

A Discussion on the word **TRUTH**

Let's begin our study with John 18:36. Here in this verse, we find Jesus and Pilate talking about the coming Kingdom of God. Jesus is saying to Pilate, ³⁶*My kingdom is not of this world. If it was of this world, then would my servants fight so that I would not be delivered to the Jews? But now my Kingdom is not from hence.* In verse 37, Pilate responds to these words of Jesus by saying: ³⁷*Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king, and to this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world that I should bear witness unto the **TRUTH**. Everyone that is of the TRUTH heareth my voice.* ³⁸*Pilate then said to Jesus, What is **TRUTH**?*

Notice what Jesus said that caused Pilate to ask this very important question. Jesus had just said to Pilate, ³⁷*Everyone that is of the **TRUTH** heareth my voice.* We must notice the effect that this statement had upon the heart of Pilate. It moved him to the point that Pilate ³⁸*went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.* Please let us not miss the kind of heart that Pilate had. If we miss this, we will miss one of the most important statements that we will ever read concerning the kind of heart that each one of us should have.

Now let's notice what this man's heart caused him to do. 1) It caused him to see the importance of what **TRUTH** has to do with our eternal destination. 2) His heart cried out to himself, "I must find out more about what **TRUTH** is, so I can secure my own salvation. 3) He then turns to Jesus and says "Tell me more about what is TRUTH." It seems to me that the statement that Jesus made to Pilate caused him to believe that Jesus was not just a mere man, but He was actually the Son of God. The reason I believe this is because of what Pilate said. He said, ⁴*I find no fault in this man.* In John 19:6 Pilate again said to the Jews, ⁶*I find no fault in this man.* We also can read about the faith that Pilate had in Jesus in John 19:12 where it says that Pilate went forth trying to find some way to deliver Jesus from the hands of the Jews. Then we can read in John 19:19 where Pilate had these words written on the cross: ¹⁹*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.* The chief priests then went to Pilate and requested that this statement be removed from the cross, and Pilate said to them, ²²*What I have written, I have written.* And he refused to remove it.

If we want to make our calling and election sure, we too must have a heart like Pilate so it will cry out to each of us, what is TRUTH? We must desire to know

the **TRUTH** of God's word more than anything in this world. Question: What will happen to us if we don't? We can read the answer to that question right from the mouth of God. Let us read it together. It is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, *10And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the **TRUTH**, that they might be saved.* Question: Are we listening to what God is saying? *11And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: 12That they all might be damned who believed not the **TRUTH**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* Question: Are we still hearing these words of God, or have we let the devil say to our hearts, "Just take these words with a grain of salt," so we immediately forget them? Now this is the reason that I said earlier in this lesson that we all must have a heart like Pilate so our hearts will cry out, "I want to know more about what is **TRUTH**." Let's not water down what we have just read in verse 10 where God said if our hearts don't have a love for the **TRUTH** we will be damned. Question: When was the last time that we heard these three verses shared with us from the pulpit or in the classroom? And still worse than that, how long has it been since we read it for ourselves? If we are not a regular Bible reader, we could easily miss Heaven because we do not have a love for the **TRUTH**.

I have a deep feeling in my heart to ask every one of us this question – does verse 11 put any fear of punishment in our hearts if we don't have this love for the **TRUTH** that God is talking about here when he says he will send strong delusions into our hearts that will cause us to believe a lie and be damned. I do not know of anyplace in the New Testament where we can read any words from God that have any stronger meaning than these.

If we will read these verses with an open mind, we will know without a shadow of a doubt just how serious God is about obeying the **TRUTH** of His word. I have been accused many times about my teachings with statements that I am too opinionated, that I leave no room for leaning to the left or the right, that it is just my own interpretation of the scriptures, that I am a troublemaker, and on and on I could go. After reading these verses from the word of God, wouldn't you have to say that I am not even close to speaking as plainly as God and His apostles speak? We should say, "Thank you" to all preachers and teachers who share with us the **TRUTH** of God's word and who encourage us to read and study our Bibles daily so we can know what is **TRUTH**. The Holy Spirit tells us in Galatians 4:16 that we will make enemies when we teach the **TRUTH**. So it is nothing new when we make enemies teaching the **TRUTH**. Jesus was crucified for it, the apostles were killed for it, the early Christians were burned at the stake for it, and many were fed

to lions as entertainment for others to see. There is no doubt about it, if we don't put the love of the **TRUTH** as our number one priority in life, God said he would pour out His wrath upon us.

If these words of God don't move us to a great motivation for the love of the **TRUTH**, there is nothing else left that we can appeal to that will change what God has said, because He cannot lie. Hebrews 6:18, Titus 1:2, Romans 3:4.

John 8:32, Jesus says, *³²You shall know the **TRUTH** and the **TRUTH** shall set you free.* In verse 31 of John 8, Jesus said to the Jews, *³¹If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed.* Verse 33 is a very important verse to show us that when we do not have a love for the **TRUTH**, we can sincerely believe that we are in a right relationship with God and be completely mistaken. Question: How can we know that? Just by reading verse 33. *³³The Jews answered Jesus, We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?* We must give close attention to what Jesus then said to these Jews, and we will have a better understanding of just how important **TRUTH** should be to each one of us. Jesus' answer to them is found in verse 37, *³⁷I know that ye are Abraham's seed; BUT ye seek to kill me, because... (Are we now ready to learn why these Jews were in this lost condition?)...my word hath no place in you.* *⁴⁰But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the **TRUTH**, which I have heard of God."*

Now let us notice some things from which the **TRUTH** will set us free: 1) **TRUTH** will set us free from a false security of belief that we are in a right relationship with God. We only need to look at the condition of these Jews to see that. 2) The **TRUTH** will deliver us from the law of sin and death. Let's read Romans 8:2, *²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* 3) The **TRUTH** will set us free from "sin's power over the flesh." Romans 8:5 says, *⁵For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* To help shed a little light on this verse, we need to remember what the Jews said to Jesus in John 8:33. They said, *³³We are the seed of Abraham.* This means that they are appealing to their fleshly birth for a right relationship with God. In the verse that we have just read in Romans 8:5, the apostle Paul says that we must live a spirit-filled life. Jesus says the same thing in John 3:5. 4) Something else from which the **TRUTH** will set us free is false doctrine. We can read about this in Galatians 1:6-9. The apostle Paul uses some very strong words to those who have turned from the **TRUTH** of the gospel. Here is what Paul says to those who had turned

from the **TRUTH**, “There is not another gospel.” This is the same as saying there is not another TRUTH. The only **TRUTH** there is, Paul says, is the **TRUTH** that I have preached unto you. We must hear what Paul has to say in verses 8 and 9 to those who preached and taught something that was not TRUTH. He said, “Let them be accursed from God.” These words of Paul should cause every one of us to see just how serious a matter it is when we do not practice **TRUTH**.

We read in John 4:23, 24 where Jesus is talking to a woman from Samaria. He said, *23But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in TRUTH: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in TRUTH.* I hope we are not missing just how important **TRUTH** is to God. It seems sometimes that we just love to deceive our own selves. We need to listen carefully to what the Proverb writer says in Proverbs 21:2, *2Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts.* Now let’s read Proverbs 14:12, *12There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* **Question:** Shouldn’t these verses teach every one of us that regardless of how sincere we are in our hearts, it is not a safe guide by which to live our lives? As these verses of scripture are saying to us, we could be sincerely wrong and our souls will hang in the balance. We must not forget what Jesus says in John 12:48, *48He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.* It seems that the most important question that we could ask ourselves right now is do we really believe these verses that we have just read? Jesus gives us some very important words in Luke 8:12 that we must give our attention to concerning hearing the word of God with our ears and not letting His words get into our hearts. Here is what he has to say, *11The seed is the word of God. 12Those by the wayside are they that hear* (Notice what happens when we just hear with our ears); *then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.* I hope we can all begin to see just how much God wants us to be saved so we can be one of His children. Praise the Lord!

Question: What does **TRUTH** really mean to me? What does **TRUTH** really mean to you? Another question we need to ask ourselves – Is our love for the **TRUTH** strong enough to move us to boldly proclaim it every time we have the opportunity, or do we sit silently, afraid we will offend someone? The only way that I know of to get the right answers to our questions is to go to the Bible and try to find them. We read in Proverbs 28:1, *1The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.* Can we find an example in the Bible of such a

person? We can read about this man in many verses in the Bible.

In Acts 9:23, this bold man of God was let down by a wall in the city in a basket by the disciples of Christ to keep the Jews from killing him. We read in Acts 9:27 where this man preached boldly in Damascus. In verse 29 we read where he preached boldly to the Grecians. In Acts 19:8 this same man preached boldly in the Jewish synagogues.

Boldly means to preach or teach the **TRUTH** in the face of a severe persecution. In 2 Corinthians 11:21-28 we can read about how severe this man's persecutions were for being bold. *23In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* On and on we could go giving examples of the severe punishment that this man received from the hands of religious people for being bold in preaching and teaching the words of **TRUTH**. This man's name was the great apostle Paul.

Question: How did Paul get all of this boldness? We can find our answer in Ephesians 6:18-19 where Paul writes, *18Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.*" Question: Where did Paul say that all this boldness came from? Answer: From a very diligent prayer life, asking God to give him the strength that was needed to teach the gospel with boldness.

Let's read about two more men who spoke the words of **TRUTH** with boldness. We can read about them in the 4th chapter of Acts. We learn that these two men were named Peter and John, and they preached the words of God with boldness, Acts 4:13. They were threatened by the high priest not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. These men needed more boldness to continue preaching the **TRUTH** of the gospel. Now let's read in verse 29 how they obtained more boldness. They prayed to God and said, *29And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may*

Speak thy word.

Doesn't this give us the answer to our question of where did they get all of this boldness? There is a trend in the church today that concerns me very much, and that is our lack of love for the **TRUTH**, and our lack of boldness to preach and teach it. Here are some facts that should get our attention. In the 1960's and the 1970's, the church of Christ was the fastest growing church in America. Question: What was the reason for this? My wife and I were very active in the church during those years, so we know exactly how that was accomplished. It was accomplished by doing the same things that the first century church did when the church that Jesus built had its greatest growth: 1) Almost all Christians had a great love for the **TRUTH**, and 2) They went everywhere preaching and teaching the **TRUTH** in all boldness. (Acts 8:4.)

Fact: During the 60's and 70's, there was no effort being put forth to "unify" the Lord's church with the denominational churches. Most all members believed the **TRUTH** of God's word when it says in Ephesians 4:4 that there is only one body. Many other verses say the same thing.

Fact: In the last 30 years, the church of Christ has had very little growth, if any. Question: What has caused this? Fact: A lot of us have lost that burning desire to learn what is **TRUTH** and then most of us have lost our boldness to preach and teach the importance that God places upon **TRUTH**.

Fact: Today there are many churches of Christ who have a strong movement going on trying to unify the church that Jesus built with the churches that man has built. To me, this is in direct contradiction to what God says in Romans 3:4, *Let God be true, but every man a liar*. Question: Where can we find a scripture in the Bible that says we are to try to "unify" all churches with their many different doctrines? Have we forgotten what God says to us in Revelation 22:18-19 about adding to or taking away from His words? He says if we do this, our names will be removed from the Book of Life. I believe that a wayfaring man can figure out that no one can unify all churches that are in the world today without adding to or taking away from the **TRUTH** of God's word.

If anyone does not believe in these facts that have been presented so far in this lesson, just spend a few moments remembering the last time that we heard these verses that we have read from the word of God being presented to us from the pulpit or in the classrooms, along with all the severe punishment that God says He

will inflict upon us if we try to water down the word of **TRUTH**. Speaking for myself, I cannot remember the last time that I have heard a lesson on the importance of being a lover of the **TRUTH** to the point that we will preach and teach in the face of severe persecution.

But to the contrary, I have heard many lessons taught that we must not offend our religious neighbors because we want to “unify” with them. I would like to give an example of what will have to take place for this to happen. The other churches will have to give up on their view that baptism is not essential unto salvation, or we will have to give up our view that baptism is essential for salvation. We all know that this can never be accomplished. This is just one example that we differ on in doctrine. Now multiply this by at least 25 times so we can cover all of the other doctrines that we differ on. We can easily see that unification between the church and the denominational churches will never happen. It is a total impossibility. This will lead to all kinds of confusion in the body of Christ and could cause many members of the church to be lost by exposing them to all of these false doctrines. It will lead to a lot of members saying the same thing that Pilate said to Jesus in John 18:38, ³⁸*What is **TRUTH**?*

I believe it is time for us all to read Ezekiel the 34th chapter with an open mind. Here in these verses, God speaks to Ezekiel and tells him to warn the shepards about the dangers in scattering the sheep. I pray every day for God to give to our leaders the wisdom to lead and guide us in such a way that there will never be any division among us, that we will be joined together in a strong love for the **TRUTH** and that they will never become ashamed to teach us the **TRUTH** of God’s word.

The word “unify” has become a very familiar word in many churches of Christ today. Question: We need to take the time to look up the meaning of this word before we start using it? In the New World Dictionary, here is the meaning of this word unify: 1) to combine into one, 2) become or make united, 3) to consolidate.

Let’s all read what the apostle Paul says in Romans 16:16-17, ¹⁶*Salute one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.* ¹⁷*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* Question: Please let’s pay close attention to what Paul says in verse 16. He gives us the name of the church that was in existence at that time. It was the church of Christ. Now if we want to be on the Lord’s side, Paul says for us to mark them that have caused division in the churches of Christ. Notice what else he says. We who are in the Lord’s church are

to avoid those who have caused all of this division. Would someone explain how we can harmonize these two words – avoid and unify. They are complete opposites. Anyone can understand that if they are **TRUTH** seekers. Remember what God told us back in Proverbs, that a man's way is right in his own eyes. Notice he did not say in God's eyes.

There are so many scriptures that we can read that condemn anybody who teaches any doctrine that the word of God does not teach. God could not make it any plainer than what he says in 2 John 1:9-11. Let's read it together. *9Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.* I have written word for word what God has said in these three verses, so no one can truthfully say that this is just my interpretation, because when we write word for word what God has said, that is God's interpretation. If we want to read some more verses on this very important subject, here are a few more: I Timothy 1:10, I Timothy 4:16, 1Timothy 1:3, 2 Timothy 4:2-4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 1:9, Titus 2:1, Titus 2:10, Hebrews 13:9, Matthew 15:9, Matthew 15:13, Galatians 1:6.

Question: How can anyone read all of these scriptures and then come to the conclusion that the church that Jesus built and purchased with His own blood can fellowship other churches with all of their many strange doctrines? We have just read where the apostle John wrote that if we do, we do not have God. If we do not believe this, then we are denying that John was an inspired apostle.

Question: How much of our time have we spent in trying to understand the importance that God has placed upon us knowing the **TRUTH** and also the importance that God places on us (as His children) to boldly proclaim it to others? We need to write this number of hours down on a piece of paper. If we do this, then we will have a true answer to our question on how important TRUTH is to us. God knows exactly to the minute how much time we have spent in His word studying on this subject.

Question: How far are we going to go with this unifying? There are some who teach that Jesus was not the son of God, that He was just a good man who lived on this earth. Are we going to extend the right hand of fellowship to them? How about the church that believes we should be worshipping on Saturday? Are we

going to fellowship them? How about the church that says their church is the mother of all churches? Can we extend our right hand of fellowship to them? How about the church that teaches that our Bible is not relevant for the people of today and that we must use their Bible if we want to please God? Can we fellowship these people?

If we cannot fellowship certain churches, then that means we will have to draw a line on fellowshiping with these churches and then put the names of the churches that we can fellowship with on the other side of the line. Can we not see that unifying the religious world will not work? It will just lead to more divisions, confusion, and hard feelings.

There is a way to put an end to all of this unifying effort. All we have to do is go to the Bible and find out what is TRUTH. That is very easy to do. And then through prayer ask God to give us the boldness to proclaim it. We read in I Corinthians 3:21, *21Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.* Question: What does the word therefore mean? It means because of what I have already said. What had Paul already said? If we will read I Corinthians chapter 1 through 3:21, we will know exactly what he said and why he said it. Please read these three chapters with an open mind putting forth a dedicated effort to understand exactly what Paul wants us to learn from these verses. In the first ten verses of I Corinthians, Paul brings up the name of Jesus Christ ten times. There is a purpose for this or the Holy Spirit would not have had Paul do it. Let's not miss the purpose of this. Paul is very disturbed about what is going on in the Lord's church in Corinth. In verse 12, we read why Paul is so concerned and why he uses Jesus Christ's name ten times in the first ten verses. Here we have the first example of denominationalism in the church.

The word denomination in the New World Dictionary means 1) units in a system having a specific name or value, 2) a particular religious sect or body. Denominationalism means 1) divisions into denominations. This is exactly what had begun happening in the church in Corinth. Now let's read it together in I Corinthians 1:12, *12Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.* So here is the problem in the church at Corinth. We have four different units in just one system. That is the meaning of denominationalism. Question: Does the inspired apostle Paul tell them to unify? No, he does not. Then what does he say? Notice the first thing that he does. He asks them a very important question: *13Is Christ divided?* Every obedient believer would answer this question by saying, "NO," because Paul has just told them in

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verse 10 to let there be no divisions among them and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Question: Is there any unifying suggested here in terms of just accepting everyone for what they think and say? Absolutely not. What else does the apostle do? He asks another question trying to get them to understand what a terrible thing they have done to Jesus and His church just by answering these questions. Here is the next question: ¹³*Was Paul crucified for you?* Every obedient believer knows that Paul was not crucified for them. Why then did Paul ask this question? Because he wants them to understand what a terrible thing they were doing to Jesus and His church by their own answers to these questions. Question: Does Paul have anything else to say? Yes, he does. He again asks them another question: ¹³*Were you baptized in the name of Paul?* Every obedient believer knows that they were not baptized in the name of Paul. Can we not see what Paul's purpose was in asking all of these questions and why he uses the name of Jesus ten times in the first ten verses of chapter 1 and points out to them in each of these verses some of the good things that Jesus had done for them that they may be in God's family and enjoy the salvation of their souls. He wants them to fully understand that man had nothing to do with this great relationship that they now had with God. Their salvation had nothing to do with any thing that man had done. It had everything to do with what Jesus had done. Doesn't this help us to see why Paul would say to them in 1 Corinthians 3:21, ²¹*Therefore, let not man glory in man*. This verse is really going to help them to make the right decision about whose name they were going to wear. Should it be Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or would it be Christ? As far as we know from the scriptures, they now know exactly what name to wear, and that name was Jesus Christ. It was not the names of men, because the names of men bring no glory to God.

Question: Why have the members allowed this teaching to become so popular? The answer is very simple. It happens when the church hears nothing from the pulpit and nothing from the classroom teaching on the seriousness that God places on not seeking the **TRUTH** of His word above everything else in this world. Instead they hear many lessons on the importance of "unifying" with other churches and do not search the scriptures daily to see if what they are taught is true.

Fact: Some churches that are teaching the importance of "unifying" and fellowshiping with denominational churches refuse to let some men teach in the adult classes who have a reputation of being too bold in their teaching on the importance that God places on **TRUTH**. Thirty or forty years ago it was taught in

some Christian workshops and lectureships that every time a teacher stood before his class, if he did not encourage his class to study the scriptures daily, he had failed as a teacher. Think about it. There is such a thing as being brainwashed so slowly that we never really know or care very much about what is happening in our hearts.

II Timothy 2:15 says we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God. Question: How do we stand before God if we don't study the scriptures? We probably do not stand approved before God since we don't even know what is **TRUTH**. I would like to encourage you to take the time to read these scriptures on this most important subject. Matthew 22:16, Mark 12:14, John 1:11-14, John 8:42-47, John 14:6, John 17:17-19, Romans 1:18-25, Romans 2:2,8-11, Romans 9:1, I Corinthians 13:6, II Corinthians 2:15-18, II Corinthians 4:2-6, Galatians 2:5, Galatians 3:1-3, Galatians 4:16, Ephesians 4:25, Ephesians 6:14, II Thessalonians 1:3-9, II Thessalonias 2:1-17, I Timothy 3:15, I Timothy 4:1-3, I Timothy 6:1-5, II Timothy 2:15-18, II Timothy 3:1-17, II Timothy 4:1-4, Titus 1:1-16, I Peter 1:22-23, I John 3:18, I John 5:20, 2 John 1-11, 3 John 1-12.

This lesson has been written with the number one purpose being to encourage every member of the church to conduct ourselves in such a manner that will promote unity within the true body of Christ and to become lovers of the **TRUTH** and then to be bold enough to proclaim it every time we have an opportunity. It has also been written to encourage every member to give every effort to keep the Lord's church pure just like the apostles did and not to let false doctrines creep into the church for which Jesus shed His own blood.

In closing, I want to add this thought to the facts that have been presented in this lesson. The apostle Paul would have a very difficult time in getting an opportunity to preach or teach in the churches that are pushing for "unifying" the church of Christ with all other religious groups. Would you agree?

In Christian love,

Herb Trout
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