

The Truth that Saves

Is:

Written. Through men He inspired, God wrote it down for you. *“If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things I write to you are the Lord’s commandment,”* 1Corinthians 14:37. Nature, or *general revelation*, can teach you that God is real and powerful (cf. Romans 1:18-20), but only His codified *specific revelation* contains the power to save you. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,”* Romans 1:16. Therefore, the truth that saves is not achieved by communing with nature, but by communing with God through His Word. It is not found in your heart, your thoughts, or your experiences. It is found within His inspired, written, codified Word, 2Timothy 2:14-17.

Preserved. What sense would it make for an all-powerful God to invest His power to save mankind in a gospel, and then allow it to be lost, or corrupted to the point of impotence? None. And He didn’t. *“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God,”* 1Peter 1:22. Sure, we can *“distort the gospel of Christ”* until it becomes a *“different gospel”* in order to *“disturb”* others, but there is a curse attached to such purposes and activities (cf. Galatians 1:6-9). However, the *“pure milk of the word”* still exists, and still provides to *“salvation,”* 1Peter 2:1-2.

Read. Through inspiration, God provided mankind with truth that saves, and through His power, He preserved it for all generations. But this eternal, saving truth does not save unilaterally- we must do our part. We must *desire* truth enough to *seek* and *find* it (Matthew 7:7-8), and we must *love* truth (2Thessalonians 2:10) enough to *read* it- *“that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,”* Ephesians 3:3-4.

Understood. Simply reading the truth, though an essential step in the right direction, is not sufficient for salvation. We can read it as a curiosity, or an obligation. We can even read it in lieu of sleeping pills each night. But unless we’re reading God’s word like the *noble-minded* Bereans did, it probably won’t provide us with any answers, or do us any good. The Bereans *“received the word”* (right activity) *“with great eagerness”* (right attitude) *“examining the Scriptures”* (right method/activity) *“daily”* (right frequency) *“to see whether these things were so”* (right purpose), Acts 17:11. In other words, they were seeking to *understand* the truth. As a result of these things, *“Man of them therefore believed...”* Acts 17:12 (right result). It still works the same way.

Accepted. Even truth that is understood can be rejected (cf. Romans 1:18-23). And, for truth to legitimately be accepted, it must be first *read*, and then *understood*, obviously. But only when we *read* and *understand* do we have the opportunity to *accept* truth. In both Acts 7:54a and Acts 2:37a, the audience understood the truth to such a degree that it *pricked* or *pierced* their hearts. Stephen’s audience *rejected* the truth he gave them, and killed him for it, Acts 7:51b-60. The apostles’ audience *accepted* it, Acts 2:41. When we read (or hear) and understand the truth, we *accept* it if we’re honest, or we reject it if we are dishonest.

Applied through Obedience. What a tragic waste it is for God to have *invested* His saving power in the *truth* of the gospel, and *preserved* it throughout the generations, only to have man, who so desperately needs its provision, to be too busy to *read* it, to be too biased to *understand* it, or too *arrogant* to accept it. But it is perhaps even more tragic when we admit and *accept* it as truth, but are too *stubbornly rebellious* to simply obey it. *“Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’,”* John 8:31-32. Please don’t waste the truth God provided and preserved to save you- *read* it, *understand* it, *accept* it, and *obey* it. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)