumstances should teach us to appreciate the words of Paul: “*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another,*” (Eph 4:25). Hence, truthfulness is not only important to us as individuals but also to us as a society. We cannot exist together as a free, prosperous and happy nation without it.

While there are many problems in our country today, most of them are rooted in too much toleration for lies and liars. Americans continue to elect and re-elect public officials who are overtly dishonest and who are oftentimes shameless hypocrites. This disregard for a candidate’s honesty will surely end in tragic results. “*Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint,*” (Prov 25:19). Americans also continue to use and support media sources that have plainly proven to be prejudicial and unprincipled. Indeed, some of these sources have been distorting truth for so long that they now do it with seemingly no compunction or remorse whatsoever and have likely deceived even themselves with their own lies. Paul well described them as, “*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron,*” (1Tim 4:2).

If America is to continue as a free and prosperous country, we must be truthful with each other and stop forbearing and supporting liars. If there were one virtue we could wish for ourselves it should be absolute truthfulness. The reason is that this virtue produces many others. A man cannot be a thief without also being a liar. A man cannot be an adulterer without also being a liar. A man cannot be a dope-pusher without also being a liar. Truthfulness also benefits us as a society. As Jesus said, “*the truth shall make you free,*” which suggests that lies will put us on a path to bondage. We cannot be so tolerant of them going forward. When reporters are found telling lies, we should no longer listen to them. When media platforms are found promoting lies, we should no longer use them. When poll workers are found to be dishonest, we should no longer employ them. When elected officials are found telling lies or being hypocrites, we should no longer elect them. Lies and liars represent a grave danger to us all.