

DO YOU REALLY LOVE THE TRUTH?

2Th.2:9-12

I. INTRODUCTION

1. When I ask this question, I am referring to that:
 - a. Which is of necessity involved when we worship God who is a Spirit, Jno.4:24.
 - b. Which came by Jesus Christ, Jno.1:17.
 - c. Which is his word, which one is to know and obey in order to be made free from sin, Jno.8:31,32;1Pet.1:22,23,25; Rom.2:8,9.
 - d. Through which we are sanctified, Jno.17:17,19.
 - e. By which we are begotten, Jas.1:18;1Pet.1:23.
 - f. Which one must love without which he can't be saved, 2Th.2:9-12.
 - g. Which is to be bought and never sold, Prov.23:23.
2. Without a love for truth one will never fulfill these obligations nor reap its benefits.
3. Obviously, some (even some professed Christians) do not love the truth. This we know because of what:
 - a. Jesus said in Jno.3:19-21; cf. Mt.13:14-16.
 - b. The apostle Paul wrote in 2Th.2:9-12; 2Tim.4:1-4; 3:1-5; Tit.1:9-11; 3:10,11; Ac.20:28-30; Rom.16:17,18; 2Cor.11:13-15.
 - c. This is why our question is legitimate and why we ask it. Why it is in order to ask it.
4. In spite of saying, "Give me the truth," Do you really love the truth? Proof of our claim lies in how we react to the truth in the moment of truth, when circumstances call for us to make hard decisions related to the truth and its demands on our lives.
 - a. Various examples of some who have said, "Give me the truth," then have refused it when given!
5. The burden of this lesson is to examine how people have and often do react to the truth with its demands that proves or denies their claim to love it.

II. DISCUSSION

- A. SOME PEOPLE REACT WITH ANGER WHEN TOLD THE TRUTH AND CLOSE THEIR EYES AND EARS TO IT.**
 1. Stephan preaching Jesus to the Jews who professed to be faithful servants of God in Ac.7 is a case in point, Ac.7:54-60.

2. Paul preaching to a Jewish mob in the city of Jerusalem, explaining his own conversion from Judaism to the faith of Jesus Christ is another case in point, Ac.22:1-21.
 - a. He taught them the truth about Jesus and his conversion, but when he mentioned his divine mission to the Gentiles, or his apostleship to the Gentiles, v.21 (“and he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee for hence unto the Gentiles”), they got extremely angry, according to vv.22,23.
3. Cain lashed out at his brother Able in anger and eventually killed him because he wouldn’t accept and obey the truth about worship and sacrifice to God, Gen.4; cf. Heb.11:4; Jude 11a.
4. A present-day example: In Dec.1987, a Baptist preacher, debating David Padfield, gospel preacher, in Evansville, Ind. (The debate being the Baptist preacher’s idea), debating baptism and whether or not one could be saved by faith alone, quit the debate the second night, saying, “I still believe that men are saved by faith alone – but I realize you can’t prove that from the Bible. But if you don’t think my mother is saved, I’ll meet you in the parking lot!”
 - a. He knew his position could not be supported by the Bible.
 - b. But instead of changing his position to harmonize with the scriptures, he reacted in anger and offered a fist fight!
5. Many other personal present-day examples could be offered.
 - a. Examples of brethren reacting in anger.
 - b. Examples of family: “If that’s all you came up here for, you can leave!” (Stated in anger. And that after they had introduced the questions which I had answered from the Scriptures.)

B. SOME PEOPLE ATTACK THE MESSENGER OF GOD’S WORD.

1. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are prime examples of this, 1Kgs.16-18.
 - a. 1Kgs.16:33: “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.”
 - b. 1Kgs.18:4: “Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord.”
 - c. 1Kgs.18:17, Ahab attacked Elijah, God’s prophet, with false accusations: “Ahab said unto him, art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

- (1) Ahab had caused the 3yr. drought in the land because of his sin.
- (2) But he blamed Elijah, the messenger of God for it!
- d. Jezebel threatened the prophet Elijah's life, 1Kgs.19:1,2.
- 2. John the Baptist was attacked and paid with his life because of his stand for the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage, Mt.14:1-11; cf. Mk.6:17-28.
- 3. Stephan in Ac.7 is another messenger of God who was attacked by those reacting unfavorably and violently because of the truth preached.
- 4. Many a true preacher of the word has been fired because he preached the truth to members of the church who were unwilling to accept it and its demands.
 - a. The preacher is about the only person who often finds it necessary to identify the sins of and rebuke the very people who pay his wages!
 - b. A preacher who can't do this, often finds himself compromising his convictions!
 - c. And one who will not so compromise his convictions, will sooner or later (if he preachers long enough) find himself fired or underhandedly forced to leave.
 - d. When the Institutional controversy was at its peak, it was said that a preacher wasn't "worth his salt" if he hadn't been fired at least once, or forced to leave because of his stand for the truth on the institutional question.
- 5. Consider the Galatians in their treatment of Paul, Gal.1:6-12; 4:13-21.
 - a. Time and time again I have had similar things happen to me by brethren.
 - b. Some discredit the messenger through lying and misrepresentation of what he believes and has taught.
 - c. They did it to Paul; they do it today!

C. SOME PEOPLE WILL HARDEN THEIR HEART AGAINST GOD'S WORD AND ITS DEMANDS.

- 1. Pharaoh's example is a case in point of one who hardened his heart because of demands God placed upon him he was unwilling to accept, Exo.5:1,2; 8:15,32; 9:34,35.
 - a. What happened was this: every one of the plagues made Pharaoh more rebellious against God.

- b. It was not God's plan or purpose to terrify Pharaoh into submission; rather, every plague was a warning designed to give him another chance to soften his heart; but each time Pharaoh refused.
 - c. In our day, the preaching of the gospel, with its demands, has had on many souls the exact same effect as the Lord's demands of Pharaoh.
 - d. My experience with the Pine Bluff jailor – everything was great till we came to the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage. He was in an adulterous marriage; not about to give her up!
2. Heb.3:7-19 warned the Hebrew Christians as well as us today about this very thing.
 - a. They were told not to harden their hearts like their fathers did in the wilderness.
 - b. They were warned of the consequences if they did.
 - c. They were told their hearts could be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

D. ON THE OTHER HAND, THANK GOD, SOME LOVE THE TRUTH ENOUGH TO ALLOW IT TO CHANGE THEIR LIVES.

1. The people of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah," Mt.12:41.
2. King David, after Nathan convicted him and said, "Thou art the man" (2Sam.12:7), confessed his sin with Bathsheba, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord," 2Sam.12:13; cf. Ps.51:1-4.
3. Three thousand formerly unbelieving Jews who had been guilty of having Jesus crucified were converted to Christ on Pentecost in Ac.2:22,23,32-41.
4. Saul of Tarsus, the great and notorious blasphemer, and persecutor was converted and became an apostle of Christ and a preacher of the faith he once destroyed, 1Tim.1:12-15; Ac.26:9-11; 9:6; 22:16.
5. Even the grossly immoral at Corinth were changed by the preaching of the gospel of Christ, 1Cor.6:9-11.
6. True lovers of truth often have to accept and obey the truth under adverse circumstances and even under great persecution while doing so, 1Th.2:14-16; Ac.14:21,22; 1Pet.4:12-19.
7. I personally know some who have loved the truth enough to come out of adulterous marriages of long standing!

III. CONCLUSION

1. Our question is this: Do you really love the truth?
 - a. Do you love it on all points of doctrine and morals?
 - b. Do you love it enough to always react favorably to it when the preacher points out something in your life that is not in harmony with the revealed will of God? I.e., when he “steps on your toes” so to speak?
 - c. Do you love it enough to defend it when it is preached? Uphold the hands of the one preaching it? Never apologize for it?
2. Remember what will happen if you don't: 2Th.2:9-12.
3. How you react to the truth reveals what you are really made of.
4. The gospel is like fire or heat or the sun – it will soften wax and harden clay. How does it affect you?
5. If your priorities are with business interests, jobs, career, worldly affairs and material things rather than things sacred and holy, the truth will somewhere along the line harden your heart and you will reject it and be lost!