



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

February 2023

No. 446

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD (Part I)

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by

THE HARVESTER
141 County Road 474
Woodland, AL 36280
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. (Acts 17:27-32)

The ignorance of God's Word so typical of today's society is alarming, and it is ironic that in a country where Bibles are so plentiful, so few people seem willing to pay the price of diligent study to obtain a knowledge of God's Word. The lack of faith in the Bible as a revelation of God's will to men, even on the part of people who claim to be religious, is an unfortunate problem. However, our salvation from sin, our ultimate deliverance into heaven, and our knowledge of how to live the Christian life are all dependent on our knowledge of God's Word. The apostle Peter emphasized the nature and power of God's Word.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. 1:22-25)

First, you notice that the Word of God is the "truth". Peter said in verse 22 of the previous scripture "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...*" Pilate's question, asked centuries ago, is still an important one: "What is truth?" (John 18:38). As surely as scientific truth such as the law of gravity exists, religious truths also exist. The awe of nature and its creation originated with the same God whose law for our salvation, freedom, and happiness has been revealed in scripture.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

People are often confused about the plan of God for man's salvation because they look for the truth on this vital topic in human testimonials or in the theologies of men. Religious truth is found in the Bible. The men who wrote the Bible were guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

The second thing that can be gleaned from the passage from 1 Peter is that Peter identified God's Word as "seed" in verse 23.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. 1:23)

The change when a person ceases to serve sin and becomes a servant of God, a child of God, or a Christian, is a change that the Lord called a new birth.

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:2-5)

Those who have any knowledge of reproduction know that "seed" is necessary for a birth. We were all born physically of corruptible seed; we are born again of incorruptible seed. What is that seed? It is the Word of God! Without God's Word, the new birth would be as impossible as a human physi-

cal birth without seed. If you believe in the new birth and the teachings of Christ, you believe in being born again, you must also believe in the word of God which is the “seed” that produces the new birth. Believing that you can be saved without believing and obeying the commands of God’s Word comes as the result of accepting human opinion and false doctrine.

The third thing that the apostle Peter says is that the Bible is the Word of God. If more people believed this fact, they would have a profound respect for God’s Word. Who is the author of the Bible?

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The scriptures are not the product of human thought; they came from divine revelation. Indeed, God is the author of the Bible; it is the Word of God.

The fourth characteristic of the Word is that it abides. In the 25th verse of the passage from 1 Peter, Peter says that God’s Word is an enduring, abiding word.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. 1:25)

In the context of verse 23 and verse 25 Peter employed three terms to set forth the permanent nature of God’s word: “liveth,” “abideth,” and “endureth.” Isn’t it tragic that some good people have been led to believe that God’s Word is, as sometimes called, a “dead letter.” God’s Word is not a dead, lifeless thing. There is life in God’s Word.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God’s harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221* Email: theharvesteronline@gmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
(Heb. 4:12)

This is to say the Word of God is ALIVE and POWERFUL. God's Word is an abiding word. There have been various efforts made to destroy or to discredit the Bible. It has been taken out of the school room and neglected in the home. The Bible has been rejected as the standard for moral character and has been denied as a revelation of God's will for man. It has been burned and banned, despised and discredited, but the Word of God abides!

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Mat. 24:35)

Though frequently attacked by enemies and often neglected by friends, the Word of the Lord endures. The enduring nature of God's Word is put in contrast with the temporary nature of flesh and with the passing away quality of man's glory.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. 1:24-25)

These are the four basic characteristics of God's Word that we have studied:

1. It is truth.
2. It is the Seed which produces new birth.
3. It is the Word that has been authored by God.
4. It is the Word that abides.

Next month we will turn our attention to blessings that we may receive from the Word.

Adapted from a sermon by KENT DICKINSON
(Deceased)

COURAGE TO PREACH

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Tim. 4:1-2)

In these verses we find the command to “*Preach the word*” no matter what. But to whom does this apply: Timothy only, preachers only, or everybody?

Rather than enter a lengthy explanation, the answer can be found by looking at two verses.

And he said unto them [Christ’s disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

Therefore they [Christ’s disciples] that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. (Acts 8:4)

In each case, proclaiming the Word of God was performed by Christians, disciples of Christ. How absurd it would be for a heathen to preach things he does not even believe!

Certainly the command to preach does not apply only to Timothy. Should we not ALL “*fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Tim. 6:12a) or should Timothy only? God intended these letters to be applicable and read to all generations. The charges to Timothy should be an example for us, in the same manner that a principal may scold and punish one student as a lesson to all others concerned (1 Tim. 5:20).

Therefore, do we, as Christians, preach the Word like we should? This question is not directed only to preachers and evangelists, but to all disciples of Christ. Men and women alike can win many souls through “private” sermons or through living a righteous life. So why do we always hear: “Let the preacher do it.” Or “I’ll let you talk with the preacher and he will explain everything.”

One reason could be that today's members of the church do not know enough about the Bible because they do not study it themselves. They let the preacher do their studying. Another reason for less preaching today could be that people lack courage. They are afraid and ashamed to proclaim Christ and His Gospel. How different from Paul, who wrote: "*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...*" (Rom. 1:15-16a).

Two other people who were not scared to preach the Truth were Aquila and Priscilla. They saw the need to correct a well-spoken man.

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. (Acts 18:24-25)

Evidently Apollos was very sincere in spreading "*the things of the Lord.*" He was an eloquent speaker and able to persuade many. But his knowledge was limited. Apparently, Apollos did not know much about the Christ that had already come. He did not know there was now a new baptism "*for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). There was also a new law, the Old Law having been nailed to the Messiah's cross (Col. 2:14).

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. (Acts 18:26)

Whatever Apollos spoke about, it was in truth, but it was not complete (perfect). That is why Aquila and Priscilla had to take him aside and proclaim "*the way of God more perfectly.*"

If it had been us, would we have preached the Word to Apollos? Or would we have let it pass by? "Let our preacher talk to him," someone says. Brethren, how much longer can we

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
February 3-5	Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL	Mark Carpenter & Ricky Murphy

“neglect so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3)? It is the duty of every Christian to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2)!

Sometimes when we confront a well-known and much learned preacher, we assume he knows everything there is to know in the Bible. We never doubt his teachings. But what if he preaches another Christ, another baptism, or another doctrine? Will we have the courage to preach the Truth then? It is time to take a stand for the righteousness of God. It is time for ALL Christians to PREACH THE WORD! May God give us all the courage to do so.

RAY MCMANUS

Reprinted from *The LifeLine*, February 1983

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. What did the earth look like in the beginning?
WITHOUT FORM AND EMPTY (VOID) (Gen. 1:2)
2. What affliction did Hannah suffer from, that allowed Peninnah to provoke her? SHE WAS BARREN (1 Sam. 1:6)
3. What did the sailors of the ship Jonah was on do to increase their chances of survival?
THREW THE CARGO OVERBOARD (Jon. 1:5)
4. Complete the saying of Jesus: *“for the tree is known by his _____.”* FRUIT (Mat. 12:33)
5. When Jesus went to dinner at Simon the Pharisee's house, what did a woman do for him?
WASHED AND ANOINTED HIS FEET WITH PRECIOUS OINTMENT (Luke 7:36-46)