

## REMEMBERING TRUTH AT

### THANKSGIVING

#### Psalm 95

INTRO: As I began to prepare for a Thanksgiving Message, I pondered what to share. And as I thought about that, I began to think of truth, and how thankful I am for having come to an understanding of spiritual truth. It remade my entire life. And so I began on a message I titled, "Remembering Truth At Thanksgiving." We had our church thanksgiving meal a week early, and a number of you shared that you were thankful for truth and the Word of God. And so I thought maybe I was on the right track, Remembering Truth at Thanksgiving.

A.W. Tozer said this about Christians and truth, "Christians habitually weep and pray over beautiful truth, only to draw back **from** that same truth when it comes to the difficult job of putting it into practice! Actually, the average church simply does not dare to check its practices against biblical precepts. It **tolerates** things that are diametrically opposed to the will of God, and if the matter is pointed out to its leaders, they will defend its unscriptural practices with a casuistry equal to the verbal dodgings of the **Roman** moralists..." or Roman Catholicism.

J. Mark Horst quoted Sir Winston Churchill like this: "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened."

Adrian Rogers was the three times president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was born in 1931 and died in 2005. Here is what he said about truth, "It is better to be divided by truth than united in error, it is better to speak truth that hurts and then heals than to speak a lie; it is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie; it is better to stand alone with truth than to be wrong with the multitude... the religion of today is 'get-along-ism.' It is time for men and women of God to stand, (even) if they have to stand alone."

#### I. DEFINITION OF TRUTH

Let us begin by just briefly defining truth. We won't spend much time here as I have covered this numerous times in the

past. Though philosophers may debate what truth is, it is simply that which corresponds to reality. I have given you this example from mathematics:  $1+1$  is not a truth.  $1+1=$  is not a truth.  $1+1=5$  is not only not a truth, but it is wrong.  $1+1=2$ , that is a mathematical truth.

When the police stop you for speeding, don't argue that you were going 100 kilometers an hour, when the radar shows 120. Truth is not relative, it is absolute. I have spent a lot of time on this in other messages so we move on.

## II. TWO KINDS OF TRUTH

Our subject this morning is thanksgiving for truth. But I want to narrow that field of truth down to one particular area. I think we could classify truth into two major areas; secular truth and sacred truth. Let me explain those and we begin with secular truth.

### A. Secular

The word 'secular' basically has to do with the non-religious aspects of life. In our country we have secular schools. We could put into this area of the secular such fields as science, or mathematics, or farming etc... We do not need God in order to find truth in these fields. Nor has He given us a book on how to discover truth in these fields. Don't get me wrong. If we truly know God it will impact how we think in these areas. But the strongest atheist can discover truths in this realm.

You can come to secular truth by logic, or reasoning or by being taught such things from others who have learned them. This is the world of the empirical. Experience is all important. You don't need to become a Christian to learn the truth of  $1+1=2$ . There is also a way of coming to truth about things that happened in the past. For example, somebody has been murdered or robbed. There is a way of coming to the truth about that murder or robbery, but you must find enough historical evidence or facts to give proof of it. If a person should claim to the judge that one had extra sensory information, he would not accept that as evidence.

## B. Sacred

But this is thanksgiving day, and I want to zero in on another area of truth, and that is sacred truth. The sacred has to do with things connected to God or religion. Now some say, "I'm not religious, I'm a Christian." Here is what I have been told, "Religion is man reaching up to God, Christianity is God reaching down to man." Well, actually, religion is any brand of faith; any belief that has stepped outside the realm of the secular. But the vast majority of religion is false.

Now, in the secular realm, we could learn all there is to know about minerals, or gases, or the stars or the planets, or plants or water or fish etc... etc... and it would not help us spiritually. We can learn from secular truth that there is a God and we can learn a good number of things about that God. Look at Romans 1 (read 18-23). But we cannot learn from these things who that God is or what is wrong with us that we are bent on doing wrong, nor that we are lost and that we need to do to be saved. You see, that belongs to the field of sacred truth.

Now, you see, that is the field of truth that our secular world is at war with. And now, with the coming of the emergent church, it too is at war with this field of truth. But let me say this with regard to religion and this field of truth; all religions outside of Christianity are at war with this field of truth as well. And if the devil can undermine the field of truth in the Church, it will destroy the Church. Listen to 1 Timothy 3:14-15. Paul says, "These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The Church is the pillar and ground of this truth we are talking about.

So, to learn where everything comes from, why we are here, who God is, what is wrong with us and that we are lost and that we need to be saved and what we need to do to be saved, such is the realm of sacred truth. John 17:17 says. God's Word is the truth. This truth is what most of mankind

has sought to avoid, and in its place it invented other religions.

Let me just add this, truth in the secular realm can be discovered through reasoning. But divine truth, the true religion can only be discovered through revelation; divine revelation. And divine revelation is reasonable, it is not irrational. God said to Israel, "Come, let us reason together."

### III. THE PROCESS OF TRUTH IN HISTORY

Now, let me show you briefly what has happened to truth in history. It got this process of truth from somewhere and did not write down the source. But I think it fits history and here is the basic idea. In premodern times, say before the 1500's, mankind accepted both divine revelation and reason. There were not too many atheists.

Then came the time of modernism, say from the 1500's until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. And reason was exalted, and divine revelation was rejected more and more. If you think that through, you can almost see what will happen next. And so it in post-modernism, both reason and divine revelation were rejected. The effects of this rejection resulted in the emergent church and a new missiology.

Eric Arthur Blair, who used the pen name, George Orwell has said, "The further a society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it." He died in 1950.

My son, Trent sent me this quote from George Macdonald, "To try to explain truth to him who loves it not is but to give him more plentiful material for misinterpretation." When people do not want to see the truth, if you give them good solid evidence you have only helped them to further reject truth. Is that not incredible?

Ravi Zacharias put it like this, no doubt building on that quote said this, "Intent is always prior to content. To give truth to him that loves it not is only to give him more reason and more content for misinterpretation. The more you give content to somebody who doesn't love truth, you're only giving them more material for misinterpretation

and distortion, and all that goes along with a mind that is resistant to that which is true."

Well, with regard to truth, we have come to a sad time in both the world and the Church. We know it as post-modernism.

### III. THE VERIFICATION OF TRUTH

Now we come to a very major question. Of all the things that are put forth as sacred truth, how can we know which one is right or if any of those are right? This is the major question. It is this question, I think, that has caused us to say truth is relative. Here is what happens to man. He seeks to discover sacred truth, but the only true divine revelation he won't consider is the Bible. Why? Because it touches his sin. It requires repentance and confession of sin, and that is out. So man seeks everywhere else, but there is no other place of absolute sacred truth, so he says truth is relative. There is no absolute truth.

I have taught a course called, *A General Introduction To The Bible* on numerous occasions. And at the beginning of the course I said this, "Try to think of life for a moment, as to how it would be without the Bible. No divine direction in life. No personal relationship with God, as Paul describes us before salvation, "...having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). That's how it was with the great Greek thinkers in the past. The following is a discussion of Socrates with some of his students regarding immortality. (That is sacred truth now) "In the course of the conversation one of them, Simmias, made the following statement: 'I think a man's duty is one of two things: either to be taught or to find out where truth is, or if he cannot, at least to take the best possible human doctrine and the hardest to disprove, and to ride on this like a raft over the waters of life and take the risk; unless he could have a more seaworthy vessel to carry him more safely and with less danger, some divine doctrine [or, as Jowett translates it, 'some word of God'] to bring him through.'" (The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation pg 13).

Here are some of the greatest thinkers the world has known, but they did not know God. Paul met some of these on Mars Hill, in Acts 17. And the conclusion of the one quoted was that man's whole duty was to find out where truth is. No doubt he is not talking about secular truth. He is talking about divine truth. And there is, in that quote, the indication that they knew somewhere there must be this truth. And the conclusion was that if you cannot find that truth, find that doctrine that is hardest to disprove, and put your trust in it, because that is the best you'll be able to do.

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, when the Roman procurator, Pilate entered the judgment hall he said to Jesus in John 18:33, "Are You the King of the Jews? Jesus said, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" In verse 35 Pilate said, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." So Pilate said, "Are You a king then?" Jesus then said, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." And Pilate asked this question, can you tell me what it was? "What is truth?" No doubt, he was not asking what 1+1 is. And when he had asked Jesus this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all." He had met truth.

In a parable we studied recently, Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they had rejected the chief cornerstone. That is what the world does with sacred truth. And why does the world reject the truth of the Word of God? Turn to John 3 (read 16-21).

But here is the question now: How can we know the Bible is this sacred truth we are talking about? We cannot say the Bible is the Word of God because it says so. I could write a book and say in that book that I am God, but would that

prove I am God? Not at all. You would certainly need some other evidence. Although there are many people today who would agree with me if I said I am God. But the problem is they think they too are God too!

So, let me ask you, are there any tests we can apply to check out if in fact the Bible is the Word of God? It is amazing what kind of tests man can come up with in the secular realm. My family likes collecting rocks and we like to polish some of them. Now rocks that polish the best are the hardest rocks. And so, recently I thought, "I wonder if there are tests one can use to find out how hard a rock is." So, of course, I checked on the internet.

In the early 1800, a German by name of Friedrich Moh also asked that question and he developed a very simple test. Today, of course, you can get sophisticated tests. But here is Friedrich Mohs test. The test goes from 1-10 in hardness, though there are things that are much harder than that. But most substances fall within that range. First you need a substance of which you know the hardness. Our fingernails are about 2.5. A copper penny is about 3. The average knife blade is about 5.5 and so on.

So, you take something that you know how hard it is, say like a knife blade. You find a smooth surface on your rock and rub the surface of the knife blade on this surface, and if it scratches the rock, the rock is less than 5.5 in hardness. If the penny will not scratch the rock, then the rock is between 3 and 5.5 in hardness. And in this simple way you can check the hardness of any substance.

Now I ask, are there any tests we can run to verify the truth of the Bible? You can run a test for almost any mathematical equation to see if your answer is true, that is besides a calculator. There are all kinds of tests in soil or minerals or blood, and you check for truth with these tests. By the way, our secular world does not believe truth is relative in such fields.

Now, there are all kinds of teachings out there that claim to be the truth in the sacred realm. There are those religions that don't use the Bible, say like the Hindus or

Buddhists and many, many others. Then there are religions that use the Bible, like the cults such as Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses and so on. Are there any tests to run on these? Well, first you have to find something that you know is true and then you test others by that truth.

For example, if a questionable teaching comes along, and this teaching uses the Bible, the basic test is the views generated by their understanding of the Bible. There is one major test that will eliminate most cults. For example, Christianity holds that the Bible teaches that Jesus is God. I have studied that. I am in full agreement. If the teaching you are testing does not allow that Jesus is God, then you know it is false, unless, of course, our view is wrong. If the Bible in fact teaches that Jesus is God, then you know it is a cult and not true. And in that way there are many tests. I told a JW just recently, "You and I cannot both be right. We could both be wrong, but we cannot both be right. If you are right, I am wrong. If I am right, then you are wrong. That makes this a very important matter." All views that purport to come from the Bible must agree with the teaching within the Bible. That is the test. But I don't want to spend time on that this morning.

My main question is, how can we know if the Bible or the book of Mormon or the Koran are true. Can these be tested? I asked a Muslim some time ago what evidence he had that the Koran was the truth. He was an Imam. Do you know what he said to me? You wouldn't believe it. He said, "Because people memorize it!" How would that sit with your reasoning units?

If the Bible is the sacred truth, as we claim it is, can that be proved? Or do we blindly believe it? Well, here are some tests you can use on the Bible. Then you can use these same tests on any other book that claims to be sacred truth. I have given a message called 10 proofs that the Bible is the Word of God. I got those ten points from one of my teachers who wrote a book on it. That message is available on [sermonaudio.com/mecl](http://sermonaudio.com/mecl). But let me just give you those ten proofs in brief. And if the Bible is the Word of God, that divine doctrine that is true, then the Bible is

the sacred truth and all other claims can be tested by the Bible.

There is first, the amazing unity of the Bible. It is a book of 66 books written over a period of 1500 years, by some forty different authors, with authors of various kinds of occupations, and with many of these books written in various different geographical locations, and written in various different styles of writing, and yet you can compare things from Genesis to Revelation, and it does not contradict itself. Did you know that the Book of Mormon, written by one man at one time has had over 2,000 changes made in it? Can you think of any book written over a period of 50 years by two different authors with two different backgrounds, and these two books agrees entirely within? No, you don't.

But then there is the matter of its indestructibility. In 303 the Emperor Diocletian burned every hated Bible he could find and when he had burned the last one he said, "Extinct is the Name of Christian." Check the history of how man has tried to destroy this book, and today it is copied millions of times more than any best seller. You can read of what Voltaire said, or Joseph Stalin. And you will find them all wrong, and the Bible lives.

Test three, the historical accuracy of the Bible. This deserves several messages. Try this test on the Book of Mormon. Go to the Smithsonian institute in the US, that studies the history of the Americas and see what they have to say of the history of the book of Mormon. Not many years ago professors sneered at the Biblical record of the Hittite people in the Bible. Today nobody sneers at that record.

Then the Bible records scientific things, for example it spoke of the earth being round when everybody laughed at such a possibility. Job spoke of the earth being suspended in space. Unthinkable? Ask today's scientist. He is finally catching up with the Bible. I ask you, do you know any other such book? No you don't.

Then there is the evidence of the universal influence of the Bible. When it comes to a book having influence on the world, the Bible wins hands down. Then there is the evidence of the care and copy of the Bible. Jesus said not one jot or tittle would fail of the Word of God. Those are the smallest letter and the smallest points on Hebrew letters.

Then there is the evidence of the care and copy of the Bible. If you were to study this, say just of the OT, you would be absolutely amazed. There is no book, no book, that has any history like this. Jesus, who was the creator of heaven and earth, trusted it to the smallest minutest detail.

Then there is the amazing circulation of the Bible. It has been, since before the time of Christ, and to our very day, all over the world. There is nothing like this book. Nothing that is even worth comparing, if you check the evidence.

Then there is the matter of the absolute honesty of the Bible. Think of it. If you were going to write a book that should affect mankind for good, if you had been God, would you have recorded that Noah got drunk or that David committed adultery? The man I got the main thoughts of these ten proofs for the Bible, Dr. Harold Willmington used to say, "The Bible is not a Book that man could write if he would, or would write if he could."

No man has had access to all the historical, scientific, and prophetic data which we find in the Bible; so man could not write the Scripture if he would. Nor would man write the Bible in the way it is written if he could because who would include all the weaknesses and sins and crimes of God's people the way the Bible does? Who would teach the doctrine of man's helplessness to gain salvation; who would include the doctrine of hell or of judgement upon saved and unsaved?

Then there is the evidence of the life transforming power of the Bible. Let me tell you a story I have not told you before. It comes from Dr. Willmington as well. It goes

something like this. A man was going through the forest in enemy territory. To be caught meant death. He was desperately in need of food, when he came upon a cabin. But would it be safe to ask for food? So he crept up to the window and looked inside and saw a Bible on the table, and so he was encouraged to take his chances.

Billy Graham tells the account of two strangers who sat in conversation criticizing his crusade. During the message one, a doctor, said to the other, "I don't know about you, but I'm going forward to receive Christ." The other hesitated a moment, then reached for his pocket and replied, 'I'm going too, and here's your wallet. I'm a pickpocket."

And I saved for last, the absolute greatest proof I know that the Bible is the Word of God. It is THE sacred truth. It is its prophetic accuracy. If you ever doubt the Word of God, and you need some assurance, it is this subject I would encourage you to study. I think, like Pilate, you would have to say, "I find no fault in this book."

CONCLUSION: So, let us conclude. As usual, I ended up with far more material than I could give. Out of seven points I gave you three. So let me reduce one of those into a minute or so. Turn to Psalm 138. Here is a verse that has caused me to marvel. It is the second verse. Verses 1-2 say, "I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and (for) Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name."

And I ask you this morning: Why did God exalt His Word above all His name? It is the sum total of sacred truth needed for life and godliness. When I went to Bible school, the school I was attending was late in accepting what was called 'Christian psychology.' Almost all the Christian psychology of modern times, apart from such men as Watchman Nee and Jay Adams, is nothing but secular psychology with the Bible applied to it.

But let me tell you how secular psychology got a foothold in Bible schools. Here was the argument. All truth is God's truth. So no matter where you find it, if it is truth it is good for

Christianity. So, since the Bible does not help us out enough in the area of counseling troubled people, and secular psychology has help to offer, then of course, it is no more wrong to use this area of truth than the area of mathematics or any other area.

And what, I ask you, what was the measuring stick as to whether secular psychology was truth? May I warn you here? If it worked, it was regarded as truth. So, for example, the church is filled with problems and pastors cannot seem to handle some of those. If the pastor can't help, and the professional Christian psychologist who has a clinic down the street can help, then that is all in order. He is simply using God's truth from a realm not given in Scripture. I am not saying that sometimes they cannot help or their help is always bad. And for pastors who are stuck, what a wonderful way to get a real problem off of the pastors hands. But here is the question I am asking: If sin is involved, as it is in most problems, does this counseling bring about repentance?

Now let me say this, when it comes to psychology proper, the Bible contains all the truth necessary for life and godliness. It does not matter if problems are financial or marital, or personal; the Bible contains all that is needed. May I ask you, are you committed to that?

And now, when we come to this verse, and it says that God has exalted His Word above all His name. How high has God exalted His Word! In Psalm 119:89 the Psalmist says, "Forever O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven!" This word is settled! You can count on it. Our very eternal destiny is determined by the accuracy of God's Word! And now let me tell you why God has exalted His truth, His Word above all His name. You cannot even know that name apart from His Word. You cannot glorify God apart from this book. You cannot get saved apart from this book. You cannot become righteous apart from this book. Oh God, thank You for this incredible gift!

And now, let me finish like I concluded the message on ten proofs that the Bible is the Word of God. This morning I have good news for Socrates, though it comes a bit late for him. But this good news is for any other philosopher as well. A doctrine has been found that cannot be disproved. No, better yet, it can

be proved! It is THE one and only revealer of sacred truth. A book has been found that you can ride like a raft over all of life's troubled waters and you need never doubt it. It is a book that has never been disproved yet and it never will be. As a matter of fact as life goes on, the more men discover, the more they will be left with these two options. They will have to close their eyes to the objective truth of the Scriptures or repent and confess their sins and be converted to the Christ of the Bible.

-Find me another book that has the diversity and unity found in the Bible.

-Find me another book that man has sought to destroy more than he has the Bible.

-Find me another book as old as the Bible with the historical and scientific accuracy of the Bible.

-Find me another book with the prophetic accuracy of the Bible.

-Find me another book with such universal influence as the Bible.

-Find me another book with such care and copy with so many old manuscripts as the Bible.

-Find me another book with such amazing circulation as the Bible.

-Find me another book that has brought the changes the Bible has, a book that can change the sinful and deceitful heart of man the way the Bible can:

Then and only then would you and I need to reconsider the validity of our faith, and that, brothers and sisters, will never happen!

My conclusion to all of this is: The B-I-B-L-E yes that's the book for me, I stand alone on the Word of God the B-I-B-L-E.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BIBLE  
Arranged and edited  
by Pastor Phil Schlamp  
from four readings by unknown authors  
for the glory of God  
in appreciation to Him for the wonderful gift  
of the Word of God

I am the Bible.  
I am God's wonderful library.  
I am always -- and above all -- the truth.  
To the weary pilgrim, I am a good strong Staff.  
To the one who sits in black gloom, I am the glorious Light.  
To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I am sweet Rest.  
To him who has lost his way, I am a safe Guide.  
To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing Balm.  
To the discouraged, I whisper a glad message of Hope.  
To those who are distressed by the storms of life, I am an anchor sure and steadfast.  
To those who suffer in lonely solitude, I am as a cool, soft Hand resting upon a fevered brow.  
O child of man, to best defend me, just use me!

I am --

The charter of all true liberty.  
The forerunner of civilization.  
The moulder of institutions and governments.  
The fashioner of law.  
The secret of national progress.  
The guide of history.  
The ornament and mainspring of literature.  
The friend of science.  
The inspiration of philosophies.  
The textbook of ethics.  
The light of intellect.  
The answer to the deepest human heart hungerings.  
The soul of all strong heart life.  
The illuminator of darkness.  
The foe of oppression.  
The uprooter of sin.  
The regulator of all high and worthy standards.

The comfort in sorrow.  
The strength in weakness.  
The pathway in perplexity.  
The escape from temptation.  
The steadier in the day of power.  
The embodiment of all lofty ideals.  
The begetter of life.  
The promise of the future.  
The star of death's night.  
The revealer of God.

And what more shall we say of the Bible?

Generation follows generation -- yet it lives.  
Nations rise and nations fall -- yet it lives.  
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go -- yet it lives.  
Hated, despised, cursed, -- yet it lives.  
Doubted, suspected, criticized -- yet it lives.  
Condemned by atheists -- yet it lives.  
Scoffed at by scorners -- yet it lives.  
Exaggerated by fanatics -- yet it lives.  
Misconstrued and misstated -- yet it lives.  
Ranted and raved about -- yet it lives.  
Yet it lives -- as a lamp to our feet.  
Yet it lives -- as a light to our path.  
Yet it lives -- as the gate to Heaven.  
It lives -- as a standard for childhood.  
It lives -- as a guide for youth.  
It lives -- as an inspiration for the mature.  
-- as a comfort for the aged.  
-- as food for the hungry.  
-- as water for the thirsty.  
-- as rest for the weary.  
-- as light for the heathen.  
-- as salvation for the sinner,  
and -- as grace for the Christian.

Oh, to do justice to a description of the divine Word of God.

To know it is to love it.  
To love it is to accept it.

To accept it means life eternal.

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of the believer. Yes, it contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter.

It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure.

Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its decisions are immutable.

Christ is its grand subject, our good is its design, the glory of God, its end.

Read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; practice it to be holy.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

It is given you in life; it will be opened at the Judgement, and be remembered forever more.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It is "the Word of God which shall stand forever."

My dear believer friend, will you READ it? Will you HEED it? And will you SEED it? For the child of God is to KNOW it in his head, STOW it in his heart, SHOW it in his life, And SOW it in the world.

Amen, and amen.