
"Following a Truth, not a Trend"

Sermon Text: Psalm 46 / John 8:31-36
Mariner Sands Chapel

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Today we are talking about this idea of membership. What does it mean to be a member of this faith community here at Mariner Sands? How can we make membership meaningful? Marketing people use membership as a tool to enrich customer experiences, to increase purchasing of products or services by offering selected benefits to a specific group. When the Bible uses the term "members," it usually refers to the context of human anatomy. "A body," as the Apostle Paul describes in Romans chapter 12:4, "is made up of many members. The members do not have the same function, but they are members not only of one body, but individually members to one another. To continue this metaphor, members of the body rely on truth to function. When your back is sore, you have to listen to it and rest. Our hands and our feet have amazing ability to feel textures that help us navigate our way through physical activities. When a nurse in a hospital emergency room tries to calmly explain that you have lost one of your members from an accident, the sudden shock of this truth is life-changing. Losing a family member is another tragic truth that causes long term grief and sadness. And of course, when we announce that we have gained a family member, it is one of the proudest moments in our lives.

So, this topic of membership in our own body of worshippers is important, because we are gladdened to have a new member in the family, and we are devastated by the loss of a member. Later this Spring, we will offer a workshop on the topic of membership, so that we can unpack the meaning of being a vital part of this fellowship. It's going to be known as "the Mariner's Hope." Together, we'll gain a clearer understanding of using our time and talents, of feeling a part of something beautiful and true.

When Jesus was among other locals talking about religion, he heard many ideas and trendy thoughts about what it was like to be a religious person. In every culture we have people who seem to have secrets, tips, tricks, and trends that will give us an edge in making life easier, faster, better, smarter, richer, or more beautiful. Nothing is as beautiful as the Truth. Jesus told the people that they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. Truth is probably the greatest tip we could receive about knowing God and being known by God. Jesus told His disciples that He was the truth. What he told us about knowing God was the true way; not what He *thought* was true. It is the way that corresponds with reality.

In our Psalm today, we read of beautiful descriptions from nature and how these panoramic scenes cause us to pause and reflect on the creativity and complexity of God's creation. What is not so obvious is the point of view behind the scenes in Psalm 46. The title gives us a hint of the lyricists: the sons of Korah. Don't skim over the title. Who was Korah, and why should the sons write song lyrics like this? Well, you would have to look at the book of Numbers to read what happened in their life that was so tragic, so vivid, that the reader of this psalm has a whole new appreciation for God's grace and forgiveness. The sons of Korah were orphans who sang of God's help and strength in times of trouble. The chorus, Be still and know that He is God, is a truth that set them free from the pain of losing all their family members in one day. Truth is something you can sing about. Truth is something that will not change. Truth is what can be believed.