

# WHAT IS TRUTH?

It is a vital requirement of the Christian Faith that whoever will be saved must have the accurate knowledge of the truth. This is the will of God. (1 Timothy 2: 3, 4) The claim by anybody that he believes in Jesus Christ and accepts him as his personal Saviour is not enough for salvation unless his belief is grounded in the truth.

The word truth in the English language means that which conforms to fact and reality, or that which is not false or fictitious. So in this respect, one can say the truth of a thing that happens either in the market or elsewhere, or the truth of what one has done, and so on.

But in the context of the subject of this sermon, the meaning is spiritual and it bears a connotation that is much wider than the ordinary usage.

In John 1: 17, it is written: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The inquiring mind would want to know what this truth is.

When Jesus Christ was addressing the believing Jews during his first advent, he said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." – John 8: 31, 32.

That was not all. At the time he was arraigned before Pilate, the Roman governor, He again made reference to the truth. Said he, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered, to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.".. Pilate was rather curious about the claim of it Jesus Christ of having a kingdom, and so he asked: "Art thou a king then?" Instantly, Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice". It was at this juncture Pilate further asked, "What is truth?" – Read John 18: 36-38.

Whatever the motive of Pilate in asking the question, it is all the more interesting to note that it has turned to good in that the very question has been taken up with all sincerity by faithful Christian students of the Bible as a subject for diligent research into the spiritual import of the TRUTH.

Long before the human existence of Jesus Christ on this earth, it had been prophetically written in the Psalms that "truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven". – Psalm 85: 11.

## Word of God

In a nutshell, the TRUTH, for which Jesus Christ came to this world to bear witness, is the WORD OF GOD otherwise known as the "everlasting gospel" or the "gospel of peace". – Romans 10: 15; Ephesians 6: 15; Revelation 14: 6, 7.

The Psalmist said that the law of God is the truth and that His word is true from the beginning. (Psalm 119: 142, 151, 160) Jesus himself confirmed that the word of God is the truth. In his prayer to the Heavenly Father on behalf of his disciples, he said: "Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH...And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through thy truth." – John 17: 17-19.

*It is abundantly clear that without the knowledge of the truth, no one can practice the righteousness of God or obtain salvation. It is the truth that purifies as to make. One holy; the truth instills the fear of God in the believer; it gives faith; and it gives sound wisdom and understanding that enables one to distinguish between holy and unholy, or right and wrong.*

The fact that God's word, the truth, cleanses one from sin was further strengthened by Jesus Christ when he said to his disciples: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken

unto you.” (John 15: 3) And St. Paul described the word of God as water when he wrote- as to how Jesus Christ gave himself, up for the church “that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”. (Ephesians 5: 26) This is not the literal water used for baptism as some people think but the word of God, the truth.

Because the truth warns against sin and encourages people to follow righteousness, anyone who believes in it and translates his belief into action will of necessity put away evil and do that which is good. It is in this way the truth sanctifies or cleanses one. That is the reason why it is written in Psalm 119: 9, to wit: “Wherewithal shall, a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy (God’s) word.” And the Psalmist added: “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” (Verse 11).

It is because people disregard the truth and do not pay heed to the word of God that they continue to perpetrate wicked acts. They take pleasure in sin. When they do evil they have no prick of conscience because they are destitute of the truth and consequently, the fear of God which it instills in one and which makes one eschew evil, is not in them.

## **Pure Wisdom**

The wisdom which the truth imparts is far superior to any form of worldly knowledge. It is the wisdom from above which James the apostle described as “pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”. Yes, this wisdom found only in the Bible leads one to salvation. – James. 3: 17; 2 Timothy 3: 14, 15.

The truth is so forceful that it can change the whole character of a man from evil inclinations to godly thoughts and deeds. King David stated: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes...More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” Psalm 19: 7-11.

St. Paul who himself also derived great benefits from his knowledge of the truth, stated: “For the word of God is quick (alive)! and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” – Hebrews 4: 12.

It is all these wonderful, divine characteristics of the word of God that make the Holy Bible, which contains it, the greatest book ever in existence in this world.

All through history men of high reputation whose sense of spiritual value was not beclouded by devilish philosophies or evil propensities had always acknowledged the truth of God’s word, its goodness and irresistible force.

Concerning the Holy Bible, which contains the word of God, Abraham Lincoln had this to say: “In regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to men. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man’s welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.”

And J. Edgar Hoover, a distinguished U. S. lawyer, said: “The Bible is the unfailing guide which points the way for men to the perfect life. The lessons of charity, justice, and equality which enrich its pages should be learned well by all men in order that greed, avarice, and iniquity can be blotted out.”

The truth comprises doctrines, judgments, instructions, and divine promises. The doctrines are the basis of Christian beliefs; judgments are for the discipline of the believers; the instructions are for the guidance of the Christians in following the path of life; and the promises give hope and comfort to the faithful.

The Psalmist described the word of God as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. (Psalm 119: 105) And King Solomon whose wisdom, as given him by God, was remarkable, stated: "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."- Proverbs 6: 23.

For the fact that Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of the word of God, and therefore the light-bearer, he declared: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12) Again, he said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." – John 14: 6.

## **Power of God**

The importance of the truth, which is the gospel of Christ, cannot be overemphasized. St. Paul stated that "it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith". – Romans 1: 16, 17.

To be ignorant of the truth is to be under spiritual bondage. People in such a state can never know unless the scales of the blindness fall off their eyes, they even claim to be in the light but oppose the truth. The case of Saul, who became an apostle and was known as Paul, is a striking example. When he was professing Judaism-the Jewish religion- he persecuted the Christians but when he was converted and came to the knowledge of the truth, he confessed his ignorance. Said he of himself: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." – 1 Timothy 1: 13.

Some people take offense when they are told the truth; such ones need prayer so that the devil may leave them. Those who WILFULLY oppose the truth, and persecute those preaching or spreading it are wicked, and God shall destroy them. Jesus Christ told such ones in his days: "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." – John 8: 43-47. And St. John said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." – John 3: 36. See also Luke 10: 1,2,8-12, 16; Mark 9: 42.

## **Saving Gospel**

It is to enlighten the lost sheep of God and give them freedom from the bondage of Satan so that they may be saved that Jesus Christ came to preach his saving gospel of truth. Concerning his mission Christ referred to Isaiah's prophecy which fulfilled on him, to wit: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." – Luke 4: 17-21; see also 2 Timothy 2: 24-26.

And up till today, the gospel is being preached by those who know the truth in accordance with the command of Jesus Christ. – Matthew 24: 14; 28: 19.

The truth is very precious. It must not be adulterated by way of adding a lie to it and mixing it with the vain traditions of men.

The Bible says "No lie is of the truth". (1 John 2: 21). Anyone who believes in a lie is damned. Saint Paul made it clear that those who will perish would become victims of Satan's deceit "because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." – 2 Thessalonians 2: 10-12.

Today, in our age, some people and/or churches teach the traditions of men instead of God's doctrines in the Bible. It was because the Scribes and Pharisees acted contrary to the truth and followed men's traditions that Jesus Christ told them: "... Thus have ye made the commandment

of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me (God) with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15: 1-9.

It is very important, therefore, that we look well before accepting and believing any teaching or doctrine from anybody no matter his religious claims, or social status, or scholastic achievement. We must be sure that anything we believe has the backing of the Scriptures, as the early Christians of Berea did, otherwise we believe or worship in vain. – Acts 17: 10- 12; see also Galatians 1: 8, 9.

St. Paul admonished Timothy and said: “Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thy self and them that hear thee.”- 1 Timothy 4: 16.

Let us, therefore, cleave to the truth which is able to make us free from the bondage of Satan, the deceits of false prophets, idolatrous commitments, superstitions, and all other devices of the devil, so as to be saved by God through Jesus Christ our Lord into His perfect Kingdom of endless peace and happiness.