

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“PREACH THE WORD”

By Corey Barnette

As difficult as it might be to admit, we now live in a time period when many people do not want the truth. To understand what I mean by that, we need to make sure that we correctly identify the truth. Divine defining is far better than earthly endeavors when it comes to such. Jesus said, **“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”** (Jn. 17:17). The one thing that is the purest **“truth”** in this world is the Word of God. We should also establish that when it comes to God’s Word, It is absolute truth. There is no room for subjectivity when discussing the Bible. Whether we believe the Word of God or not does not change that it is true.

One other point of importance is that contrary to what some advocate, we can know the truth. Again, letting God state such is far more convincing than any claim of man. The Lord told some first century Jews, **“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (Jn. 8:32). Their reaction was defiant. In response, Jesus told them why they were not made free. **“I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you”** (Jn. 8:37). Remember, Jesus said that it is the truth that makes men free. The truth and the Word are synonymous. Because of their rejection of the Word, the Jews remained in bondage to sin. This truth was further shown when Jesus spoke, **“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not”** (Jn. 8:43-45).

With all of that being established, how important is that we have individuals who preach the truth, the Word? Now, as we began this article, let us recall that many today do not want the truth. Instead, they would rather hear falsehoods that make them feel good, or they would rather certain parts of the truth be left out because of fear that some might be offended by the proclamation of such. It is this type of preaching that has caused much damage to the church of Christ. Choosing to refuse to preach the Word does not help the listeners. Instead, it simply deceives those who hear it. It allows the hearers to believe that they are in a right relationship with God, when truthfully they are not in fellowship with God. John wrote, **“Whosoever 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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”** (2 Jn. 1:9-11).

With so many people against the truth, it can become extremely tempting to compromise and fail to preach the totality of God’s Word. This is not a twenty-first century phenomenon. While writing to the church in Ephesus, Paul was a prisoner for being a faithful Christian and preacher of the Word. Even that great soldier of the cross understood the possibility of giving into the temptation to hold back certain parts of truth. He requested that the Christians there do certain things. Part of his request was that they would be **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”** (Eph. 6:18-20). With such desire, it should not surprise us to find that while speaking to the elders at Ephesus, Paul told them, **“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”** (Acts 20:27). Paul did not hold back any part of the Word!

Paul’s understanding of the power and necessity of God’s Word was so strong. In demonstration of such, before he died, Paul charged Timothy to **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”** (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul knew that **“...the time will come when**

they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Can you just imagine what Paul would think of the lack of preaching of the truth today?

Let me start to bring this article to a close by stating that if you have a preacher that is courageous enough to preach the Word amidst the onslaught of efforts to deter him, then be extremely thankful for him. Encourage him by letting him know that his labor is appreciated and his commitment is noble. It is my hope that we will continue to have preachers that will **“preach the Word”!** ■

Why Will So Many Be Confused On The Judgment Day?

By John C. Robertson

The coming of Christ and day of judgment is at an unknown time in the future (Matt. 24:36 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The Lord will use his word to judge and determine where one spends eternity (Jn. 12:48). Some will hear Jesus say, **“Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”** (Matt. 25:34). Others will hear, **“Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels”** (Matt. 25:41). The cursed will question the Lord’s decision because they did not spend their lives learning his expectations (Matt. 25:44-46).

Why are the cursed so confused? They had heard the word of God, just as others, yet faith did not develop in their minds (Heb. 4:2). Jesus explains that some **“hear and shall in no wise understand and see yet shall not perceive”** (Matt. 13:14). The god of this world, Satan, has blinded their eyes and shut their ears (see 2 Cor. 4:4). In layman’s terms, you cannot know what you do not read or investigate.

While most people will research, study, perfect, and treat with great respect their occupations they consider the eternal word of God as unworthy of such efforts. The world can quote lines of movies, yet they do not know the word of God. The consequences of neglecting the word of God are astronomical. It results in confusion, misunderstanding, and ignorance (1 Cor. 3:1-7). Such a state of mind is in no condition to make decisions on matters of faith and the eternal soul.

No business owner would permit one that has little knowledge of his business make decisions that impact the company. Those that put in the work to know their field of study are the ones entrusted with responsibility (Prov. 6:6-11). Likewise, those that do not spend their time gathering facts from the testimony of truth have no place in God’s kingdom (Heb. 11:1ff).

The world ignorant of truth hears the word of God and puts their own spin on it. The Bible tells us that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). The world hears and believes that baptism is not necessary for salvation. The Bible tells us that we are under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), law of faith (Rom. 3:27), perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25), or the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). The world hears and believes that we are not under law but grace as they ignorantly quote Galatians 2:16. The Bible tells us that Christ will come a second time to judge the world and all things of this earth will then be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:8-11). The world, however, hears and believes that Christ is coming again to this earth to establish his thousand-year reign. The Bible teaches that there is one church, yet the world believes we may worship at the denominational church of your choice (Eph. 4:1-4). The Bible teaches that sin separates one from God, yet the world hears once saved always saved (Isa. 59:1-2 and Gal. 5:1-4).

All this confusion is because of one’s unwillingness to spend time in Bible study to figure out matters of their eternal soul. In a state of ignorance, the devil makes his mold and cast his form of idolatry as a metal worker pours liquid metal into a cast. Within the mind of the erring a hardened image of Christianity forms that is foreign to the Bible (1 Jn. 5:21). The calf jumps out and no one knows where it came from (Ex. 32:24). ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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