

Knowledge without Truth

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2 Timothy 3:1-8

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”

First of all let me say that a good Captain prepares his soldiers for war by exposing them to the harsh realities to come, holding nothing back, subjecting them to the relentless challenges of weariness, fatigue, hunger, thirst, trauma, and the depravation that is consistent with wartime operations. History has proven that the soldier best equipped for battle is the one that has endured the most rigorous training.

On the battlefield the first to become casualties are those who have been at “ease” in training. These are they which have the glossy boots, and the polished rifles, but have neglected the disciplines of hard training, and subjection to the harsh environment of war-time realism. These have found an outlet to escape the difficulties of real-time training to engage in more comfortable activities. Our national cemeteries are filled with these kinds of men.

You may ask within your own heart; “why must these messages be so challenging each week? Why such strong words and convicting themes?” Beloved we must realize that the Holy Ghost is preparing a people; a bride for a Groom. The bride of Jesus Christ is a victorious bride that has overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of her testimony. Without the equipping of the Lord we cannot expect to overcome in the strife. Beloved, we are being prepared by the very Word of God for the cruel realities of the warfare we face as His beloved.

Our comfort and ease is to our own peril. If we are to overcome, we must be disciplined to submit ourselves to the providential workings of Grace as well as to the faithful declarations of uncompromised Truth that we might be good soldiers in the Lord’s army.

Here is the text that we have before us we find a stunning declaration; “*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.*” The environment of truth and the attainment of truth are two separate realities. Here we find a person being subjected to truth, finding the environment of truth (or where truth is proclaimed), without coming to the knowledge of the truth.

In fact, we see in this passage that there is a possibility to learn in the environment of truth and yet never come to the knowledge of the truth. Before I go any further with this we must understand that the knowledge of truth being spoken of here is the attainment of truth as a living principal of life not only to be practiced but divinely imputed deep into the heart.

Jesus said: “*and ye shall know the truth...*” This is not speaking of an abstract principle without – but an indwelling and concrete principle that has been imputed and awakened by the grace of God.

This is not speaking of the mental assent to the logic of a governing principle of truth, or even the agreement that this principle of truth is precise and accurate. There are so many people who will agree that something is accurate without conforming to its truth. The knowledge of the truth is beyond the mere acknowledgment of the accuracy of a certain thing; it is the indwelling principle within the heart that bears witness to the truth as it is revealed by the Spirit of Truth.

I hope I am not mudding up this topic but clarifying and differentiating between learning about truth and coming to the knowledge of truth. It is my great concern that we in the Christian church come weekly into the environment of truth and learn good lessons about truth, hearing powerful dissertations and admonitions concerning truth, and even learning with great learning in regards to truth without coming to the knowledge of the truth.

The principle of truth without the practice of truth is an empty religious tomb; it is a religion without power. The practice of truth is the natural response of the indwelling knowledge of the truth. Yet, before the knowledge of the truth can indwell our hearts we must submit ourselves to a divinely wrought gift.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Here we find the knowledge of the truth awaiting the repentant heart. It is not difficult to see that the knowledge of the truth is given in response to the repentant soul. This addresses one of the greatest concerns of my heart for Christ’s church – the lack of abiding and practicing truth.

We have become a poised church; too poised to stoop low in contrition and repentance. We have become masters at positioning ourselves to submit to the hearing of truth and never becoming any better because of it. With great pride we sit and listen to the faithful declaration of truth and assent that it is true and good. Yet, soon after we remove ourselves from this environment we find that we are lacking in the truth we assented to being in practice in our daily lives. Hence, ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

It is evident that something is missing in our Christian experience. The problem is that we have become inoculated against the gospel of Jesus Christ in many ways. I have met and known people that take pride in their ability to sit under anointed preaching and boast as to the truth of what they heard but they are none the better because of it. They still are obstinate, rebellious, and despisers of truth in their actions.

Beloved the missing ingredient that opens our heart to the indwelling knowledge of the truth is the repentant heart and life. What is lacked is the repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth – that they might be freed from the snare of the devil.

Why is it that we can hear anointed and Spirit led messages and continue in a lifestyle that is yet held in the chains of bondage and corruption? We have acclimated ourselves to learning truth without responding to truth in repentance. It is not the exposure or illumination of your sins that brings deliverance from them. It is your brokenness over them that moves your heart to call to our Lord for repentance – that we might be delivered from the snare of the adversary; *“if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”*

The truth that is being proclaimed is purposed to illuminate the lies deeply embedded in the human heart – and as the truth is powerfully illuminating these inward maladies we have the decision to continue in our ways – or cry out to God for repentance and change. More times than not we are awakened by the grace of God unto truth but soon retract into the lifestyle of selfishness and sin. Why is this?

The opportunity to repent is neglected, and repentance is the corridor down which the knowledge of the truth travels. Last week a powerful and God ordained message was delivered – and many hearts were convinced of sin. Yet, were we broken by this illumination of our hearts bondages and lies? Did we repent by God’s grace, forsaking our former corruptions and illicit sin or are we yet in chains this day?

We have become inoculated against the work of the Holy Spirit in many regards and it is troubling to me. It is utterly discouraging to know that the unction of God is pouring forth such truth to our generation – and to us and we have learned to fold our arms and await the dismissal of the service so we can continue on with our lives. We watch others submit to the work of the Spirit – as they repent and cry out to the Lord with inner grief and brokenness – but we excuse ourselves from this work and return to our ordinary way of life.

Romans 1:18

“But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves.” *” NLT

It is one thing for us to learn about repentance, it is wholly another to repent. It is one thing for us to learn truth, it is wholly another to come to the knowledge of the truth. Are we allowing the deep work of the Holy Spirit in our lives; the work that exposes sin, selfishness, and every indwelling anomaly in our hearts? The work that cultivates deep soul-anxiety and sorrow that leads to true repentance? Beloved, it is imperative that you know that this repentance being practiced by the grace of God is the work of God to impart the knowledge of truth into our hearts.

As the truth being heralded and proclaim exposes our lacks and lies, we must allow the deep work of the Spirit of God to break us unto repentance. It is only when we truly repent of these lies and injustices that we can received the knowledge of the truth in their place.

Many times we are so well cultured that we cannot break free from its chains and respond to Christ in contrition and repentance. We allow the lying serpent to hiss his lies all of which are designed to cause you to rationalize the experience the Holy Spirit is giving you in dealing with your heart – and to explain it away or to ignore it completely.

As we respond to these lies, we fail to respond to the truth which would work in us repentance unto life and we find ourselves ever learning without coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Your bearing up under sound doctrine, your endurance in regard to truth is not a noble act. It could be the very artifice that quenches your hopes of eternal life. If the powerful exposition of truth is not producing brokenness and contrition in your heart it is going to produce obstinacy. The response is indicative of the outcome of its work.

We know that the will of God is for us to repent unto the acknowledgment of the truth that we might be freed from the serpent’s lies and bondage. It is God’s providential work to position His dear children underneath the faithful proclamation of truth that His good and perfect will might come to pass; *that all men everywhere repent.*

Acts 17:30

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” KJV