

... and when the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,

what shall we do?

(Quoted from Acts 2:37)

In the year A.D. 30 many Jews and God-fearing Gentiles who had gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Pentecost asked this question after hearing Peter speak to the crowds about Jesus. We also asked ourselves this very same question, as does everyone who thinks more deeply about the sense of life, regardless of whether they are an atheist, a Buddhist or a Catholic.

We have come from a wide range of backgrounds, religious and non-religious, but we have all come to realise that the many different paths available do not lead to one and the same destination. There are so many ways out there to choose from - so many people offering answers; Protestants, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists, ... The question is:

What is the right way? What is truth?

The answer you often hear is, "Everybody has his own truth", or, "No one can really know it". In our opinion, such statements contradict the fact that there is an objective reality. Either the earth is round or it is flat. It cannot be both. The one reality remains absolute and unchanged regardless of the way you look at it. It is the same with religious questions. When it comes down to it, it is not possible for two opposing and contradictory alternatives to exist simultaneously - one for you and one for me. If the reality is that there is a resurrection after death, then there cannot be reincarnation. You cannot have both eternal life after death and the annihilation of the soul. If matter was created by God it cannot have existed from eternity. Or let us consider some other questions to which contradictory answers cannot both be right: Is Jesus God, or is he not? Does God predestine people to condemnation, or does He give them free will? Can a Christian fall away from God, or is he 'once saved, always saved'? Is man sinful by nature, or is he not? Does hell exist, or does it not?

Questions like these ought to inspire everyone who wants to get to know God's nature to form an opinion. Can we remain indifferent when faced with these questions if we are interested in finding out how to live according to God's will?

To find answers to these questions we do not think that we need a new revelation, or some kind of new special method of interpreting the Bible. Nor do we think that we are the source of the truth - we are very aware of our imperfections and humbly accept our limitations - but we believe that truth is accessible, because Jesus revealed it to mankind.

The majority of people hold the opinion that there is no absolute truth. In our society, the view that the truth is relative is the predominating ideology. Many people have become accustomed to this stream of thought and think that one's idea of truth is relative and has no validity for others: "What seems good to me is what is right for me!" However, if everything has the same validity, then in the end nothing matters. The standard according to which good and bad, right and wrong are measured is completely missing. Everyone can find something to suit his own personal taste and needs. People paint their own picture of heaven, choosing the colours from a palette of their own desires and wishes, creating their own religion, which seems to fit well enough for the time being... In fact, religion is widely treated as yet another branch of the arts, like the world of fashion in which people shape trends and trends, in turn, shape people. However, God's way is different...

How does God want me to use my life?

In God's eyes every person who does not seek the truth is enslaved. But Jesus wants to deliver us from slavery - it's up to us to accept his offer.

**So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
(John 8:31-32)**

The truth will make us free – this means that we need to see the truth about ourselves, we need to realise and confess our sinfulness, and accept that we need God's forgiveness through Jesus, as Peter said:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Then He can give us the power to give up our sins and live a holy life, then He can give us the strength to devote our whole life to serve Him. Jesus wants to redeem us, He wants to set us free from selfish desires and sexual sins, from vanity and envy, from the feeling of inferiority and pride, from arrogance and the urge to win the favour of other people.

Jesus also wants to set us free from all kinds of deceptive teachings which lead people to concentrate on themselves even more in the effort to save themselves. But He also wants to set us free from wrong ideas which people call Christianity, where people devote vast amounts of time and energy to the cause of social justice but neglect the spiritual fight against sin.

Jesus wants to free us from teachings which provide an assurance of God's forgiveness but forget that discipleship is all about following Jesus. He wants to liberate us from doctrines which promise God's grace, but renounce obedience as legalistic. For this reason we seek the truth, searching for God's will in both our lives and teaching.

This search for God's will led us to the question:

What should a Christian community be like?

The community of Christians in Jerusalem that formed after the apostles' preaching is described in Acts 2:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart... (Acts 2:42 and 46)

For Christians in that time it was natural to come together for fellowship and to deal with the teaching every day. Their common life bore witness to their great interest in, and love for God and their brothers and sisters. We, too, have this sincere desire to share our lives with our sisters and brothers in faith, to read the Bible together, and to take part in each other's joys, sorrows and spiritual fights. We are very thankful that we can live in a time when good transport and convenient working hours make daily community possible. For us, daily community is an expression of love and a result of the wish to live out what we believe, to devote our time to God and to our brothers and sisters in faith. We use our time for the things that are important for us.

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 4:20-21)

This vibrant, committed fellowship is of great value in helping us to strengthen one another in our struggles and practice the principle expressed in the Bible:

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:13)

We do not want to build superficial relationships or show a good front to one another and by doing so avoid revealing the reality about ourselves. Instead, we confess our sins and weaknesses to one another in order to help one another in the fight for holiness, following the example of Jesus.

...love one another, even as I have loved you... (John 13:34)

This is the kind of love we want to live – not just on Sundays or at celebrations but every day alike; not only with particular friends but with anyone who wants to live in the truth.