

The Old Paths

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“The Word Of The Truth Of The Gospel”

Connie Adams, Louisville, KY

From the place of his imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Colosse, a place where he had not personally preached. These citizens of the Lycos Valley had become citizens of the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). Paul was thankful for their faith. He wrote *“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love which ye have for all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth”* (Col. 1:4-6).

It is interesting that in this passage several divine principles are tied together. They had faith in Christ, love to all the saints, hope of heaven, and had come to know the grace of God. But notice that none of that could be enjoyed apart from *“the word of the truth of the gospel.”* Indeed, *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). There is a *“hearing of faith”* (Gal. 3:2). Later in Colossians 1, Paul spoke again of *“the hope of glory”* but hastened to connect that hope with the message which he preached: *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”* (Col. 1:27-28). You will ob-

serve also that *“the grace of God”* is something which they *“knew... in truth.”*

We are living in an age of subjectivism. Too many are looking within themselves for satisfying answers to the nagging questions of human existence. Forgotten is the precept stated long ago by Jeremiah *“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jer. 10:23). The humanist philosophy is that whatever we choose voluntarily from alternatives, having considered the consequences, is right for us and that we ought to prize that choice and assert it to the point of making it a pattern of conduct. This is what is meant by *“values clarification”* in education today.

Denominationalism has, for many years, placed emphasis on religion that is *“better felt than told.”* Great store has been placed by being satisfied with religious faith and practice, assuming that whatever is sincerely done must be right. Many have relied upon subjective *“feelings”* as the evidence of salvation whether the word of God taught it or not.

Much is said about salvation by grace through faith. That is Bible doctrine and is certainly taught in Eph. 2:8-10. But God’s truth on any subject is the sum total of all he said on the matter. The passage from Colossians 1 shows that there is a *“word of truth”* by which things

may be determined and that word of truth is in the gospel. So then, the final measure of truth in the spiritual realm is the gospel of Christ. Every doctrine and practice must be measured by that standard. The Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into *“all truth”* (Jn. 16:13). If the Lord did not teach it and the Holy Spirit did not move the apostles and prophets to preach it or write it, then it is not part of *“the word of the truth of the gospel.”* And since God proposes to save all men, Jew and Greek alike, by the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), then if it is not in the gospel there is no salvation in it. If it is not a part of salvation then it becomes a source of damnation. That is why we must not go beyond *“what is written”* (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Jn. 9-10).

We all need a warning here. It is not our right to offer pardon to an alien sinner on less terms than God has provided in *“the word of the truth of the gospel.”* Neither is it our right to offer pardon to an erring child of God on less terms than the word of God directs. In either case we have acted presumptuously and have not benefited our hearers in the least. All the fallen trees on the way to the baptistery and suddenly stepping in front of unexpected trucks, or praying soldiers in foxholes, or death bed stories, will not change what the God of all truth has said. I will leave the right of clemency in the hands of him who made us all, but I dare not offer it unless I can put my finger on it in *“the word of the truth of the gospel.”* Paul said the secrets of men will be judged *“according to my gospel”* (Rom. 2:16) and exactly there I propose to leave the matter. I can do no other without intruding into a realm which is not mine. I appeal for others to do likewise.

(Searching The Scriptures, May 1984, Vol. 25 No. 5, p. 3)

Editor's Note:

We thank brother Connie for his good work in preaching the gospel to us and teaching us about the dangers associated with the "house-church" movement. We bid him God-speed in his work of spreading the gospel. Truly, he has helped and equipped us in learning "the word of the truth of the gospel" these last three days.

Brethren, thank you for getting the word out concerning this gospel meeting, for inviting friends and neighbors to come, for your prayers, and encouragement as well.

Why Be A Disciple?

Aric Russell

If we turn to the text of Luke 14:25-33, we see that Jesus has told us the cost of being His disciple. When we break down this section of scripture, we see that being a disciple may cost us some earthly friendships, cost us some time, and even cost us some possessions. We realize that being a disciple is not free. We also realize that being a disciple is not easy. Therefore, folks will ask, why would I want to be a disciple if it is so hard or requires so much of me? Let me tell you why. Put simply, it is because it is worth it!

It is worth it because the reward God gives is greater than any reward we can gain on this earth. Romans 8:16-18 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." What we suffer today, the pain and agony we go through, is not even worthy to

be compared to the reward that will be revealed to us.

It is worth it because it allows us to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:10-12 says, "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. This is a faithful saying: for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us." If we stay faithful through all the suffering, we will reign with Christ. At the same time though, if we deny Him He will deny us. Remember what the latter part of Romans 8:17 says: "if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him." If we stay faithful, our relationship with Christ will never end. We will have an eternal home with Christ. It is worth it because after all is said and done, we will spend eternity in Heaven.

Remember what 2 Timothy 2:11-12 said: "for if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him." In Heaven we will live with God. We will see Him and serve Him face to face. Revelation 21:3-7 says: "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."

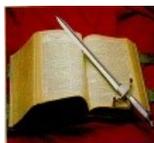
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.' He who overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be My son." How great it will be to live in Heaven for all eternity.

We as Christians will indeed be challenged along the way. However, we must remember to stay faithful to God through all things in order to gain the crown of life. Being a disciple of Christ will cost us along the way, but we cannot let things of this world cost us our place in Heaven. It is worth it to be a disciple.

Dedicated To Certain Church Members Everywhere:

"Now I set me down to sleep; The sermon's long, the subject deep. If he should quit before I wake, Somebody give me a little shake."

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