

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Searching For The Truth

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Number: 03

Topic: Faith And Truth

Bible Verses: Titus 1; 1,2; Matthew 13: 18-23; Luke 8: 18

Date:

Titus 1:1-2 *Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to build up the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.*

Matthew 13:18-23 18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand, then the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed that was sown beside the road. 20 But the seed sown on stony ground, is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but is short-lived. For when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 But the seed sown in the thorns is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches chokes out the word, and it becomes fruitless. 23 But the seed sown on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty."*

Life-transforming truth is not arrived at just by logically stitching bits of information together. Even the most intelligent philosophers rarely, if ever, arrive at a living faith! Indeed God is discovered, not proven. God is a loving being Who is personally revealed, not the ultimate answer to a set of abstract propositions.

Truth is grasped by faith alone. And truth is held on to, and acted on, and built upon, by faith alone. A calling to the ministry is like that. You know for certain that you are called to serve God. You have solid faith in His Word spoken into your life, indeed spoken into the very fiber of your being, and this certainty keeps you going through even the toughest of times.

When God's Word resonates within you so deeply that it takes hold of you and you have to live it out, then you have the sort of faith that Abraham and the patriarchs had. This is a personal and absolute certainty about the truthfulness of God!

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

This well known verse tells us that faith confidently sees God's Word as substantial, and true, a foundation that can be built on as evidence of things far beyond the material world of the senses. Faith sticks with the truth. Faith hangs on to what God has said, believes it and pushes ahead and goes places and does things that are extraordinary in some way; because they are built firmly upon God's will:

Romans 4:16-22 *...whom he (Abraham) believed, the One who gives life to the dead and calls those things which are not as though they were; 18 who, contrary to hope, on hope believed, so that he should become a father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not weakening in faith, he did not consider his own body, already having been worn out (being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb, 20 he did not waver at the promise of God in unbelief, but was empowered by faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to do. 22 And therefore "it was credited to him as righteousness."*

So we see that faith takes God's truth and believes it, even in the most naturally hopeless of circumstances (such as having a child at one hundred years of age).

Faith has grittiness to it. Faith says "This is my truth that God has shown me, and I am living it out, no matter what". Faith believes the truth that God reveals, and holds on to that truth with a firm grip, despite all of life's circumstances.

Now every preacher I know asks themselves something like "Why does Such-and-So who has been in this church for twenty years and heard all this good teaching never get it?" We wonder at the lack of response of many and the faith of a few!

Good teaching does not automatically produce good results. Moses taught the Israelites in the Wilderness for forty years with signs and wonders and miracles accompanying and yet most of them fell in the wilderness!

1 Corinthians 10:3-5 *They all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. 5 But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.*

Hebrews 4:1-3 *Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that none of you should miss it. 2 For we also have received the good news just as they did; but the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith*

These passages, and the parable of the sower and the four soils (above) and various other bible passages give us a picture of what happens when God's truth encounters differing people, with varying kinds of spiritual natures. Some believe, some do not, and yet others fall away or go astray.

Here is my quick summary of how things work when truth and faith try to connect with a human heart:

Faith - hears God, believes God, holds firmly on to the truth, and acts on it.

Doubt - hears God, initially believes, but then questions God and does not act

Worldliness - continues to believe, but has other priorities and so does nothing

Shallowness - hears God, rejoices, but circumstances come, and it falls away

Unbelief - hears God, flatly refuses to believe His Word, and walks away

Presumption - thinks it hears God, makes something up, and then acts wrongly

Offense - hears God and is outraged by the call to change and stomps off in a huff

Folly - hears what God says, scorns it, and goes off and makes a dumb decision

Rebellion - hears God, then sets itself up in authority and opposes the command

Hardness of heart – stubbornly opposes whatever God says “almost on principle”.

Stupor – is so totally self-centered and self-absorbed that it never hears God at all.

So we see that the exact same knowledge, delivered by the exact same person, can have incredibly different reactions in various human hearts. Thus we clearly have *choices* about what we will do with God’s revelation. Each of these reactions (faith, doubt, unbelief etc.) is a personally chosen reaction to God’s revelation.

There is a moment when we decide and say: “Yes, that makes sense, I see it and I believe it!” or alternately we are offended and say “No! I cannot believe that, and I will not believe it, not now, and not ever!”

Because this is so important Jesus tells us to be careful with how we listen:

Luke 8:18 *Therefore take care how you listen. For whoever has, more will be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him.”*

The choices about which voices we listen to are the MOST important choices that we will ever make! It is these choices that decide both our eternal destiny (Heaven or Hell), our reward in Heaven (if we get there) and even our earthly prosperity:

Matthew 23:37-38 *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! She who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, yet you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate.*

Jerusalem was destroyed because it rejected Jesus and His teachings. This applied to other cities as well (e.g. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum) that did not repent even though they heard His teachings and saw His miracles: .

Matthew 11: 24 *...For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. 24 But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”*

Truth is not neutral. It cuts and divides asunder, and it sets life directions. If you steer towards it you are blessed, but if you steer away from it you are destroyed. And truth is not just received and then stored somewhere in the mind to be regurgitated later on, on some religious test on Judgment Day.

The exam paper is life itself, and your faith in the truth is demonstrated by the friends that you choose, the good or evil works that you do, the actions and reactions of daily living, the decisions that you make and the pathways that you choose in life. Faith holds on to God's truth and applies it diligently in daily living.

Imagine that your life is being lived in front of a one-way mirror called the firmament and that God and the heavenly angels are watching you and grading you on your every action and reaction, on your every thought, and on every link you choose to click on, and on every picture that you choose to view. How are you doing at living out the truth that you already know?

True faith is so totally driven by its grasp of the truth and the importance of the truth that it almost *must* obey! Faith believes the truth so intensely that it has to live the truth out, has to leave Ur or Egypt, and has to believe in Jesus despite the cost! Faith has such intense energy that it in turn generates good works. The works do not save us. The works are just a natural result of saving faith grasping hold of God's truth with such tremendous force and energy!

In the New Testament James says that faith is made manifest, perfected and demonstrated by good works and in 1 John we find that if we say we believe in God, then we must also keep His commandments:

James 2:22 *You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected.*

1 John 2:3-6 *This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," yet doesn't keep His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him: 6 The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked.*

True faith receives the truth and believes the truth, holds on to the truth, and is compelled and driven into action by the truth. Faith also boldly goes forth and does good works that bear fruit, good works based on grasping God's truth. As Paul says "we believe therefore we also speak.." (2 Corinthians 4:13)

Blessings,

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