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*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,*
*and a light unto my path."*

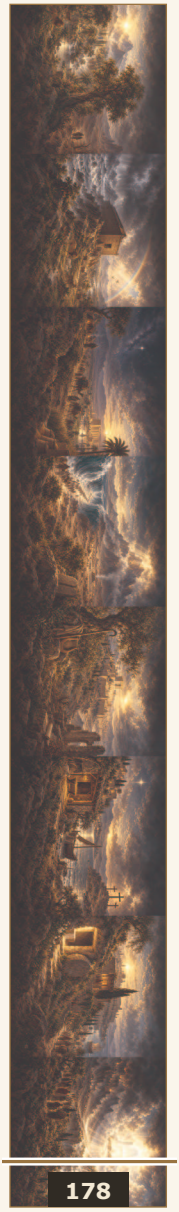
PSALM 119:105

# Four Great Truths



**JOHN WEAVER**

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE





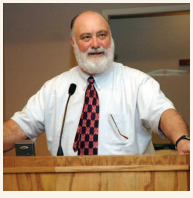
*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

**JOHN 17:17**

Christian faith must be distinguished from a profession that bears no fruit. John Weaver considers election, the character of saving faith, godliness, and the believer's response to preaching. These messages gather foundational truths into a practical call to examine whether confessed beliefs are finding expression in disciplined and faithful Christian life.

*“It is a serious matter to be unfaithful to the preaching of the Word of God.”*

JOHN WEAVER



## John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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# Four Great Truths

New Testament Studies

John Weaver

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# Four Great Truths

John Weaver

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

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CHAPTER 1

# Four Great Truths

*Part One of Two*

## Introduction: The Nature and Necessity of Truth

Let us open our Bibles to Titus, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3:

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

When we stop and think about the word truth, we must admit that we not only need truth, but want truth—at least those of us who believe truth. There is that which man calls truth that, in reality, is a lie.

The Bible speaks in Romans 1:25 of those who changed the truth of God into a lie. It also gives us, in James 3:14, the command not to lie against the truth. Here is a simple principle: if it is against God and His Word, it is a lie.

God is truth, according to the Bible. Since God is truth, everything else is a lie apart from Him. It is God who determines truth, and God who determines reality. There is no reality apart from God. When man tries to make his own reality, it is a lie. The only truth is God's truth, and the only reality is God's reality. All truth is of God, because God is truth.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 32:4, “He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

So He is called the God of truth. Everyone remembers John 14:6, because our Lord is truth incarnate. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." David said it plainly in Psalm 25:10: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth."

The problem we are facing today is the same problem that most have faced throughout the centuries, and it is very simple: most people do not want truth. It is easier to believe a lie than to believe the truth. The truth of the matter is that many will believe a false prophet when they will not believe a true prophet. Our Lord said to those Pharisees in John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

They were ready to turn away from the Lord Jesus Christ and receive anyone and anything else that came in his own name. Here is a very simple and straightforward truth: when anyone refuses the truth, the only thing left is a lie. Whenever you will not believe the truth, you are ultimately condemned to believe a lie, and believing a lie will condemn you and damn you.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, the Bible says, "...and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Why are they perishing? "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." People perish because they do not receive the love of the truth. When they do not receive the love of the truth, the Bible says in verse 11, "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." When you refuse to believe the truth, the only thing left is a lie, and a lie will condemn you every time.

Someone has aptly said it like this: truth is like surgery. It hurts, but it cures. A lie is like a painkiller: it gives instant relief, but has side effects that last forever. So, clearly, we should much rather have the truth. The Bible says in Proverbs 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” The truth of the matter is, I would much rather be wounded with the truth than kissed with a lie. Wounds will heal, but deceit continues.

There is another problem we have with the truth. Not only do most people really and truly not want it, but truth also destroys all our illusions. It destroys our ignorance and our error. Consequently, when people do not like what they hear, and cannot refute what they hear, they seek to destroy the messenger carrying the message. That is why the Apostle Paul asked the Galatians, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” It is astounding how many people are cut off simply for speaking the truth. So today I would like to share with you the beginning of a two-part message. The second part will come next Sunday, Lord willing, on four great truths. And certainly, I am not your enemy for telling you the truth.

## Truth Must Be Applied, Not Just Believed

Truth is not only to be believed; it also has to be applied in your life. Consider this illustration: You might believe that a weapon will save you from an attack, whether by a human predator or an animal predator. You can believe that all day long. But if that lion, tiger, or mad dog jumps at you, unless you pull that weapon out and shoot, your belief that it will protect you is absolutely useless. You must make sure that you apply the truth as well.

## First Great Truth: The Truth of God's Elect

So let us consider two of the great truths today. If you will look in your Bibles to Titus 1:1, we will get to this verse today. We will take verses 2 and 3 next Sunday, Lord willing. Paul writes, “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after

godliness.” Here is the first great truth: the truth of God's elect. There are obvious truths in this first verse. The first is that God does indeed have an elect.

The Bible teaches this over and over in Scripture. You remember when Elijah said, “I am left alone, and they seek my life to take it away.” And God said, “No, you're not left alone. I have reserved to myself seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal or kissed him.” God was telling Elijah, I do have an elect. I do have a remnant. I have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. You may not know them, but I have them. So there is an elect.

The Apostle Paul himself, in 2 Timothy 2:10, said, “I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” He said, “I endure all things for the elect's sake.” In 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14, we read: “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord.” Why? “Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Notice that he said, “We’re bound to give thanks always unto God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord.” Why? Because God hath chosen you unto salvation. The very first truth in Titus 1:1 is that there is indeed an elect.

## The Faith of God's Elect is a Divine, Saving Faith

Here is the second truth: God’s elect always have faith. That faith is referred to as “the faith of God’s elect.” You are going to have to ask yourself, What does that mean? What really and truly is the faith of God’s elect? In summary, it means that it is an absolutely saving faith. It is a divine faith, a faith that is wrought in God. When we talk about faith, we must understand that there are errors in the minds of people concerning faith.

Let me give you several illustrations. First of all, there are those who equate intellectual assent to a saving faith. That intellectual assent is not a real saving faith. Simply because someone believes facts about the gospel does not mean that they actually believe the

gospel. Salvation is not just mental assent. It is not simply nodding one's head in agreement with historical facts. Salvation consists in far more than merely believing historical facts about Jesus Christ. Now, it is true that there are historical facts about Jesus Christ, but let me point out this fact: the facts are not the gospel. Jesus Christ Himself is the gospel, and one may give mental assent, intellectual assent, to numerous truths and still be lost.

There are multitudes of individuals who have assented intellectually to facts they have heard and been taught all their lives, and they genuinely believe somehow that they are saved regardless of the course of their lives and regardless of how they live their lives. Scripture identifies such faith as a dead faith. The Bible calls it a dead faith. For instance, in James chapter 2, beginning at verse 14, James speaks of a faith that is not a living faith, not a saving faith, but nothing more than a dead faith, absolutely worthless. He asks, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Now, let us go back and look at verse 14. He asks, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Let me insert something there that will clear this up for you: Can that kind of faith save him? James goes on to give us his illustration. Here is a brother or sister who has need. They are hungry, thirsty, and need clothes. What does this man with a dead faith do?

He says, "Notwithstanding, he gives him not those things which are needful for the body." Then he asks, Can that kind of faith save him? This is a dead faith, one that does not work.

Now let me make something clear. Our works do not save us. Faith plus our works do not save us. However, if we are genuinely saved, it is by a faith that works. Most everyone can quote Ephesians 2:8-9, but most people forget verse 10. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Then verse 10 says, "For we are

his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." God has ordained that those whom He saved walk in good works. True saving biblical faith is therefore not a dead faith.

It is not a mere intellectual assent to certain historical facts. Saving faith produces a life, a faith, and a belief that actually move in the direction of obedience and holiness.

James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." If you take the breath, or the spirit, out of a man, all you have is a dead body. Likewise, if you take away works that demonstrate, illustrate, and exemplify a real saving faith, then, if there are no works, it must be a dead faith. Just as the body is dead without the spirit, faith without works is dead also.

If your faith does not pray, study, obey, worship, give, praise, be thankful and appreciative, enable you to submit to the Word of God, honor the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek His kingdom, then you need to examine your faith. That is a command in 2 Corinthians chapter 13, where the Apostle Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Clearly, there is such a thing as a dead faith. Anyone who has a dead faith is merely deceiving himself. He is certainly not deceiving God. A man who says that he has faith, but never lives a holy life, never obeys, and never does anything godly and right, has a dead faith.

Here is the second error, one I have encountered all of my life. People say, "I must be a Christian, because I believe in God." It is true that Christians believe in God, that God is, and that the Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

But a man can believe in God and be lost. He can believe in God and never touch salvation. Look in James chapter 2 and verse 19. There is not only such a thing as a dead faith; there is also a demon's faith: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." They know there is a real God, that they are going to be judged, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. An

interesting study would be to go through the New Testament and see the confessions demons made when our Lord cast them out. In Luke chapter 4, when our Lord approached them, they said, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."

Demons believe in God. They know that God is, how powerful He is, and His position. They know that our Lord Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and God of Gods.

If you do not acknowledge the greatness, goodness, glory, power, and position of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you do not tremble before Him, you do not even have the faith of demons. They not only believe; they tremble. There is indeed a dead faith, and there is also a demon's faith. When Paul spoke of the faith of God's elect, he was speaking of a third kind: divine faith.

A dead faith or a demon's faith will not save anyone. Divine faith is given by God and wrought by the Spirit of God. It is a faith that obeys, trusts, leans upon the Lord, suffers, endures all things, and will never let go of the Lord Jesus Christ. It believes that salvation is an accomplished fact; that Jesus Christ actually propitiated the Father and satisfied God the Father; that Jesus Christ is our substitute and our sacrifice.

It is a faith that wholly and completely entrusts itself to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the gift of God the Father, wrought in us by God the Holy Spirit, enabling us to come savingly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 6:44, our Lord declares, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." He continues, "And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Return to verse 44: "No man can come to me." The term "can" is a term of ability; "may" is a term of permission. Thus, no man has the ability to come unto Christ except the Father who sent Him draw him. And it is not drag; it is draw. God draws us. How does God draw us? The answer is found in verse 45.

That is by teaching us, enlightening our minds, releasing our wills from the bondage of sin, and enabling us to come savingly to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why, in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 13, the Apostle Paul said, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So a divine faith means that something has happened in your life that would be absolutely impossible for you to accomplish yourself. It means that you have been worked in effectually by the Holy Spirit and drawn into the fellowship of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

So when God calls us effectually, when God enlightens our mind, when God teaches us, when God draws us, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 9, it is a call that actually ends in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A divine faith is that which is absolutely impossible for man to accomplish. Why? The answer is because it is a work of God alone. I am genuinely convinced that the reason most professing Christians stumble, fall, fail, and never persevere is simply because they only have a dead faith.

They have given intellectual assent to a number of historical facts, and that is it. There is no power in their lives, no fruit in their lives, and no devotion in their lives. A divine faith is that which has to be done by God.

## Salvation is Impossible with Men but Possible with God

Let me show you this in Mark chapter 10. This is the story of the rich young ruler. The Bible tells you in this passage that there was a rich young ruler who came running to our Lord, knelt, and asked, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Our Lord actually begins with a rebuke. He said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."

Literally, what he was saying is this: If I am good, then I am God. And if I am God, you do not come running into my presence, demanding something from me. But our Lord said, “You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, honor thy father and mother. If you want to be saved, keep these

commandments." The young man said, "All these have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

Remember, this young man not only had morals, because evidently he was pure and clean; he also had manners, because he knelt. He had money, too—lots and lots of money. I usually think that if this young man had come to the average preacher today, he would have been led to the Lord in five minutes, baptized, made a member of the local church, and probably promoted to a deacon. With the money he had given, a new wing would have been added to the church and named after him, or a college started in his name. But our Lord said, "Here is what you need to do: You want to be saved? You sell all that you have and give it to the poor. Take up your cross and follow me."

Here is a good question: How many of you, when you were saved, sold everything you had and gave it to the poor? The answer is none of you. Why did our Lord tell this young man that? Why did He not say, like the Apostle Paul, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? Why did He tell him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor? Our Lord was applying the law of God. The young man said, "All these things have I observed from my youth up," and our Lord was saying, "You had not even kept the first commandment: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,'" because his money was his god.

When he heard that, he went away exceedingly sorrowful, for he had great riches. Mark 10:22 says, "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." He did not want to give any of it away because his money and possessions were his god. Now look at verse 23.

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"

Now look at that question: “Who then can be saved?” Our Lord answers it in verse 27: “And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” The truth of the matter is, only God can save and only God can give a divine faith. Your baptism will not save you. Your good works, mental assent, church membership, good intentions, or relationship with true believers will not save you. You cannot save yourself. The only one who can save is the one true and living God, who has sent his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the propitiation for our sins.

Therefore, we are required and obligated to throw ourselves upon Him and ask, beg, and plead for His mercy and grace, and for His gifts of repentance and faith. It is our duty and responsibility to seek Him, call upon Him, implore and beseech Him to save us, because we cannot save ourselves. It is God that must give us the faith of His elect. That faith is divine and is produced by God alone.

The Scripture says, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.” The second truth is this: the faith of God's elect always produces the truth which is after godliness. All truth which is God's truth is after godliness. Godliness is a synonym for holiness, which includes reverence, respect, fear, and piety toward God.

## Second Great Truth: The Faith of God's Elect Produces Godliness

Now, the Greek word is eusebeia, literally translated “godliness.” In our Bibles it is translated “godliness” fourteen times and “holiness” one time. But look again at verse 1, because there is another important word: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.” The word “acknowledging” is very important.

It does not mean merely to nod our heads in agreement or to say something with our mouths. The Greek word is epignosis. Epi is a preposition meaning “upon,” and gnosis is knowledge. Thus, “acknowledging” means knowledge upon knowledge: a full and

precise knowledge. The verse could be understood as saying, "According to the faith of God's elect, to the acknowledging—but to the full, precise truth—which is after godliness."

In other words, we know something absolutely, for sure, and certainly. It is not merely in our heads; it is in our lives. Our lives are to be lives of godliness, pursuing obedience and conformity to the Word of God. There are three important truths in relation to the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. Think about these.

## No Excuse for a Believer Not to Be Godly

First of all, there is absolutely no excuse for a real child of God not to be godly. How can I say that? This is what I mean when I say there is absolutely no excuse for a real, genuine child of God not to be godly. Look at 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Did you see that? If God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, there is absolutely no excuse why we should not be godly.

We are alive in Him. We should be godly in Him. Wow. I will return to this a little later, but look at it again in verse 3. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." So the very first truth that we must understand is that there is no excuse, no reason, for a real, genuine child of God not to be godly, because God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Now here is the second truth: godliness is something that has to be added to our faith. Faith is our foundation, but that foundation does not consist of the superstructure. The foundation is there; the superstructure sits upon the foundation. We have to build upon that foundation. Let me show you. Let us begin again by reading verse 3 of 2 Peter 1: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." All of these virtues must be added to our faith. He says "giving all diligence." You make sure you pay attention that these graces are added to your faith. One of those is godliness.

## Godliness Requires Diligent Spiritual Exercise

Now, let me get to the last truth concerning godliness. First, there is just no excuse for the real, genuine child of God not to be godly. Second, godliness and many other graces are to be added to our faith. It is our responsibility to give all diligence to add these to our faith. But here is the third one, and it is going to be the most painful: godliness involves exercise. Most people do not like exercise. They would much rather be doing something else.

Turn back to 1 Timothy, chapter 4, beginning with verse 7. The Word of God says, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." There are two truths here: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." The Greek word for "exercise" is actually where we get our English word "gymnastics"—Gumnadzo. Gymnasticize yourself unto godliness. Alice and I enjoy watching gymnastics, and the older I get, I suppose the more I enjoy it, only because it is astounding to me that anybody can be that flexible and do those things.

It is kind of like when I am teaching rifle and have to teach squatting, kneeling, and prone position. I tell people, "Don't think for one minute that I cannot get into those positions. I can. I just can't get out of them," at least not without help sometimes. The last time Steve and I went to Front Sight and did some of that, I told him,

“I’m going to do it.” He said, “Fine, I’m not. I’m just going to help you up when you get through with it.” I told him, “I’m too old for that.”

But when I look at Simone Biles—the young black gymnast, an Olympic and world champion—I think of what she can do. You should see that girl. It is unbelievable and astounding. When you see her, you think, “My goodness, how can she do all of that?” The answer is that she probably started when she was two or three years old and has done it all her life. You do not become that flexible or able to do those things by thinking, “I’m just going to be a gymnast. I’ll start tomorrow.” No, it does not work like that.

Years ago, I showed Alice a picture from the internet. I think the woman was either eighty or ninety; I forget which. She was a Chinese woman wearing slacks, standing at a stop sign with one foot on the ground and the other straight up in the air against the sign. Ninety years old! I thought, “Lord have mercy. I have to be pulled out of my chair.” But she had probably done that all her life. I have seen ballet teachers in their seventies and eighties who could do things like that.

The point is that they worked at being flexible, limber, and loose. They exercised themselves. Here is what he is saying: “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” We are to exercise ourselves unto godliness. We are to work at being godly.

Now, here is the truth: you will never exercise yourself unto godliness until and unless you refuse profane and old wives’ fables. A profane and old wives’ fable is something you have heard all your life that simply is not true.

One thing I heard was that if your mother, or a pregnant woman, listened to beautiful music during pregnancy, the child would be born musically inclined. I tell people my mother must have listened to a dying buzzard sing, because I am not musically inclined at all. That is just an old wives' fable. Some old wives' fables, when it comes to spiritual gymnastics, are these: “All I have to do is go forward in a church service, and that will take care of it. All I have to do is kneel at an altar one time. All I have to do is rededicate my life.” That is not

true. If you decide to do a backflip and do it one time, does that mean you will be able to do it the rest of your life? I do not think so.

When we are talking about gymnasticizing ourselves unto godliness, we are talking about continually exercising to have godly thoughts, a godly way of thinking, a godly way of acting, and a godly way of doing things. In other words, we are doing things biblically and scripturally, and things that are righteous and holy. Those things do not come by nature. You have to exercise your mind and control your emotions—indeed, control everything—if you are going to be exercising yourself rather unto godliness. Now he said, "Bodily exercise profiteth little."

It does profit some, though not much. The most muscle-bound man, the older he gets, the more his muscles will sag. If you do not believe that, look at Arnold Schwarzenegger today. Everything he has sags. I am not saying do not have bodily exercise; it does profit some. But godliness is profitable in this life, he said, and in the life to come as well.

There is an adage frequently used by those who go to the gym: "No pain, no gain." That is true not only physically but spiritually, because we have to fight to keep our minds holy and pure and our lives in line with the Word of God. So here are two great truths: first, the faith of God's elect; and second, that faith of God's elect always leads to the truth of acknowledging godliness—that our lives are to be godly lives.

## Applications: Examine Your Faith and Pursue Godliness

It is only a divine faith that will enable us to have the faith of God's elect. And it is only the faith of God's elect that will lead us to the acknowledging of the truth that is after godliness. A dead faith will not do that. A demon's faith will not do that. Only a divine faith will produce this truth in our lives.

The truth is this: if someone is unconcerned about being godly, holy, or righteous; if they have no desire to please God and no desire to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, they need to be checking their faith, because they are probably still lost and in their

sins. The faith of God's elect always leads us to the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness.

Look again at 2 Peter 1:3: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” How do we know? “Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” God, in His divine power, hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. What is the source of that knowledge? Through the knowledge of Him. It is only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and only in and through His Word, that we understand godliness and righteous living. The more we learn about God, the more holy and godly we will become, and the more obedient we will become, because His divine power is manifested in and through His Word, and that produces godliness and righteous living in our lives.

The more we know about Him, the more obedient we become. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." We must lay aside every weight, every hindrance, and the sin that so easily besets us, whatever that may be; usually, it is the flesh. If I am going to run a foot race, I am not putting on army boots or carrying rocks in my pockets. I want to lay aside anything that will weigh me down.

Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto this life and the life that is to come. It requires spiritual exercise to live a godly life. Why must we exercise incessantly? Because our flesh is opposed to it. The flesh does not want us to be more holy or godly; it cries and craves to be satisfied. Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

When Scripture says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," it means that the flesh fights against the Spirit, and the Spirit fights against the flesh. That is why holiness and godliness require exercise and a constant combat mentality. We cannot give in to our flesh if we are going to live a godly life.

If we have the faith of God's elect, it will always lead to the truth and acknowledging of that truth, which is after godliness. We will never find it with a dead faith or a demon's faith; it is always with divine faith. Those whom God saves, He enables to live a godly life. There is no excuse not to be godly. We must add all these virtues and graces to our lives, and that will require spiritual gymnastics, exercising ourselves unto holiness.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before you today and thank you for your Word and truth. We thank you for these two truths: there is an elect, there is the faith of God's elect, and there is the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness. Help us, Lord, to be godly, holy, obedient, and faithful, honoring you in all that we say and do. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

# Four Great Truths

*Part Two of Two*

## Review of the First Two Great Truths

Last week I began a message titled “Four Great Truths,” and we covered only two of them. The next two are found in the Word of God. Titus chapter 1, beginning with verse 1, says: “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching which he hath committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.”

I began the message last week by talking about truth. Certainly, the Word of God is truth, and our Lord Jesus Christ is truth. But many people really and truly do not want truth. Romans 1:25 speaks of those who change the truth of God into a lie, and we are commanded not to lie against the truth. Over and over, we find that people would much rather have a lie than the truth, because truth will dispel not only errors and heresies, but illusions as well. Most

people would rather live in their own dream world, a world of illusions, rather than live in the world of reality.

We began looking at the truths presented in Titus 1:1–3. The very first truth we saw was the truth of the faith of God's elect. This faith of God's elect is indeed a divine faith, a faith bestowed by God in His grace, mercy, and power. It is not a dead faith. Many today have merely an intellectual assent to truth, or mentally assent to historical facts, and then equate that with saving faith, when in reality it is not saving faith.

When we look in James chapter 2, we find that he speaks of a dead faith, and says that kind of faith cannot save anyone. Verse 26 says, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so likewise faith without works is dead.” Whenever someone has a profession, and yet does not have works that evidence and manifest the fact that he is a real, genuine Christian, it is indeed nothing more than a dead faith. A lot of people are like that in our modern-day churches. Titus chapter 1, verse 16, points this out very clearly.

The Bible says, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient unto every good work reprobate." They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. That is nothing more than a dead faith.

Then, of course, there is the demon's faith, as I pointed out in James 2:19: "Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble." A lot of people think they are saved simply because they believe in God. Yet those who profess to believe in God usually do not tremble before Him. Therefore, their faith is not even the faith of a demon, because at least the demons tremble. Although the demons believe in God, they are certainly not repentant, nor are they honoring or glorifying Him. So there is this faith of God's elect, and that faith is a divine faith. It differs greatly from a dead faith and also from a demon's faith.

The second truth I pointed out is in verse 1: the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. There is absolutely no excuse for us to live an ungodly life, because the Bible says in 2 Peter 1:3 that God has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Godliness is something that must be added to our faith. Faith is the foundation. But 2 Peter 1:3 and onward says, "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly love," and it goes right on down. All these things have to be added. The third truth I pointed out was that godliness can only be accomplished by pure exercise.

The Bible says in 1 Timothy 4, verses 7 and 8, “But refuse profane and old wives' fables, but rather exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” The word exercise is the Greek word gumenadzo, from which we derive gymnastics and gymnasium. So, actually, he is saying, “gymnasticize yourself rather unto godliness.” It takes godly exercise to make sure that our thoughts are biblical and scriptural, our emotions are controlled and brought in line with the Word of God—in fact, the entirety of our lives. It must indeed be godly exercise in order for us to attain maturity in the faith.

The first two great truths were, number one, the faith of God's elect, and, secondly, the acknowledging of the truth which is after holiness, or godliness; I pointed out that they are synonymous. When you look at verses 1 through 3 of Titus chapter 1, the apostle is setting down, in actuality, the sum of the gospel. He is dealing with justification, sanctification, the hope of salvation, and the ministry of the Word. All of this comes, he says, through the acknowledging of the truth.

Those who despise truth will never, ever be converted as long as they continue to despise truth. Jesus Christ is truth incarnate. When you despise truth, you despise Jesus Christ; and when you despise truth, you despise the Word of God, for the Word of God is truth. You cannot be converted apart from the Word of God and apart from the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We had a lady years ago, a friend of ours, who was dying of cancer. The world would have considered her uneducated, ignorant, and worthless because she only went to the fourth grade. Certainly, she would qualify as an uneducated person. But she knew more of

Scripture than a lot of the PhDs. I remember being in her room and praying for her because, very obviously, she was close to the end.

I was holding her hand, and as I prayed for her, she had a daughter and a son. The daughter attended church with us, but the son never, ever darkened the door of the church, period. After I prayed for her and for the daughter, I started praying for the son. This lady jerked her hand out of mine, caught me around the wrist, and said, "No preacher, no."

She said, "You're wasting your breath to pray for Johnny. He refuses to hear the Word of God; there is no hope for him." I thought to myself, This woman knows more theology than most preachers—and that's true. You will never be converted if you do not bow to truth, and certainly the Word of God is truth.

## Introduction to the Third Great Truth: The Hope of Eternal Life

The first of the other two great truths is found in verse 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." An obvious question should arise when you read this verse: To whom did God promise eternal life before the world began? Clearly, you and I were not born then; no one was born then, because it was indeed before the world began. To whom, then, did He promise eternal life?

There is a similar passage in 2 Timothy. Look, please, at chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. Paul writes Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." Now watch carefully: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

## The Eternal Covenant and the Nature of Biblical Hope

He gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the world began. Eternal life was indeed promised to us before the world began, but it was promised to us only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord

Jesus Christ was given to us by virtue of the eternal, or everlasting, covenant.

Let me explain that. Turn in your Bibles to Hebrews, chapter 13, and look at verses 20 and 21, right before the book of James: Hebrews, chapter 13, verses 20 and 21.

“Now, the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Verse 20 talks about the everlasting, or eternal, covenant. Here is a covenant that was made in eternity past. With whom was this covenant made? The only ones that existed then were God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. We only existed in the purpose and counsel of God. Here is basically a summary of this eternal covenant. In the eternal or everlasting covenant, God the Father gave to God the Son a people. He gave Him an elect. He gave Him a herd of sheep. Whatever you want to call them, God the Father gave to God the Son an elect. God the Son, in this eternal covenant, agreed to become their substitute, their sacrifice, their propitiation, and to be their Redeemer and their Reconciler.

And then God the Holy Spirit agreed to regenerate and convict and convert all those that the Father had given to Jesus Christ and all of those for whom Jesus Christ had died. This basically is that everlasting, or the eternal, covenant.

This must be understood in one sense of the word to grasp the significance of the eternal covenant. I want to emphasize one word. In Titus 1:2 the Bible says, “in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.” The eternal covenant is explained in order to point out the word hope: “In hope of eternal life.” The word hope in the Bible is used differently from the way that we use the word hope today.

I've heard professors in Jesus Christ make statements like this: “I hope I'm saved. I hope I make it to heaven.” They use the word hope in a similar vein to the way I would use it when I say, “I hope to go to town tomorrow.” I don't know whether I'm going to go to town

tomorrow. I would like to, and I would hope to, but it is a hope based on a contingency.

In other words, I hope to go to town tomorrow, weather permitting. If it's raining and storming, obviously I'm not going. I would hope to go health permitting; that is, if I'm sick, I'm not going. I would hope to go mechanically permitting; that is, if my automobile works. It may not work, and I'm not going to walk 10 miles to town. I am simply pointing out the fact that every time we use the word hope, we use it based on a contingency.

I hope to go to town tomorrow if I feel like it, if I have enough money. That's our kind of hope. But that is not the way the word is used in the Bible. In fact, the Greek word elpis simply means an expectation, but more than that, it means a joyful and a confident expectation. It is a joyful and confident expectation centered upon the person work of Jesus Christ that was given to us in that great eternal covenant before the world began. He said in verse 2, “in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.”

In Titus chapter 3, beginning with verse 3, he says, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers' lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." That's a pretty good description of what we were before we were converted. He says in verse four, "But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior toward man appeared," which would be Jesus Christ, "not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior," watch, "that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In this passage you have the work of God the Father, the work of God the Son, and the work of God the Holy Spirit.

## The Certainty of the Believer's Hope

So here's a good question. Do the works of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit produce a maybe-so salvation or a know-so salvation? Clearly, it has to be a know-so salvation. It is not

based upon a contingency. Is there some remote possibility that God has not considered that we might not be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life?

The answer is absolutely not. If we have been given a divine faith, which leads us to a sanctifying faith, meaning that we walk obediently and are pleasing unto the Lord, obviously then we have a sure hope of eternal life, which God promised to us in Jesus Christ before the world ever began.

There is even more confirmation in Hebrews chapter 6, beginning with verse 13: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. So after that he patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath of confirmation is for them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability, the unchangeableness of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath."

Hebrews 6:13–20 says, “That by two immutable things, the oath and it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. Whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made a high priest forever after the order Melchizedek.”

Notice that he talks about having an anchor. The anchor is sure and steadfast. Verse 19 says, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” The Greek word for “sure” is asphalos, meaning that which is certain, firm, and confirmed. The word for “steadfast” is bebeos, meaning firm, sure, stable, trustworthy, and steadfast. Look at verse 19 again. It is an anchor, and he refers to it as a hope. Our hope in Jesus Christ is something that is solid.

It is confirmed, absolutely certain, absolutely sure, and standing, not failing whatsoever. Our hope is not something uncertain. It is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

He is our forerunner, who has entered heaven, into the presence of God the Father, and is seated at the Father's right hand on our behalf. Consequently, there is no doubt as to whether we have a solid hope. May I point something else out? The Word of God also refers to Jesus Christ as our head. He is our head; we are His body. If His head is already in the presence of God the Father, for sure His body will be there shortly thereafter as well. Our hope, then, is sure and steadfast.

In 1 Peter 1:3–5, we see something else about this hope. It is not a dead hope, nor is it based upon a contingency that God has not foreseen. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation."

"Ready to be revealed in the last time." Now, the Bible tells you in verse 3 that we have been begotten again into a lively hope. The Greek word refers to that which is living, that which is alive. It is not a dead hope. No, it is something that has breath and life. He has begotten us again into a living hope—how? By the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What has He purchased for us? Verse 4: "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." How do we know that we will make it? Here is how: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Obviously, this is no dead hope. This is something God has given us as an anchor of our soul, both sure and steadfast—a solid, living hope.

## God's Immutability and the Security of Hope

Now remember, if you go back, he not only says this in Hebrews 6, but I want you to go back to Titus chapter 1 and verse 2. Look what he says: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." You remember the Bible says in Hebrews 6, by two immutable things, and one of those immutable things was that it is impossible for God to lie. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

"The word lie here includes, beyond its ordinary meaning, the thought of change. So that when we read that God cannot lie, we understand by it not only that he cannot say that which is untrue, but that having said something which is true, he never changes from it and does not by any possibility, after his purpose, retract his word. This is very consolatory to the Christian, that whatever God has said in the divine purpose is never changed. The decrees of God were not written upon sand, but upon the eternal brass of his unchangeable nature. We may truly say of the sealed book of his decrees, hath he said and shall he not do it? Hath he purposed it and shall it not come to pass?" Whatever God says is truth; He will never change from it, retract it, or take it back. So, just as surely as God is true, our hope is in Jesus Christ, and He cannot fail.

He will not change, and He certainly will not deny Himself. Just as the faith of God's elect leads to the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness leads to an hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, has promised before the world began.

We understand, based upon verse 1, the faith of God's elect. It is not a dead faith, it is not a demon's faith; it is a divine faith. We also understand the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, and the hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie has promised before the world began. So here is my question: How do we know the truth of these doctrines? How did this come to our knowledge and understanding?

## The Fourth Great Truth: Manifestation Through Preaching

Look in verse 3, because here is the fourth great truth: “But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” That great truth is a manifestation of the truth through preaching. Verse 3 says, “But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.”

I suppose that everyone knows that between the Old Testament and the New Testament, there were 400 years of silence. God did not speak. They had the truth of the Old Covenant, but there was no

truth of the New Covenant until the appointed time came. Thus, when verse 3 says, “but hath in due times manifested,” the phrase “due times” refers to the proper time, the appointed time, or the season which God has eternally purposed and has seen good according to divine wisdom.

We understand this in light of other passages. Consider the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. When was Jesus Christ born? The answer is, exactly when God the Father ordained Him to be born into this world. That is why the Bible says in Galatians 4:4–5, “But when the fullness of time has come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” But listen now: “but when the fullness of times.” Or we could say, when due time came. In other words, Jesus Christ came exactly at the appointed day and hour.

The same truth is found in Acts 2:1, because the Bible says there, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come.” What does that mean? It means it came at the exact day and hour that God had ordained it. Yes, it came from the pictures of the Old Testament types. It came because of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yes, but it came fully when God had ordained it, when God had appointed it, in due time. It did not come too early. It did not come too late. Jesus Christ did not come too early. He did not come too late. Everything was right on time.

Our Lord basically started His ministry, and it is recorded in Mark 1:15, where the Word of God says, “and saying, The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel.” The time is fulfilled. What is He saying? The appointed time has come. The due time is here. The season is absolutely now. Jesus Christ is saying, Here is the good news. May I remind you that Jesus Christ Himself is the good news? The gospel is not facts about Jesus Christ. The gospel is Jesus Christ.

Look back in Titus 1:3: “but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.” So here is the good question: How do I learn about the faith of God’s elect? How do I learn about the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness? How do I learn about the hope of eternal life? I could ask these questions another

way. How do I learn about justification, sanctification, election, predestination, or glorification? How do I learn about any doctrine in the Word of God? The answer is found in verse 3: “but hath in due times manifested His Word through preaching.”

There are truths in the Bible that you will never understand except through preaching. How can I say that? Does that mean you cannot read your Bible? Of course not. You must read your Bible every day. Does it mean you cannot study? Of course you can study, and you must study. You need to know how to use lexicons, concordances, commentaries, and maps. I encourage all of that. But the truth of the matter is this: there are some things that you are never ever going to learn except through the preaching of the Word of God.

For instance, he said, “but hath in due times manifested His Word.” The word manifested is the Greek word phanerao, which means to reveal, to make known, to make known that which before was unknown or unseen or not understood. It is basically a teaching of the Word of God.

When you study the Scriptures, you are going to find three great truths. Number one, God the Father ordained the preaching of the Gospel. Number two, God the Son Himself engaged in the preaching of the gospel. And number three, over and over in scripture, we are told that the Holy Spirit of God is covenantally engaged to honor the preaching of the gospel. You remember that passage in Isaiah 55, where God said, “My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that whereinto I send it, and that whereinto I purpose it.” God the Father has set up the ordinance of preaching and proclaiming His Word. Those that were sent by Him—listen to verse 3 again—“but hath in due times manifested his word through the preaching which is committed unto me,” said Paul, “according to the commandment of God our Savior.”

## The Necessity of Preaching for Spiritual Maturity

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4. Verse 11 says, “And he,” that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is the one who has ascended on high, “gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastor teachers.” Pastor teachers are

one and the same. Notice that He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor teachers. Why did He give these gifts?

Verse 12 answers: “For the perfecting of the saints,” that is, the maturing of the saints; “for the work of the ministry, for the edifying,” that is, the building up and strengthening, “of the body of Christ.” How long will this preaching continue, and these gifts continue? “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect or mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

The purpose is “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying,” or building up, “and the strengthening of itself in love.”

Why did God give pastor teachers? Why did He give apostles? The answer is, “For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Jesus Christ.” It takes preaching and teaching for the saints of God to be mature, built up, and strengthened in the faith. It takes preaching for them to grow up in Christ, to cease being children, and to withstand the deceivers who are ready to deceive them on every hand.

You will never be the Christian that you should be without the preaching of the Word of God. God gives His men, His preachers, that which His people need. He leads, guides, directs, and prepares the hearts and minds of His servants to feed His sheep. That is why, in the book of Amos, chapter 3 and verse 7, the Word of God says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealed this secret unto his servants the prophets." In other words, God says, I will put in their mouth what they must say, and I will tell the people through them. There are some things you will never learn except through preaching.

We have individuals in our church who are now retired. Dr. Bowen is a retired OBGYN. I have no idea how many babies he has delivered, but that is what he did all his life. I have never delivered a baby, nor have I even been around a baby when he was born. If there were an emergency involving a pregnant mother about to have her child, and she had to choose between me and Dr. Bowen, if she had any sense, she would choose Dr. Bowen, because that was his life. He is bound to know more about delivering babies than I do.

Dr. Holmes in our church is a retired veterinarian. Have I doctored animals? Yes. Have I sewed up and stitched up animals? Yes. I am sure my stitches were not nearly as neat as Dr. Holmes's, but I have done it. If an animal you love needed help, would you rather call on me or Dr. Holmes, who has done this all his life? If I want to know something about delivering babies, I am going to ask Dr. Bowen, because that is what he has given his life to. If I want to know something about animal husbandry and dealing with animals, I am going to ask Dr. Holmes, because that has been his life. Yes, you may read your Bible. Yes, you may study.

Do you realize that the men God calls and the men God sends have spent their entire lives studying so that they can teach what God gives them to teach? Have you considered the fact that each Lord's Day God, through His preachers, is setting out a meal for you? It is a meal that you are going to need through the week, maybe through the month, and maybe even sometime in the future. It is a truth that God has ordained for you to hear, that you may learn, and that you may apply to your life and the lives of others. If you are not present when that meal is put out, you will go hungry.

I have talked to people in times past who had severe problems. I have also talked to people who had very serious questions and needed answers. I would study, research, and come up with a message that would give them the answers they wanted—not just answers to their questions, but answers for those who had severe problems. I would prepare and go to church so that they could receive the answer, and they were not there that day.

You cannot miss and continue to grow. Look in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 2. God has never called me, and He has never called any man, to chase people down and cram truth down their throats.

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 2, Paul tells Timothy, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.”

Faithful men are present, eager, willing, and ready to receive truth. They are not lackadaisical, slothful, off and on, up and down, and undependable. In other words, Paul said, whatever I taught you, Timothy, you teach faithful men. What are faithful men? They are men who are dependable, men you can count on, men who are going to be there when they need to be there.

It is not my responsibility to chase people down and cram truth down their throats. It is their responsibility to be faithful to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

## Three Necessities for Maturity in the Faith

Here are three things that are absolutely necessary for maturity in the faith. You will never be mature without them. In Colossians 1:28, Paul says, “whom we preach,” talking about Jesus Christ, “whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect or mature in Christ Jesus.” If you want to be presented mature in Christ Jesus, three things are absolutely necessary in your life: preaching, warning, or nutheteo—nuthetic confrontation—and teaching in wisdom, God's Word.

Isn't it strange, since I talked about truth, how most people do not want truth? When we talk about preaching, the next thing is warning every man, that is, nuthetic confrontation. What is nuthetic confrontation? Suppose Gary is doing something wrong, contrary to the Word of God. I could come to him and say, “Now, brother, you ought not to be doing this. Here is what God says. Here is something to avoid. And here is something you can do in place of it that would be pleasing in the Lord.” That is nuthetic confrontation. We are to speak the truth in love, rebuke in love, and admonish, as the Bible says. The word admonish, the word confront, or warn here, is all nuthetic confrontation.

But when you try to confront someone, usually, even a professing Christian, what attitude do they take? “Who are you to talk to me like that? Who are you to tell me what's right and what's wrong?” My answer is, I'm a representative of the Most High God. I'm an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Yes, I have the right to tell you that, because the Bible tells me to exhort, rebuke, with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Every Christian has that responsibility. When you refuse to hear preaching, when you refuse to be nuthetically confronted, and when you refuse to be taught, you're never going to be mature in Jesus Christ. You're never.

And these three things are absolutely necessary. Notice what the Scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 2:13: “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.”

So here is what Paul is telling those Thessalonians: when you received the Word which we preached, you did not say, “That is Paul’s opinion. That opinion belongs to Timothy, or that opinion belongs to Silas, or that opinion belongs to Barnabas.” No, they said, “When we heard you preach, we received it as it was in truth, the Word of God—not as the word of man.”

Let me put it to you like this. Do I have opinions? Yes. Do I know everything? No. But if I expound a Scripture, explain a Scripture, and apply the Scripture, that is not my opinion. That is the Word of God. That is the truth of God, and that is how it is to be received—not as, “Well, that is just what Brother Weaver thinks.” No. If it is from the Scripture, it is what God says and not what I think. Here he is telling us very clearly that we have this great truth: the manifestation of the truth through preaching.

## Applications: Attitude Toward Preaching and Faithfulness

Your attitude toward the preaching of the Word of God reveals your attitude toward God. Our Lord said repeatedly through Scripture,

"He that has ears to hear, let him hear." If you are unwilling to hear the Word of God, you are unwilling to hear God. If you are unwilling to receive the truth of Jesus Christ, you are unwilling to receive Jesus Christ.

Read Acts chapter 13, and you will see different responses to preaching. Some became angry at Paul's preaching; others became glad. The Gentiles were glad when they heard, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Thus, your attitude toward the preaching and teaching of the Word of God reveals your attitude toward God. Our Lord Himself tied these things together in John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me," since He is the living Word, "and receiveth not my word," that is, the written Word, "the same hath one that judges him in the last day, even the word which I've spoken."

It is a serious matter to be unfaithful to the preaching of the Word of God. Once a meal is missed, the meal is missed. The truth brought on one Sunday may not be brought again for a long time—perhaps a year or two. I was talking to people twice this week and explained a message to them that I probably preached forty years ago, though I had not thought about it until they asked me a question.

Just as physical growth requires consistent, constant nourishment, spiritual growth requires consistent, constant nourishment. If you start missing meals, you will become anemic. If you start missing preaching where the Word of God is preached, you will become spiritually anemic.

This is one reason we have so many, as one fellow says, "Baptist midgets, Methodist midgets, and puny Presbyterians." They have missed so many meals that they have no idea. Remember Hebrews chapter 5, where the apostle said, "I wanted to give you some meat, but now I've got to feed you with milk." Instead of progressing, you regress. When you start missing the preaching of the Word of God, you start going backward. I have observed this for years: people become upset with the preacher, some doctrine, or somebody.

They may be in the front pew or in the front few pews. Next thing you know, they are in the middle pew; then they are on the last pew. After that, they are out the door and do not come back. When folks who are used to sitting up front and up close start sitting on that last

pew, better look out, because they are going to be easing out. Why? Because they are upset with the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. They are going to be missing meals, and they are going to be midgets, that is for sure.

This is not only a warning to the children of God, a warning to Christians; it is also, in one sense, a very real warning to pastors and preachers. God has ordained pastors, preachers, and teachers to feed His sheep. In John 21, what did He tell Peter? “If you love Me, feed My sheep.” Therefore, every pastor and every teacher is going to give an account to the great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Identifying God-Called Pastors

There are so many preachers in the world today, and even so many pastors. So the question is this: How can I tell whether or not a pastor is really called of God and sent of God? It is really very simple and very easy.

I know that a multitude of men have entered the ministry simply as a vocation. They consider it an easy job. It is not, I can assure you, although perhaps it is the way they do it—or the way they do not do it. When I was a boy, I wanted to be a preacher, but the only reason was that preachers worked on Sunday and Wednesday and could play the rest of the week. I found out it is not like that.

Here is how you can tell. Jeremiah 3:15 says, “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” God’s preachers feed His sheep, and they do so with knowledge and understanding: the knowledge of the Word of God and the understanding of the Word of God. Not their knowledge and not their understanding, but they feed the sheep of God.

So here are four great truths. There is the truth of God's elect—the faith of God's elect, that truth. There is an acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness. There is the truth of the hope of eternal life. And there is the truth of the manifestation of truth through the preaching of the word of God. We need to learn to value each one of these truths and hold them close to our hearts, because these are absolutely foundational and fundamental truths.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word. We thank you for the truths that you have given us in your word. And we ask, Father, that you would teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, make us holy, make us godly, make us obedient, and enable us, Lord, to embrace that sure, steadfast, solid, living hope that we have in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and whose name we pray. Amen.

# Source Notes

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JW01627 | YouTube

Chapter 2: Four Great Truths - Part 2 of 2
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