

Truth in the Inward Parts

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I would like to start off with a trivia question this morning. There might be a few people who are old enough to remember who this individual is, but do you know who Ferdinand Waldo Demara Jr. actually was? He's dead now, but do you know who he was? (Nobody? Okay. I was thinking maybe one of the kids would know.) There was a book written about him. He was quite famous, or maybe infamous if you look at it that way. A movie was made about his life. He was known as "The Great Imposter". Not to give him undue credit but he had a storied career. He spent his lifetime passing himself off as someone else.

Here's a list of some of his exploits: He was a Trappist monk; a doctor of psychology; a dean of philosophy at a small college in Pennsylvania (which he actually founded); a law student; a zoology graduate; a cancer researcher and teacher; was in the Canadian navy as a second lieutenant and a medical officer—a surgeon—and actually performed a very complicated chest surgery, saving a soldier's life. (He just went to his stateroom, studied the medical books, and then went in and did the surgery.) He was also an assistant warden of a Texas prison and a beloved teacher, idolized by the local children. He was able to achieve all this because he had an extremely high IQ and a photographic memory. He was a true con artist. He didn't know the difference between truth and falsehood, and was a remarkable fraud. The fact is, he was a pathological liar, pathological in the sense that he had a mental disorder—he just couldn't help himself. He couldn't tell real truth from anything else. It just wouldn't compute in his brain—it didn't work for him.

All of the above is kind of a lead-in because I'm going to be speaking about truth today. I'd like to turn over to a very well-known scripture in Psalm 51. I was looking at this recently and the thought occurred to me that we don't talk much about truth in an abstract way, as a concept, if you think about it. But when truth is applied, it becomes very concrete. Here in Psalm 51 (mostly using the New King James throughout),

Psalm 51:6 [David says] *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.* (NKJV)

In order to get the back story to this psalm, we need to turn to 2 Samuel 12. (You may want to hold your place in Psalm 51 because we're going to come back to it.)

2 Samuel 12:1 *Then the LORD [that's Jehovah, used 6,521 times in the Old Testament] sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.* (NKJV)

It will lead into the conversation—using a rich man, poor man parable. The rich man obviously represents David. He has the means to take advantage of the poor man, who has no way to defend himself against the king—a king who takes everything from him. Nathan gets to that in the parable.

2) *The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.*

3) *But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. (NKJV)*

It was a pet—part of the family. He didn't have much but what he did have was his family and this little ewe lamb.

4) *And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; (NKJV)*

That was a hospitality custom at the time, we know that. It doesn't say so but in the illustration that Nathan is using here, the implication is that the traveler is also a rich man—a person of some means and his host is trying to impress him.

4 continued) *... but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."*

5) *So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!*

6) *And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."*

7) *Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.*

8) *I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!*

9) *Why have you despised the commandment [actually that should be plural, because he violated multiple commandments] of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.*

10) *Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'*

11) *Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.*

12) *For you did it secretly [thinking no one knew about it], but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'*" (NKJV)

It's going to be done in the open.

13) *So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." (NKJV)*

What he had done came crashing down on him—it was crushing him from the inside.

13 continued) *... And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. (NKJV)*

He repented of that and God forgave him, but there were consequences.

14) *However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die." (NKJV)*

What he had done was offensive to God. Made God look bad. If you were paying attention there to the context, God pronounced three judgments against David for what he had done. First, because David used the sword of the Ammonites to kill Uriah, so the sword would never depart from his own house. Second, he was guilty of adultery and violence—all those things—lust and all that, so these would also afflict his house; even his own son Absalom would take his concubines and wives. Third, the child would die. That's the story behind Psalm 51. So let's go back there, if you saved your place. I would like to reread that from the Complete Jewish Bible, verse 1. It says, the Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him after his affair with Bathsheba.

Psalm 51:1 *God, in your grace, have mercy on me; in your great compassion, blot out my crimes.*

2) *Wash me completely from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.*

3) *For I know my crimes, my sin confronts me all the time. (NKJV)*

His conscience was crushed—he couldn't get out of his mind what he had done to God.

4) *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil from your perspective; so that you are right in accusing me and justified in passing sentence. (NKJV)*

Those three judgments that we read about.

5) *True, I was born guilty, was a sinner from the moment my mother conceived me. (NKJV)*

He's just saying he knew he was born carnal, like it says in Romans 3:23—all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. One of the reasons David was a man after God's own heart was he never tried to rationalize his sin away. He owned up to it. The back story is David thought he had gotten away with what he had done. It went on for about a year before he was confronted by Nathan. In fact, Nathan risked his life to even confront David. David could have just as well said, I don't like hearing that, somebody

kill him—cut his head off or do something with him! Like Ferdinand Demara, his life had become a fraud. The whole nation of Israel knew what he had done; they saw the facade he had created for himself, and sin can do that when we let it into our lives. We can fool ourselves with it but we can't fool God. And those judgments God passed against him—those three things—were public. David was on display, to his own shame. There's a huge lesson there for us. Sin is a lie. David owned up to and took responsibility for a tremendous sin. Sin and lies always have terrible consequences. That's why David says in verse 6 of Psalm 51,

Psalm 51:6 *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. (NKJV)*

The wisdom he is referring to here is God's wisdom, the only source of true wisdom, and it comes only through God's Holy Spirit. David goes on to ask God to renew it in him and not take it away. He was really in danger of losing it. Back to that phrase, you desire truth in the inward parts; it became vitally important to him because his sin covered up God's truth, embodied in God's word. So my title today is:

Truth In the Inward Parts

When we're on the path to conversion, God's truth is vital to us. It's vital to our ultimate salvation, and hopefully I can point that out later as we go along. I use the term "God's truth" because man will confuse the concept of truth. (You can look that up in scripture if you want.) He will make up all kinds of stories to justify what he does—the way he lives, the way he does everything, and we can see that all around us. People are so confused, with so many lies, they won't begin to face the truth of what they're doing because they don't look to God—they don't trust God for anything. We have that famous scene in scripture, Pilate confronting Christ over in John 18,

John 18:37 *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (NKJV)*

Kind of reminds you of John 10—that whole section there in John 10.

38) *Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" (NKJV)*

A classic response. The world wants to make up its own truth. Sometimes we've even done that to ourselves, haven't we? What I did really isn't that bad—we fool ourselves.

38 continued) *... And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all. (NKJV)*

Pilate knew the whole thing was a big lie. It was an illegal trial. They were using him to kill Christ—he knew that. God's truth is not complicated. We want to confuse the

concept of truth. It's not complicated at all, in fact it's pretty simple, as many scriptures bear out. Unlike English—with its nuances—in scripture there are only two words used for truth, according to Mounce's Dictionary. The word for "truth" in the Old Testament is a noun—Strong's #571 if you want to look that up—*emeth*—used about 127 times. It's kind of a contraction of another word but it basically means firmness, stability, trustworthiness, perpetuity—all of that. We'll see some of that later on in the New Testament. It's easy when you look at that—stability and trustworthiness, faithfulness, all of those things—it's easy to read into that that God never changes. He's saying the truth never changes—God's truth never changes. Always the truth in the largest sense. In the New Testament it's sometimes a noun, sometimes an adjective, sometimes a verb, sometimes an adverb; it's used in different forms, about 110 times according to Mounce's, and (in Greek, Strong's # 225) it's *aletheia*. God's truth has to be in us. It has to be in the inward parts as Psalm 51 says. That means our innermost being, our core, what we're made of. So much so that it becomes the driving force, the motivation behind everything we think, say and do. It has to be there.

In relation to that, let's go to what people in the Old Testament understood and knew about God, or didn't, as some think. Let's go to Exodus 34. They understood this characteristic about God, that God was a God of truth, unfailingly. Exodus 34, again from the New King James; let's read verses 4 through 6.

Exodus 34:4 *So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. [The context here is Moses has to redo everything; God directs him to come back up the mountain and write another set of tablets.] Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD [Jehovah again, throughout] had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.*

5) Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6) And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth [Strong's #571], (NKJV)

Notice that Jehovah is used here six times. It's pretty amazing to believe they didn't know who God was. Let's see a little bit more about what some presume they didn't know; let's go over to Deuteronomy 32, verses 3 and 4.

Deuteronomy 32:3 *For I proclaim the name of the LORD: [Jehovah again] Ascribe greatness to our God.*

4) He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He. (NKJV)

That title *Rock* there is used some seventy-six times. Here it's symbolic of strength, mighty refuge, in a context that's obviously referring to Jehovah.

Over to Joshua, chapter 24. They understood this quality and characteristic of God. Joshua 24, verses 14 and 15.

Joshua 24:14 *Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! (NKJV)*

We know that in this part of the record Joshua is nearing the end of his life; he sees the lingering tendency of the Israelites toward those false gods that had corrupted them, ever since they left Egypt—that clung to them like a disease. All their lies and their pagan idolatry. He's telling them they can't be double-minded. They have to choose to totally fear, respect, love and serve God, in sincerity and truth.

15) *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods [the false ones, the phony ones, the frauds] which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. [Their current bad influence.] But as for me and my house, we will serve [Jehovah] the LORD.” (NKJV)*

Jumping over to 1 Samuel, because we see a similar scenario here. We see an aging Samuel, nearing the end of his days. He had done what God told him to. He had offered them a king—that's what they asked for and God allowed. Samuel knew that their focus would turn to that king. They would look to him, they would trust him rather than God. So he tells them in 1 Samuel 12, verse 24,

1 Samuel 12:24 *Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. (NKJV)*

The point there is, notice the emphasis on truth in just these few scriptures. The psalms are loaded with this topic—just loaded with it. Here are just a few; Psalm 25, verse 5.

Psalm 25:5 *Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. (NKJV)*

Down in verse 10.

10) *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. (NKJV)*

Over in chapter 26, verse 3.

Psalm 26:3 *For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. (NKJV)*

In Psalm 40, verse 4.

Psalm 40:4 *Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. (NKJV)*

When David makes a reference to lies, he's kind of expressing some anguish in this psalm, which suggests to me some dirty politics going on towards him. That may even sound familiar. Psalm 40, going down to verse 10.

10) *I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.*

11) *Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me. (NKJV)*

There's some interesting information there for all of us. David knew his ultimate spiritual salvation lay with God and it was bound up in truth. It's also interesting, if you track this whole topic of truth throughout the Bible, you're going to see it's linked to salvation. We talk a lot about salvational issues—how can you have salvation without truth? That just doesn't work—it won't work. Let's go over to Psalm 85. I remember a study some years ago (I haven't looked the notes for a long time), but in some of the later psalms, there's a millennial setting; they are futuristic in that sense. In Psalm 85, verse 11,

Psalm 85:11 *Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. (NKJV)*

Psalm 86:11 *Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk [which means I will conduct my life] in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. (NKJV)*

Psalm 96:13 [This seems very millennial to me] *For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth. (NKJV)*

It never changes, it's always going to be the same. It's not new truth one era and then another new truth the second era, it's always the same—it's God's truth. Psalm 119; there are several of these in Psalm 119, verse 142.

Psalm 119:142 *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth. (NKJV)*

It's everlasting—it's going to go on forever—the same truth.

151) *You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth. (NKJV)*

Verse 160 really nails it.

160) *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. (NKJV)*

There's a shocker. You mean we can't, as we go through time, invent our own truth? We have to rely on God's word for truth? That's kind of what it says; it's pretty clear. That must be why most of the world's religions are basically belief systems comprised of fabricated truths to fit their system. They're not true—they fit their particular system. Like Mark says, they have their own puzzle and they have their own pieces that fit in their own puzzle. It doesn't mesh with God's word—it doesn't fit. That last verse, Psalm 119, verse 160, from the New Living Translation says:

160) The sum of your words is true. Every one of your righteous judgments endures forever. (NLT)

It doesn't mean we can pick and choose the truths we like or dislike out of God's word. We have to accept them all even if we don't have perfect understanding of God's truth. That's our duty. When we're called and begin that conversion process, and we're learning and studying and doing all of that, we grow in understanding, but it's understanding with truth. It's not something that the world believes is true. If you want to go to some kind of a Christian seminary, you're probably going to get an education but most likely it won't be in truth. There might be some truth there to keep you strung along but it's not going to be truth—it's not going to be God's truth, we know that. Proverbs says something about this too. Isn't that amazing? Wisdom literature. Over in Proverbs 3, verse 3.

Proverbs 3:3 *Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart ... (NKJV)*

In other words they're always with you—truth is always with you. You don't set it aside, conduct yourself outside of its bounds and then pick it up the next day. It's like wearing it. They're saying to wear it like a necklace around your neck. In Proverbs 8, verse 7,

Proverbs 8:7 *For my mouth will speak truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. (NKJV)*

That's pretty plain. Be a person of honesty and integrity. That's who we all should be, as God's people. It's disheartening sometimes to see dishonesty in people, and even sometimes in the church. You have to wonder sometimes what people are thinking, but I won't go there. I think you know what I mean.

Does truth have value? Proverbs says it does. Proverbs 23, verse 23.

Proverbs 23:23 *Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding. (NKJV)*

Most of the stuff we buy, the material stuff, as Christ said, eventually it's going to rot, it's going to turn to rust, it's going to go to dust. Even if it's made out of steel, it came from the earth and it's going to go back to the earth through corrosion and rust, but the truth doesn't. It's a vital thing for each and every one of us. In this statement, buy the truth—

don't sell it, it's very valuable—it kind of reminds you of Matthew 13, where Christ is giving that series of parables and mentions the pearl of great price:

Matthew 13:45 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,
46) who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (NKJV)*

That's the truth about the Kingdom of God—the value of it. In another reference, Matthew 7:6, it says,

Matthew 7:6 *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. (NKJV)*

Christ was the master at word pictures but they had meaning. This parable means we should be careful about how we handle God's truth. We shouldn't present it to people who just hold it in contempt. They respond with abuse and maybe violence, as some of us have found out, through hate mail and phone calls and all of that. Not everyone accepts truth, they just don't. I like this quote I found that says, if you tell someone the truth, make them laugh or they'll kill you. (Author unknown.) Moving along with this in the Old Testament, let's go take a quick peek in the prophets; Isaiah 59 is a good place. We know in Isaiah, he's primarily addressing the sad spiritual state of Judah. Isaiah 59, verse 4.

Isaiah 59:4 *No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
5) They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. (NKJV)*

A picture of a poisonous web of lies, that percolates through their society. Down in verse 14,

*14) Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.
15) So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice. (NKJV)*

Just in those few scriptures, they're talking about a culture at that time, but the thing to take away from it is God's truth never changes. It's timeless, and by the same token, as we can see in these scriptures, human nature never changes. It just doesn't—it can't without God's indwelling Spirit, and that's a Spirit of truth, as we've seen. Going on to Isaiah 65, verse 16. We know this particular section of Isaiah deals with the future—with the Millennium on into the future.

Isaiah 65:16 *So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My eyes. (NKJV)*

If you think about that in the context of the Millennium—and we know that the knowledge of God is going to cover the earth like the oceans do now—the very fabric of that knowledge is going to be truth. It has to be. A similar discourse in Jeremiah 5:1.

Jeremiah 5:1 *“Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now and know; and seek in her open places if you can find a man, if there is anyone who executes judgment, who seeks the truth, and I will pardon her. (NKJV)*

Jerusalem was in a pretty poor state, just like the nation was at that point in time—in a cultural and societal malaise, with a dearth of God’s truth in the land. The comparison there is unmistakable—it’s just unmistakable. We can see it in our own country right now. Actually it’s all over the world, it’s not just us. Satan is alive and well. Let’s go to Hosea, one of the minor prophets. I’m not going to spend the whole time in the Old Testament, by the way; again, there are over 100 verses. We could be here a year—well, maybe not.

Hosea 4:1 *Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel, for the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: “There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. (NKJV)*

There’s the problem. Satan loves a vacuum—a void. You take the truth and the knowledge of God away and Satan will supply a counterfeit every time—every time. It works for him and it’s a great strategy.

Here is another millennial prophecy, in Zechariah 8.

Zechariah 8:3 *Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.’ (NKJV)*

We know precisely Who that is. Okay, we’ve taken a survey of the truth in the Old Testament, now we’re going to turn to the New. It’s where the topic of truth becomes a little bit more interesting, and hopefully I can point out how crucial it is for us as God’s people today.

Let’s turn over to Matthew 22 to begin. In the New Testament there are more than 100 verses. That Greek word for truth. There are some interesting things here—I’m going to highlight something from here that I hope I can make clear enough for you to follow. It’s because of our experience in these days, in these times in the church of God.

Matthew 22:16 *And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. (NKJV)*

People neither decide nor define what God's truth is—they don't—not for God. Titles and such do not impress God and neither should they impress us. We should look at spiritual fruits just like Christ tells us to—we won't go there but we know where the scriptures are about false prophets. Christ warns about that because He knew what human nature was like and what its tendency was. When we do look to men, to our ministry, the first and foremost question should be, are the ministers conducting themselves with integrity, honesty and truth? Are they? These should be the main criteria. Let's go over to Mark 12; this is Mark's version. Of course they are fooling with Christ, trying to trap Him, to set Him up with questions.

Mark 12:14 *When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? (NKJV)*

That's the same account as in Matthew 24. Let's look at Luke's account.

Luke 20:21 *Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism [unlike men tend to do], but teach the way of God in truth: (NKJV)*

No catering to men's position or status, or any of that. That's the same account as Matthew 22 and Mark 12. Let's go over to John 1, verse 14.

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (NKJV)*

Down in verse 17.

17) For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

He was a direct representative from God of the truth. It goes on later to describe Christ having a conversation with Nicodemus, in John 3:16; it's the most famous scripture in all of Christendom.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (NKJV)*

That's even underlined in my software, by the way—I didn't do that. In fact, there are a couple places where you can't escape the religious bias. It will be everywhere. You have to read past it when you're looking at commentaries, dictionaries, and all of that. I

even have one writer whose writing I appreciate but he's very much against and despises millennialists—people who believe in the Millennium—and this bias comes out all the time in his writing; other than that he does a pretty good job. That's so ingrained in the Protestant world, that you just have to believe—it's the only salvational requirement. It's a classic example of picking and choosing the truth when it suits the belief system. But let's read on, down to verse 17.

17) *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

18) *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [Sent by God.]*

19) *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil [and continue to be]. (NKJV)*

Carnal man doesn't want God's truth and scripture supports that.

20) *For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (NKJV)*

Verse 21 is crucial.

21) *But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (NKJV)*

It can't be any clearer. We have to do something with the truth God gives us. There are parables about that—the parable of the talents, the parable of the sower—all kinds of parables about that. What we do, our actions, our conduct, has to be moated in the light of God's truth—it can't be any other way. Let's go to another really famous scripture people love to quote, John 4, verses 23 and 24.

John 4:23 *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

24) *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (NKJV)*

If you look up that Greek word, *must*, it means it's necessary. It's not an option, it's a necessity, it's an obligation and a duty, if we're truly worshipping God in spirit and truth. I look at that and the way I can relate to that word, *must*—it means no options, no other choice. I was a really bad teenager, and I actually joined the Navy when I was seventeen years old. My parents had to sign for me and were glad to do it, I don't mind telling you. The military was good for me, I actually needed that but this is how it worked for me. In the military, you have orders. I went from a recruiter, took a train ride to Seattle, and got sworn in by the commandant in Seattle, whoever he was (I don't

remember). Then I was shipped to bootcamp in San Diego, nine or twelve weeks; I can't remember but it was a long time. After bootcamp you get orders to go somewhere. So they ordered me to go to the naval air station in San Diego. I spent a while there and then I got more orders. I was sent out to the fleet, to a destroyer; I spent a long time on that destroyer, and the good Navy finally gave that destroyer away trying to buy "lovers"—the Bible talks about that. They gave it to the Peruvian Navy. So I got orders to go to another ship which was in Bremerton. The point I'm trying to make is that every place I went, no one said to me, Jack, we have an assignment for you, and we would like to send you—take your choice, you can take your choice—to Antarctica or Hawaii; where would you like to go, Jack?

I know I'm being silly, but I'm trying to illustrate the point that we have our marching orders right here. We have to worship God—we must worship God—in spirit and in truth. It can't be anything else. You also notice here if you look at it, there's kind of an equation, like a formula—you have to use and apply each part of it to get the answer. In order to worship God (that means adoration, to the point nothing else gets in the way), in essence, nothing else really matters between us and God. It really doesn't. It has to be that approach, no other way. It has to be done with truth as the basis or it's a waste of time, a complete waste of time. Also, it's an individual requirement in worshipping God in truth. It's nothing anyone can do for you; we each have to do it as individuals. Paul addresses that. Let's go over to 1 Timothy 2, verses 1 through 4.

1 Timothy 2:1 *Therefore I exhort first of all [Paul is giving instructions to a young minister here] that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men [that's a good thing to do],*
2) *for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (NKJV)*

Because if they do, we do.

3) *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior [he's talking about God the Father]*
4) *who desires all men to [what?] be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (NKJV)*

That's what God wants. Just like David knew back in his time, God wanted truth in the inward parts. Let's go to chapter 3. We know that in chapter 3, Paul is telling Timothy about the qualifications of deacons, elders, etc. Let's go down to verse 14.

1 Timothy 3:14 *These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15) but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (NKJV)*

That's what it's supposed to be. I know we've heard this many times too, one of the great mis-translations of the King James—church. Good old King James gave his

orders to the translators. Of course he wanted to preserve that strong sense of the monarchy, the authority of the ruling class, but that's a clear case of tampering with the scripture, translating it in such a way from the Greek to the English as to justify a system of church government, modeled after the kings of the Gentiles, which is exactly what Christ told the apostles not to do—exactly.

If you want to go look at that again, it's over in Luke 22:22-26, and there are clear instructions not to do that. Any of it sound familiar? The point is, Christ is the head of the ecclesia, mis-translated as church more than 100 times. The translators at that time really kind of nailed that down so you wouldn't forget who was in charge. But we know that from the Greek it means the assembly or called-out ones—that is us. It was never intended that the assembly become institutionalized. Which is was and it is, whenever you consolidate the church or the ecclesia under a hierarchy. It becomes a corporate machine like we see today—top down, controlling, dictating, with a ruling class. I retired from a corporation after twenty-five years, maybe more, give or take, and I know exactly how it works—exactly. I'd like to go back, just as a reference (you don't need to turn there) to Isaiah 59, and really read that one verse, getting to the point here. From the Amplified Bible; it's a little bit different.

Isaiah 59:14 *Justice is pushed back, and righteous [uprightness and right standing with God is implied here] behavior stands far away; for truth has fallen in the city square, and integrity cannot enter. (AMP)*

That's from the Amplified version. It does amplify scripture a little bit. Speaking of the courts of justice, one of the great weaknesses of our country's jurisprudence system is that the process of gathering evidence is more important than the clear evidence itself. People get turned loose who are guilty as sin because of some technicality or error in the gathering of that evidence; it happens all the time. The current political scene that we have in the country right now, which I think is a national disgrace—I won't elaborate on that to avoid getting into politics. But fabricated lies are the order of the day. Like it says back in the Old Testament, truth has fallen in the street and you have to look really hard to find it. Truth and real evidence are just not part of the vocabulary. Continue in verse 15 from Isaiah 59, again from the Amplified.

15) *Yes, truth is lacking; and he who turns away from evil makes himself a prey. (AMP)*

That is happening in the church right now—the ecclesia, I should say. Faithful ministers who stand up for the truth about God's role as the Father and His activity in the Old Testament are being systemically persecuted by an unrighteous hierarchy. I don't think that's a harsh statement because it's true.

15 continued) *... Now the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice. (AMP)*

But it's coming actually. The point is the ecclesia is comprised of people, not a corporate body with a headquarters. It just isn't. I'm not trying to imply that organizations or corporations are wrong—I made my living in one for a long time. Most everything we have comes through some kind of corporate body, but when you structure a church like that you get in trouble, and Christ was warning the apostles, don't do it like that. The various groups of the church of God are fond of saying that they like to associate with brethren who are like-minded. I know the intent of that but it's kind of bothersome to me because it implies "church-think". It's also a religious, institutional thing, implying a top-down structure that dictates what the body of believers must think. That's what it does; that's what it did. We saw it. We lived it. If we really understand this scripture about the ecclesia, it should profoundly change our thinking, it really should.

Ecclesia is the assembly, the body of called-out people. From that standpoint alone, if we just look at it in that very simple, plain language, it's not a corporation. It's not—it's just not. If you're sitting in a corporation, that's not the ecclesia, sorry. The reason I'm bringing this up is people still have a problem with that concept and they just don't see it. They can't get past that psychological tether to that organization, thinking salvation is tied to that corporation, that governmental, corporate body. That's a satanic lie, that's not true.

The church belongs to God the Father and Jesus Christ—He's the head. Furthermore, like it just said in these verses, the ecclesia, the body of people by scriptural definition, has to be grounded in the truth—it has to be. It means truth has to be foundational, it has to be the binding thing for the spiritual body, to keep the body together. If you look over in Ephesians 6 where it talks about the armor of God, isn't it interesting that the belt of truth holds everything together? It holds the body armor together. If the incorporated church you're sitting in claims to be the ecclesia and tells you what to believe as the truth, they're arrogantly interpreting what is the truth, and if they're doing that—because we've been there almost twenty-eight years ago now—my advice is, don't get all bent out of shape, don't get mad, don't stomp out, don't do any of that, just look around and find their nearest exit, that's the best thing to do.

We left in the early '90s ourselves and that doesn't mean anything, that's just when we saw it and we understood it, so we left. At that time they were introducing heresy of the worst kind—the absolute worst kind—blatant lies. My wife, who had been raised a Catholic, recognized it right away. They thought they were the only true custodians of the truth and that they could get away with their flat-out lies, with all of the heresies they were trying to cram down our throats, and frankly we got to a point—we called it the puke point—where we had to leave. We couldn't take it anymore. I don't say that out of meanness, I don't have any animus there; we're way past that, and again, I'm not saying necessarily that a corporation or an organization is evil; you have to have some organization, and you should. But by their very nature, when you think about this, if you have a centralized church corporation, it has to be self-sustaining. So what do the members become? They become a cash source. It's all masked under the guise of doing a work. Plus the facade that you help create by sitting there, and it's not because

they want to help you grow in grace and knowledge and truth, which is what a faithful ministry should be doing, what they should be interested in. Let's see something over in the book of Jude.

Jude 1:1 *Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, [who's that—the ecclesia] sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: (NKJV)*

Not by a corporation, I might add.

2) *Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.*

3) *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith [and the truth, I might add] which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

4) *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

Notice the denial of both. Maybe they don't understand what it's talking about.

5) *But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. (NKJV)*

Then he gives a couple of examples—the angels, Sodom and Gomorrah.

8) *Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. (NKJV)*

They only claim to represent God.

9) *Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (NKJV)*

10) *But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.*

11) *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

Not really doing things in a godly way at all.

12) *These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots [lacking substance];*

13) *raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (NKJV)*

Go down to the last part of verse 14.

14) ...*“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints ... (NKJV)*

In the end, each one answers to God.

15) *to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

16) *These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. (NKJV)*

It all sounds good on the surface.

17) *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

18) *how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. (NKJV)*

If you tell the truth today, you're probably going to be mocked.

19) *These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. (NKJV)*

It means they have a wrong spirit. You have to think about that for a minute. If they are causing divisions, it must be that they are in the body. You don't cause division from the outside, it's caused from the inside, within the body. God's Spirit is not working in them. They aren't motivated by God's truth, but by everything else. It's in the way they turn that around and accuse you of causing division if you're speaking the truth. See how that works?

21) *keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (NKJV)*

It all ties into that. Another thing about persecution from men is we don't have to attack, we don't have to accuse, or belittle them—we don't have to do any of that. The light of God's truth is going to expose them. We see an example of that, actually a really good example of that, in Acts 5:27. The context here is of the apostles being brought before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 5:27 *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them,*

28) *saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"*

29) *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. (NKJV)*

Just tell them, no matter what you claim (and they thought they had all the truth sewed up), you don't trump God and His truth—that's what they were telling them. You do what you need to do to us, but God's truth is what we're going to stick to, and we're going to obey God.

30) *The God of our fathers [the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.*

31) *Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*

32) *And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." (NKJV)*

When they heard this, were they so excited that they wanted to understand this truth too? No, they were furious and they wanted to kill them.

34) *Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. (NKJV)*

He needed to talk to the council.

35) *And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. (NKJV)*

He gives a couple of examples of religious movements at the time and how they failed.

38) *And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;*

39) *but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God." (NKJV)*

The point is, if it's a truth of God it's going to stand. There's not a single thing men can do about that or change that—they can't. God sets the structure in the ecclesia. You don't need to turn there but we find that over in 1 Corinthians 12; all the functions of the Body are described and the point is to serve, not to rule over. I used this once before, years ago, but there's a wonderful little hidden gem we can use as a metaphor, found back in Genesis 29. It's about what a shepherd's job really is. In Genesis 29, Jacob is in pursuit of finding his wife, Rachel.

Genesis 29:1 *So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.*

2) *And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth.*

3) *Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth. (NKJV)*

There is a wonderful little metaphor we can pull out of that. Isn't that what a true shepherd does every Sabbath? He rolls the stone away and he gives the sheep, the ecclesia, a drink of water. Isn't that a minister's function? That's what his real function should be, to feed and water spiritually. It should be pure water; it shouldn't be toxic, it shouldn't be polluted water, but God's truth, which is pure. Like I said before, truth is kind of an abstract, it's kind of like love, but the result of applying both of them is very concrete, and we'll see that very quickly as we draw to a close. In 1 Corinthians 13, have you noticed this in here, in this list?

1 Corinthians 13:4 *Love suffers long and is kind; [agape] love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; (NKJV)*

That's godly love.

5) *does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;*

6) *does not rejoice in iniquity, [what does it do?] but rejoices in the truth; (NKJV)*

So those two—love and truth—actually go together. Those two, in action, are far from abstract, they're very, very real. That's what we should be doing and the way we should be conducting our lives. We should embrace God's truth, rejoice in as much as He gives us, and appreciate it. Live it in everything we do—every part of our lives—that's what being a living sacrifice means. Just a brief reference, back to Psalm 51, verse 6.

Psalm 51:6 *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts ... (NKJV)*

If you look up that word, *desire*, in the Hebrew, in my dictionary it says a very strong word, something God really wants to see in His children. I relate that to being like a parent with your children; you want the very best for them. You want them to be blessed in every way in their lives; you want them to be successful, all of that. That's what you want and that's kind of what that word means. It's how strongly God wants us to have truth in our inward parts, motivating us in our lives. God the Father and His Son want that in our very being and it's expressed in that statement—*truth in the inward parts*.