



The Voice of Truth



November 29, 2009

We Can Understand Truth

By Jimmy Pettigrew

With so much religious division in this world in which we live in today, there are those who are going around saying, "We are divided because truth is unattainable, impossible or beyond our reach. Can we not know truth? Please notice what the Bible teaches on this subject concerning truth.

Look with me in the eighth chapter of the book of **John**; we find Jesus speaking to the multitudes. We read that many of them believed: "*Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (**John 8:31-32**) Notice, here we had a statement from the Christ, the Son of God saying that one can know truth. If we cannot know truth, then Christ lied to us, and then we can't be free. I want you to notice again; when you look at these two passages in John, you notice that their faith had not made them free, nor does faith alone make people free today as some so strive to teach. But I notice that abiding in Jesus' word, knowing the truth and obeying it; these are the nuts and bolts unto eternal life. Friends, how can you abide in something if you don't understand it? How can you abide in something if you don't know it? To "abide in my word," one would have to understand it! Only then could one be a disciple of Christ.

John writes, "*I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth.*" (**1 John 2:21**) What is John saying? John is saying it is not because ye are ignorant of these things that I write to you, but because you know them, and you can by knowing truth, hold up God's word, knowing what it teaches, and say those who teach the doctrines of false teachers, and know that they are liars. You have to know the truth to

be able to do this; to be able to tell someone they have contradicted the truth, that your doctrine is a lie. Why? Because no lie can be of the truth. Now you have to know the truth to know what a lie is. A lie here is any doctrine contrary to that taught by the Christ and the apostles. "*...We know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*" (**1 John 4:6**). We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. But this is impossible some say, because they say we can't know truth. Again are you saying John lied? One must be careful for truth can be distorted (**Romans 1:25**). Jesus said, "*If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself*" (**John 7:17**). How can we do His will if we can't know the truth? How can we know that the teaching is from God or man if we can't know the truth? If we can't know truth, how could we speak the same thing and be perfected joined together in unity (**1 Corinthians 1:10**)?

Paul tells us, "*whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ*" (**Ephesians 3:4**). Paul says to the Ephesians by reading you may understand God's word, and His way of saving people, the mysteries of the Christian religion. "*Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*" (**1 Timothy 2:4**). If we can't know truth, how do we know if we are saved? Why would God give us truth if we could not understand it? "*Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*" (**Ephesians 5:17**) Question: Where can the will of the Lord be found? Nowhere, but in the Bible! We can understand that will, and we must be able to understand the Bible. We can understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it. We can know the teaching of the Scriptures, we can know truth and we can

understand the word of God. No problem with the word of God; the problem is with men! Truth must be known (**John 8:32**); believed (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**); loved (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**); and obeyed (**Galatians 5:7**). Only then can it set one free! ♦

“Thanksgiving” By Jarrod Jacobs

Lord willing, this coming Thursday, we will be celebrating the national holiday of Thanksgiving. Mr. Webster defines “thanksgiving” as follows: “1. the act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgement of benefits or favors, esp. to God. 2. an expression of thanks, esp. to God. 3. a public celebration in acknowledgement of divine favor or kindness. 4. a day set apart for giving thanks to God. 5. (cap.) U.S. see Thanksgiving Day.” Thanksgiving Day: “1. (in the United States) a national holiday for giving thanks to God, now observed on the fourth Thursday of November. 2. (in Canada) a national holiday for giving thanks to God, observed on the second Monday of October.”

Did you notice something consistent with each of the above definitions? Each definition made reference to God! From man’s early history, he has spent time in gratitude to God. Since the time of the pilgrims, there have been days of “thanksgiving” celebrated in this country as well. During Abraham Lincoln’s presidency, a national day of “thanksgiving” was established, and has been celebrated annually in this country ever since.

It is great that we live in a nation that was founded upon the principles of godliness and thanking God for our bounty. However, we must also understand that “thanksgiving” is not simply a one-time-a-year, or one day thing! Thanksgiving to God needs to be a way of life with us. (**I Thess. 5:18**; **Eph. 5:20**; **Ps. 34:1**)! In fact, the word “thanksgiving” is something we find time and again in the Bible. Let us study about gratitude toward God and see how we measure up.

We Need To Give God Thanks For Our Physical Blessings.

In **Acts 17:24-28**, we learn that God created and sustains us. God “made the world and all things therein.” He “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things For in him we live, and move, and have our being.” In reading **Revelation 4:11**, we hear the 24 elders praising God and saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” The word “pleasure” means, “a determination (prop. the thing), i.e. (act.) choice (spec. purpose, decree; abstr. volition) or (pass.) inclination:—desire, will.” (**Strong’s**). In other words, man exists, and we are here at this time, because God **wanted** us! This ought to make us thankful to God!

Once we understand that we can do nothing for (or by) ourselves, we will be thankful to God as well! David said, “I will wash mine hands in innocence: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wonderful works” (**Ps. 26:6-7**). Later, we read, “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High” (**Ps. 92:1**). Are you willing to thank God for physical things and “tell of His wonderful works”? Paul wrote: “Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God” (**II Cor. 9:11-12**).

For what should we be thankful? Let us be found thanking God for our food (**Mk. 8:1-9**; **I Tim. 4:1-5**); our life, strength, and health (**Acts 17:28**); our marriage, if we are married (This is a physical blessing from God, **Matt. 22:30**); and our children (**Ps. 127:3**) just to name a few blessings in this life! Are we thankful to God for these things?

We Need To Give God Thanks For Our Spiritual Blessings.

When reading the Bible, we see that gratitude for spiritual blessings is an overwhelming theme! We need to take note of the gratitude shown by the men of God and make it our own!

David was grateful for such spiritual blessings as: the coming Lord, God's holiness, God Himself, and God's mercy (**Ps. 110:4, 30:4, 12, 106:1; I Chron. 16:4, 7**). The apostle Paul showed gratitude for: God Himself, being a partaker of God's inheritance, the brethren he knew, for God's "unspeakable gift," those who received the truth, and for being put "into the ministry" (**Col. 1:3, 12; Rom. 1:8, 16:1-4; II Cor. 9:15; I Thess. 2:13; I Tim. 1:12**). Jesus thanked God for things on numerous occasions. One such time was when He "gave thanks" in instituting the Lord's Supper, which to us is a spiritual blessing! (**Matt. 26:26-27**). Righteous Anna gave thanks for the spiritual blessing that is Jesus Christ, for He brought salvation to all men (**Lk. 2:36-38**)! Daniel is another example of one who was thankful for spiritual blessings. In **Daniel 2:20-23**, we find him thanking God that he had the ability to discern and explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Brethren, how grateful are we for our spiritual blessings we enjoy in Christ (**Eph. 1:3**)? Truly, they are many!

How May We Express Our Thanksgiving To God?

Some may say: "I am grateful, but I am not sure how I can thank God." Below are just three ways to show our gratitude toward God.

We can express our gratitude to God through word of mouth. David said, "That I may **publish** with the **voice** of thanksgiving, and **tell** of all thy wondrous works" (**Ps. 26:7**). Later, he said, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and **declare** his works with rejoicing" (**Ps. 107:21-22**).

We can also express our gratitude to God through songs. **I Chronicles 16** records a psalm David delivered in gratitude and praise to God for the return of the ark. **Psalm 69:30** says, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." Later, David said, "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (**Ps. 95:2**).

A third way to express our gratitude toward God is through prayer. **Philippians 4:6** teaches the brethren to express their gratitude to God in this way. Jesus showed gratitude to God through prayer (**Matt. 26:26-27; Mk. 8:6; Jn. 11:41-42**). The apostle Paul expressed his gratitude to God in prayer on several occasions as well (**Acts 27:35; Rom. 1:8; II Tim. 1:3; Col. 1:3**).

These expressions of gratitude can be done in **both** public and private settings. The Holy Spirit calls this a "sacrifice of praise" (**Heb. 13:15**). Now that we know how, let us be about showing our gratitude to God daily!

The Results Of Ingratitude

Gratitude toward God is not an option! We are commanded and expected to properly thank God for what He has done and given to us (**I Thess. 5:18; Col. 3:15**). When people have the attitude that gratitude is an option, they soon stop being as thankful to God as they once were. In fact, this has happened in many places, and some seem to think that they are OWED certain things merely because they are alive! **Not So!!!**

What is the result of ingratitude? Some seem to believe there are no consequences to suffer for ingratitude. This is wrong. The results of ingratitude are seen in **Romans 1:18-32**. Why is it that God "gave them" (the Gentiles, JJ) up (over, NAS)" to uncleanness, vile passions, and a reprobate mind? His

reasons are found in **Romans 1:21**: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, **neither were thankful**”!!

To keep God from giving us up, and to stop us from ultimately being the kind of people who do “*not like to retain God in (our) knowledge*”; let us be thankful and praise God for His wonderful works!

Some Questions About Gratitude.

1. “**To whom** are we to be thankful?” We must be thankful to God (**II Cor. 4:15**).
2. “To what **extent** are we to be grateful?” “...**abounding** therein with thanksgiving” (**Col. 2:7**).
3. “What should our **attitude** be toward gratitude?” Our attitude should be one of sacrifice. David said, “*I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD*” (**Ps. 116:17**).
 - The Holy Spirit called it the “*sacrifice of praise*” in **Hebrews 13:15**.
4. “How **widespread** should our gratitude be?” Paul said, “*I exhort therefore, that, ... supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for **all men**; For kings, and for **all** that are in authority*” (**I Tim. 2:1-2**).
 - What does “all” mean?

Conclusion

How grateful are we to God? After considering all the blessings we enjoy in this life, how can we **not** be grateful to God? When we realize God’s blessings come down upon us daily, then we can understand how gratitude is not a one-time occasion, but a life-long practice!! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com* ♦

Getting More Out of the Sermon By Roger Hillis

Experts tell us that we speak at a rate of 125 words per minute. But we can listen to 400 words per minute. It's no wonder the attention often wanders. That means we need to discipline the mind to listen to a lesson without distraction. Here are some suggestions to help you get more out of the sermon.

1. **OPEN MIND**. We need to be in the right frame of mind to listen. Our worship is to be “in spirit and truth” (**John 4:24**). We should approach a sermon with the attitude that we want to learn and profit from it. Attitude makes a big difference.

2. **OPEN BIBLE**. Compare what you hear with God's word (**Acts 17:11**). You need to form personal convictions based on what you read in the Bible. It will stick in your mind longer when you read it for yourself.

3. **TAKE NOTES**. This will be another “visual aid” to help you remember. You can recall more of what you see than what you just hear. Plus, you will have the notes to use for further study.

You CAN get more out of the sermon. But only if you try. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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