

The Truth Part 1

The Truth

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"I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will tell the wondrous story,
How my lost estate to save,
In His boundless love and mercy,
He the ransom freely gave.

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will praise my dear Redeemer,
His triumphant pow'r I'll tell,
How the victory He giveth
Over sin, and death, and hell.

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His heav'nly love to me;

He from death to life hath brought me,
Son of God with Him to be.

Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
With His blood He purchased me,
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free."

Let's take our bulletin hymn this morning sung to the tune of "O God, our help
[unintelligible], Jesus King of Saints."

Thank you, we welcome each and every one of you this morning and we pray that we
might glorify and magnify the one who is truly the King of saints, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you turn in your Bibles to Psalm 147 this morning for our reading. We pray for those
who are away traveling, and for those that are sick, [unintelligible] and others. Psalm 147.

1 Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is
pleasant; and praise is comely. 2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he
gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. 3 He healeth the broken in heart,
and bindeth up their wounds. 4 He telleth the number of the stars; he
calleth them all by their names. 5 Great is our Lord, and of great power:
his understanding is infinite. 6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth
the wicked down to the ground. 7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;
sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

May we pray.

*Our Father, this morning we as the psalmist has said, would delight and be determined
to distinguish our God. We look at all that is said by this wicked world as they say to us
as the heathen did in David's day, "Where is now their God?" And our response is, "Our
God is in the heavens and he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." This is our God,
the sovereign ruler and Lord who is God alone over all, possessing all, working all after
the counsel of your own will. And we have nothing as the psalmist said but praise for you
and praise is comely for those who have been saved by your sovereign mercy and grace
in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*We pray this morning that all that is said and done might be to your glory and to the
comfort and good of your people that you chose in Christ before the world began. Lord,
we know that they are the objects of your love and power to save them for your glory, to
magnify your name in the earth as you triumph over all your enemies and all their
enemies. We thank you for every blessing that we receive in the Lord Jesus Christ. We
praise his name this morning above all names. We cry out with the Psalm, "Worthy is the
Lamb that was slain for thou hast redeemed us from among men, saved us by your
sovereign mercy, and called us unto yourself to be yours for eternity and to worship you
forever."*

We pray this morning naming against those that are sick and those who are away, and most especially those around us and among us and who you bring into our presence who are lost and know not the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that you would show yourself as the God who is mighty to save, that you would bring them from darkness into the light of the Lord Jesus Christ and cause them to live and demonstrate that life by faith in you.

We ask this morning that you would receive our thanks, humble and pitiful as they are for all that you've given us, for all the blessings of the year, for all the blessings of life, and most especially for that salvation that's of the Lord. We pray now that in this time you would help us, unworthy as we are to speak the truth as it is in Christ, and to give glory to you as it is fit in your eyes. We pray your forgiveness for all our sins and failures. May we know the reality and experience of that forgiveness in our hearts and minds. Teach us, Lord, this day and cause us to understand the things of your Gospel for we pray it in Christ's name. Amen.

Hymn 419 and then Brother Tim will give a word to the congregation.

"Blessed Father, hear our cry.
Cast out sin, but draw us nigh.
Not for merit—we have none—
For Your mercy, for Your Son.

Blessed Jesus, make our plea.
In Your name to God we flee;
Through Your blood we seek His face;
By Your priesthood claim His grace.

Blessed Spirit, meet our need;
In our silence intercede.
Translate groans we cannot speak,
Heal the broken, help the weak.

Triune God, please grant our prayer
As Your glory we declare.
May Your promised kingdom come;
May Your will on earth be done."

That is among my favorites. The true Triune God has engaged himself fully in the salvation of his people.

Turn with me this morning, if you would, to the book of Genesis, Genesis 24. Genesis 24. Abraham is called the father of the faith and believers are identified as the children of Abraham by faith, and these children of faith, God's elect, whom God saves through belief of the truth, they do believe the truth. And I got to noticing when I began to study for this message how the first mention of the truth, the first time this word "truth" is used

in the Scripture is here in Genesis 24, and this is when the servant of Abraham is sent by Abraham to seek a bride for Isaac and he arrives at the land to which he's sent, and he sees this young woman by the well gathering water, she gathers water also for him and for his camels, and wondering if the Lord had prospered him on his way to find the woman, it says in verse 26 that "the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD." He gave God thanks that he had given him a prosperous journey and led him to what he now feels is the woman that he was sent to retrieve, and as soon as he worships, he begins to say to her in verse 27, "And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham." When God is mentioned by his people in the Scriptures, he is not spoken of generically, he's spoken of particularly. "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth."

That's the first time that word is used in the Scriptures and this is the way it is with all those sons of Abraham, all of God's people. He does not leave them destitute. He shows mercy to those people in Christ and he does not keep the truth from them. In other words, a way in which he shows mercy to them is to bring them the truth, and what we find in Scripture is this: that truth and mercy are many times mentioned together in Scripture. Some 24 times I found mercy and truth were always together, such as Psalm 85. I'll read that to you, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." They're almost like twins, it seems like, mercy and truth. Wherever you find God showing mercy, you'll find him revealing the truth because none ever really believe, truly believe apart from the truth.

Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." They couldn't trust Christ until they heard the truth as it is in Christ.

Also we find that none have any true hope without the truth. Colossians 1:5 says, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." There's no hope apart from the truth. Any hope that you might have is just a wish apart from the truth.

And also every true preacher preaches the truth. 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul says, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." He's not a true preacher, he's simply a false preacher, a false prophet if he does not preach the truth. No matter how many titles that men may give him, no matter how many names he might take to himself, he's not a preacher of truth unless he preaches the truth.

And none are ever born again, none are ever born again apart from the word of truth. James saying it "of his own will begot he us with the word of truth."

It's always the truth and the truth of God, like God himself, is unchanging. We don't need a relative Gospel, we don't need a contemporary Gospel because God never changes as we said recently, and because he never changes, his truth never changes. It's always the

same. It's always the truth of God in Christ Jesus. And what men don't realize oftentimes one way in which Satan blinds men is this: you can believe so many true things and not know the truth, just like you can believe that a man has a million dollars but not any of it be yours. We can believe a true thing such as God is love and yet not know the truth about God's love, not know it because we don't know the truth.

And Paul himself is a man who at great lengths he went to, to declare the truth. What could make a man endure what Paul endured, what could make him go on and preach that which he knew would cause him troubles and trials, what moved him with this courage and this determination and this resolve? Look over in Acts 20 with me. Acts 20. Now look down at verse 18, Paul saying here, he tells these men, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." He hadn't changed. He hadn't altered his message. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. And you know how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is repentance toward God? It is when God changes our natural mind and thoughts about who he is, when we are turned from thinking of him as we wish he was, or as we hope we is, or as a false preacher has said he is, when he turns us and we repent and acknowledge the truth.

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." How could he say that? "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." All the counsel of God. You see, what he did to bring on all this hardship and trial and imprisonment and much more, what he did was to preach the Gospel of the grace of God.

He says in 1 Corinthians, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

And in Romans 1 he said the Gospel is the Gospel concerning God's Son. It's not about eschatology or end times, it's not about history, it's not about a host of things that men in our day talk about and call ministry or call preaching the Gospel, it is the Gospel concerning God's Son. It's the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

And he knew this Gospel, as he says here, was everything that's profitable to the soul. He knew that this Gospel could be summed up in these words, "all the counsel of God." He knew that the Gospel is defined in other places as the word of truth. Not many Gospels.

Not many faiths. But it seems like it's something that brings out the rebellion, the natural rebellion of men is when you say it is the Gospel, it is the truth. In other words, there may be many true things naturally, there may be many true things in the Bible, but there is only one truth. Only one truth, and he knew, as I know, that God saves and he liberates sinners, he saves his people by the truth.

Listen to the words of Christ, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." That makes me think that people must be in bondage. That makes me think that they must be, as Scripture says, bound up in error or captive by Satan and his various delusions, and they must be made by the Lord Jesus Christ free and he sets them free with his truth.

He knew, Paul did and so does every preacher of the Gospel, of the truth, he knew that God sanctifies, as Christ said, "Sanctify them through thy word, thy word is truth." He knew that God begets, that God calls by his Spirit which is called the Spirit the truth and he guides into all truth.

He knew something that men don't want to admit today and that is, he knew that the God of truth does not save people, his people by lies and by half-truths. You can believe a lie as sincerely as you want to, you can defend it as diligently as you might, but you will never be saved by a lie or you will never be saved and know God by half-truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

God brings all he saves which are all kinds of men, of people out of every nation, tribe and kindred, he brings them all out to the knowledge of and the acknowledging of the truth. The truth. Do we want to know the truth? Our generation could be described by their own selves with this little saying we have "don't confuse me with the facts, I have my own opinion. I have my own ideas. Don't open up the word of God to me and declare what God says, take a verse here or a verse there and say what I want to hear. But if we want to know the truth, do we want to know the truth about God, do we want to know the truth about ourselves, do we want to know the truth about sin, do we want to know the truth about salvation, do we want to know the truth about Christ? Or maybe we're like Pilate. When Christ stood before Pilate and began to say to him some of these very things, Pilate said, "What is truth?" And then the Bible says, "He turned and he walked away." He didn't want to know the truth. He turned and he walked away without waiting to hear what Christ had to say further.

But can we know in our day with all this maze of religion, with all these denominations, with all these things in religion going on around us, with all these opinions, can we know the truth? Not if we listen to men in our day who say there's no absolute truth. I'm telling you what, if you believe that, you are in great danger. You have been thoroughly deceived. If you think that there is not in this day any absolute truth, there is absolute truth because there is an absolute God of truth.

But can we know the truth? Well, according to what Abraham's servant said, he said God had been pleased to reveal his mercy to his master and his truth. Even back as far back as

Genesis, even by this man Abraham, this Old Testament patriarch, he says that God in great mercy and grace revealed to him the truth and do you know what the New Testament says about Abraham? Christ said, "Abraham saw my day and he was glad." Anytime people are brought to know the truth which is the truth of grace, they are brought to be truly and everlastingly glad.

But there are many deceivers and we are commanded to try the spirits whether they be of God. We have so many saying this and so many saying that, that the devil just puts that spirit in us where we say, "Well, you can't know who's right and who's wrong." If you believe that, if you truly believe that, you'll be damned.

When God says try the spirits, he must mean that there is a standard by which we can test or try those who say anything and everything about God, who is God. There must be a way that we can test and try what men say that the state or condition of a sinner is. If you ever want to know what you are by how you feel, you may feel fine today, all of a sudden be diagnosed by a doctor as having a terminal disease and you say, "Doctor, but I don't feel like I have it." You wouldn't use that logic. There must be a way in which we can try and test what only the Bible can tell us about who the Lord Jesus Christ is, and surely there must be a way that we can try the spirits and see how it is that God saves sinners, and only those that the Spirit of God quickens or gives life, gives faith to, only they desire the truth and only these will use these things, and only true preachers and people of God don't mind the test. I don't mind the test. I don't enter into debate, I don't enter into a mudslinging battle with anybody because I don't believe that the truth is up for debate. I'm in the declaring business. I'm in this business if I'm called of God, of telling you what God says. I don't have anything new like an old preacher said once, if it's new, it isn't true, and if it's true, it isn't new. I don't have anything new, I have the everlasting Gospel.

So I don't waste my time entertaining people on the way to hell, or comforting them in their unbelief, or bragging on their works, or talking foolishly about what they really believe. I just declare the truth and I'm gonna give you one point this morning. I'll never get through this but I'm gonna give you one point this morning about the truth. The truth is only known by the Scriptures. Now listen to me. I don't care what Grandpa So-and-so said or old preacher So-and-so, or what you think was the kindest, godliest, finest woman or man you ever met, we don't know the truth by them. They may speak the truth but you and I only believe, really believe what we know to be true from the word of God itself. God said this. And when it comes down to all the times of doubt and fear and despair, I can tell you this, the only comfort you'll have is in what God said.

That's the only thing. I might put my arm around you and tell you I love you, I might say, "Don't worry about it, everything will be alright," but the only thing that's going to matter, and you know this, in those times when you are the lowest, when you sin the greatest, when you suffer the greatest grief, when your fears and doubts assail you, when the devil questions you, the only answer is the word of God. The truth is always true to the Scriptures.

Now one of the greatest preachers of the truth apart from Christ himself was undoubtedly the Apostle Paul. I don't think there would be any question about that. The Apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul. He preached and in Acts 17 we read this about a people from Berea, they're called the Bereans, they've come to be called the noble Bereans. Acts 17 says, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind," they heard what Paul preached and then they tested it. You mean to tell me that they questioned the preaching of the Apostle Paul? I'm telling you, you better question every preacher you hear by this standard. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." They put what he said to the acid test and we are to put everything that is called the truth to this acid test, what the word of God says. Not what the preacher says it says.

I'm quite willing for anybody who hears me to take their Bible, take an accurate translation of the Bible, of the Holy Scriptures and see if the things whether or not I say are true or not. If they're not true, don't believe them. If what I say in this pulpit is not true to the Scripture, you ought to run me off. You don't have to wonder is what I say according to the Scripture, and you, like these Bereans who heard Paul, you can test what I say, try what a man says by the Scripture to see if they are true or not. I'm not above that.

The Lord said to those in his day that he confronted most, the Pharisees, the scribes and Pharisees, they were religious. They claimed to know God. They claimed to be teachers. They claimed to be godly people, moral people. They would pass in our day for some of the finest so-called Christians alive but here's what he said of them, he said, "You do err. You're in error. You're proud of your error. You're sticking by your error. You think you're saved by your error. But you do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

They took verses, they took verses of Scripture and they wrote them on pieces of parchment and rolled them up, tied it in their hair, and tied it all over their garments. That's just like preachers in our day. They tie together a sermon that's a verse here and a verse there and they parade them before men, "I can quote the Bible." They could quote the Bible like you wouldn't believe. But he said, "You do err not knowing the Scriptures, and the reason that you don't know the Scriptures, you are void of the power of God's Spirit in you to reveal the true meaning of the Scriptures."

Paul says this in Romans 15:4, he says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Somebody says, "Well, I don't want the Old Testament because you just can't understand anything there." Well, I'm telling you this, if you understand anything in the New Testament, you surely can understand the Old too because it says the same thing. It speaks of the sovereign mercy of the Lord to a people. One here, one there, one another place. It shows how all together the one way that anybody ever truly worshipped God was through a sacrifice, was through a priest, both appointed by God. The only way that sin was ever atoned for was by blood, the blood of an innocent victim.

So it's through these Old Testament Scriptures, which is all that Paul had in his day, through them that he, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, had hope.

What was that hope? That God saves sinners and that he saved them in the way he appointed, and that he saved them all by himself, and that he saved them all by grace, and that he saved a people for his own glory, and that he let a whole world pass like in the flood and suffer the consequences of their sin, but he had mercy on Noah and his family. You see, such instances of that reveals the truth. Noah was just like everybody else but it says Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Where do you find out these things? In the Scriptures.

Paul writing to Timothy, he says, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." Every year in the summer, churches have what they call Bible School but the problem is the children are taught about everything but the Scriptures because the people doing it do not know the Scriptures. You can't teach what you don't know.

Paul writing to Timothy again in 2 Timothy 3:16 says this, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." This is the God-breathed word of God, this is the Spirit-breathed word of God. These men according to what Peter and Paul and all say, they didn't come up with this on their own. They didn't come up with a theology all their own. They were led by the Spirit of God to pen down word for word what the Lord said, and you'll be lost believing anything else but what the Lord says because it's the truth. The truth.

"From a child thou hast learned the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We only have faith which is the gift of God. Any other kind of faith is not true faith. You say, "Well, I believe this and I believe..." Well, okay, but let's don't mistake this as believing the truth. We only believe the truth when we believe what God has said, and we're only wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine." Beware of that preacher or that people who say, "Well, doctrine don't really matter. Let's just preach Jesus." Doctrine doesn't matter? That's what he calls his Gospel, doctrine. Supposing I send you out to the airport and I tell you, "You go out there and pick up a man named John," and that's all I tell you, and you go out there and you see a fellow and you say, "Is your name John?" He says, "Yes, I'm John." And another man over here says, "Wait a minute, my name is John. Which John?" There may be a half a dozen of them. And the same thing is with the name Jesus. Paul said, "Many believe another Jesus and another Gospel and live by another spirit." How are we gonna know? Doctrine. The doctrine of Christ. You don't have to wonder who he is, or how he is, or what he's done. It's all in the Scriptures.

"[It's] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." As a matter of fact, Paul having only the Old Testament Scriptures, when he came preaching, he told those Corinthians, "For I have delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he

was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." He wasn't talking about the New Testament Scriptures, he was talking about the Old Testament Scriptures, and what he's saying is this, "I told you who died. I told you who he died for, God's true Israel, his people, spiritual people. I told you how he in his death put away their sins. I told you that he raised from the dead. I told you about his success." Redeemed, I will sing of my Redeemer.

I listened very closely that hymn this morning. The hymnwriter said it was my Redeemed that did this, it was my Redeemed that did that, it was my Redeemed that did this, it was my Redeemer that did this. He did it all. He doesn't mention what he did at all. He sought me. He bought me. He did everything because we do nothing. You know where you find that at? The Scriptures.

In religion you find people telling you what to do to be saved, in the Gospel you find out who it is that does the saving. In religion you find out all that you're to do, in the Gospel, in the truth you find out what has been already done, finished and accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ which is salvation and it's not by a verse here or a verse there. You don't know the truth by going through the Scriptures like a buffet. Most of us have suffered from too many food buffets as it is, but we've suffered more by these religious buffets. You go to the church of your choice, you go until you find a preacher that you like, you go until you find one that's funny or that gives the best illustrations, or makes you feel good about yourself, or inspires you, but does he tell you the truth? Because the only way he can tell you the truth is if God puts it in his heart and like Paul, he can't do anything else, and the only way you can believe the truth, it's so contrary to what we want to believe, it's so contrary to what we hear in this world, is if his Spirit enables you, gives you faith to believe the truth.

When the Lord first began to show me the truth, I remember exactly one of the first things I thought and this was as a preacher, a pastor. One of the first things I thought was, "God's not who I thought he was. He doesn't save sinners the way I thought he did." Christ didn't do what I thought he did, I thought he made something possible for all people. I found out that he saved his people. My view of Christ and his death and what it accomplished was like building a bridge so wide that it included everybody except it did make it all the way across the river. It was a works view, not a grace view, because the Scriptures, when we understand the Scriptures, it won't be about the beast or the false prophet or anything else in Revelation that so excites men, it won't be how we're to live in this life, it'll be about Christ.

When he rose from the dead and he confronted those that he had met with before, they didn't understand. They didn't even know him at the first. It says, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Later on, he said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." All of it concerned Christ. He is the truth.

And so in Isaiah 8, the admonition from the prophet who represents God, he says, "To the law and to the testimony," to the word of God, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The truth, no one is saved apart from it, and the truth, first of all, is true to the Scriptures. The whole of Scripture. You see, some people know a lot of true things but they don't know the truth, but the truth is the whole body of the revelation, the written revelation of God in Christ and him crucified. All the pictures of him in the Old Testament. All the things that are said of him and done by him in the New Testament. It's all the same. It's the everlasting Gospel. And only by the truth is any man free, free from his sin, free from the devil, free from his bondage that men have brought him under, truly free to serve the living God of truth. I pray that God will reveal his truth to you.

We pray, Lord, this morning that you would take your word, the only thing that matters, what you have said, what you have told about yourself and about your salvation that's in your Son, and enable us to believe it, that you might be glorified and that we might have peace. For we pray and we ask it in Christ Jesus. Amen. Amen.