Lessons on God's Truth from John's Gospel

Christ said to us in John 8:32… "**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** The truth makes us free… what it frees us from is the bondage that we are in to sin upon this earth… we become Christ's possession, freed from slavery to sin, when we "**know the truth"**. The word "**know**" in this instance implies much more than an intellectual registering of the truth… it means actively obeying the truth. When we do this… obey the truth… it sets us free. So who decides what is the truth?

The scriptures make it plain that God does this, and only He can do it. Let's look at Isaiah 45:19 where God says… **"I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."** God makes it very clear that He tells us what the truth is when He says **"I declare things that are right".** What He is also saying is that He does this and we do not… we need to think on that. So now we know that our God declares what is truth, and men don't… it is God's prerogative and not ours. So where do we find the truth?

Jesus Christ answers that clearly when He states in John 17:17… **"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."** We find the truth in God's word to us and no where else… meaning if it is in God's word… it is the truth… and anything not found there, especially in the way of religious teachings… is not the truth. "**Sanctify them by Your truth**" means that when we are walking in the way of the truth we are set apart… that is what "sanctify" means, it means "to set apart"… we are set apart from the world by the truth of God… we don't live as the rest of the world does… we live walking in the way of the truth, which is a concept that tragically escapes most people. We find the truth to live by in God's word to us… the Bible, and that is the only place it is to be found. It does not exist anywhere else.

We are told more about the word of God by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John at John 12:47-50 …in this passage Christ tells us… **"And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."** There is a lot of information here…so let's break it up into manageable chunks.

- Christ makes it clear here that we will all be judged by the word of God and the truth found therein when He says "…**the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."** We are going to be held to account for ourselves on the last day, and the word of God will be the measuring rod that our lives will be compared against… those found not measuring up to the word… in other words those not found to be walking in the way of the truth… will be judged and condemned. Those found in the truth… meaning they knew the truth found in the word of God and lived their lives according to it… they will be saved. It is that simple. So it is obvious from this that we must take the time to know the word of God in order to know what to do… we will be judged by the word… so we must know it, in order to not be found wanting.
- To not walk in the way of the truth… to not believe Christ's words and accept them…is to "**reject**" Christ… even if done through ignorance. If you "**reject**" Christ… then you "**reject**" salvation.
- Christ also makes it clear that the truth that He is giving to us… comes to us from God through Him.
- He makes it clear that God's commands represent "**everlasting life**" to those of us that follow them.
- Again, Christ carefully makes it clear to us that He is speaking only what God has given Him to say… thereby showing us an example of absolute and unswerving obedience to

God. Christ is saying to us "I am giving you this truth exactly the way God has told Me to".

He repeats this same thread of thought in John 14:24 when He says… **"He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."** God gave Christ the words for His ministry… Christ taught what God wanted him to teach. Christ did not add to it in any way or take away from it in any way… He spoke it exactly as God gave it to Him.

Since Christ makes such a point of this… do you get the idea from this that God expects us to do things His way, and that this is an important idea? We should get this… especially in light of the fact that God declares what is right… meaning we do not. If God's only begotten Son was careful with the truth and delivered it exactly as He was told to, shouldn't we be careful with it as well? We certainly should… but unfortunately many are not careful with the truth… that is why there are so many different ideas out there about Christianity and salvation.

Let's face it… all of the different teachings floating around cannot all be right, because so many of them conflict with one another. It only makes sense that the teachings found in God's word are the right ones… God has told us this is so. That is why we must know the word... the truths found in God's word never conflict with one another in any way.

Christ makes clear His love for God by demonstrating to us that He obeyed God… exactly. Christ is showing us again that obedience to God is a pattern for us to follow. We see this brought forth in great clarity in John 14:31 when Christ says… **"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do."** That quotation of this scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible… here is how the New International Version of the Bible states it … "**but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me."** We should be seeing a theme here as to what Jesus wants to teach us… exact obedience to God is something that is not negotiable… if Christ submitted Himself to it… then we must as well. There is no other option… and following any other option leads to death.

Christ gives us more truth to follow in John 14:12 when He says**… "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."** We learn from this that we are to emulate Christ in every way… meaning He was a pattern for us to follow after. If we are truly Christians, we will do what He did and obey God in every way… in everything we do… no matter how small. We must do it "**exactly**"… there is no other way.

The Apostle Paul repeats this theme in his letter to the church of Christ at Corinth. In this passage in I Corinthians 4:6 he tells them… "**Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other."** In other words, God's truth is sacred and must be respected at all costs… we are not to go or **"to think beyond what is written**" in anyway when it comes to God's truth. It is what it is… no more and no less, and we have no authority to change it or alter it in any way, shape, or form.

This teaching is delivered to us by the Apostle Paul through his letter to the church at Corinth… but it was given to him to teach to us, and the Corinthians… by Christ, who in turn, received it from God. In John's Gospel, Jesus promised the Apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit to them for their Ministry to the world at large…He tells them this in John 16:13-14… **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."** We see clearly from this passage that the Holy Spirit divinely inspired the Apostles teachings by taking from what

was Christ's and giving it to them… to teach to us. That is why the whole New Testament is known as the Gospel. The Gospel is not just made up of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which are the books of the Bible commonly referred to as "the Gospels". That is a fallacy. Let's explore this for a moment.

Many people in the religious world today do not get the fact that this is a fallacy. They say that we only need the four Gospels, and we can do away with the other books in the Bible. That is not so and John 16:13-14… referenced just now shows this. The Gospel… the Good News… includes every other book found in the New Testament as well; Acts through Revelation. It was delivered through the Apostles in their written letters and chronological accounts… but it all came from Christ, because the Holy Spirit took the teaching from Christ and gave it to them… to teach to us. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us… **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness…".** So the words found in the book of Colossians are the same kind of truth as those found in the book of Matthew, and all of these words are given by the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit, and we are to use those words to learn what God expects of us, and how to please Him. There is no difference between the Gospel of John, and the book of Ephesians, as far as both are equally inspired and are to be used for our "**instruction in righteousness**". Anyone who claims otherwise, or would discount one part of the New Testament for another… is sadly mislead and is not walking according to the way of truth.

Notice if you will the theme of obedience that is stressed throughout all of these verses. The fact that it is so stressed means that it is important, and so it is. If we are not obedient, then we are of no value to the Lord. He is looking for willing and obedient servants, who live this life in a manner that will make them fit to serve Him for eternity in Heaven. If you cannot get it right here on this earth… while you have your life, which God has so graciously given you by the way… then you will not get the opportunity to serve Him in Heaven, and you will be cast down into eternal punishment. We must show our love for the Lord… we do this by living and conducting ourselves as He has commanded.

We see this concept again in John 14:15 where Christ says… **"If you love Me, keep My commandments."** Again Christ repeats this in John 14:21… **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me."** Repetition is something that we had to endure in grade school, remember? Whether it was to learn the alphabet, our multiplication tables, a foreign language, or history… we learned through repetition. Christ is teaching through repetition here as well, He is saying to us, "I am emphasizing this theme over and over again, because you need to learn it… it will save you… when you have learned it fully".

In John 14:23 Christ repeats himself yet again… **"Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."** Notice, however that He adds a little new information for us to the repetition. He tells us that if we will love Him and keep His words… meaning if we will walk in the way of the truth, exactly as He tells us to… that They, Christ, and God will come to those who obey and make Their home with them. How do They do this?

The answer is found in Acts 2:38, which is one of the scriptures that tells us what to do to be saved… it says… "**Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" When we are obedient to this command exactly as it is given… then we come into the possession of Christ, and are freed from our bondage to sin… as we saw in the beginning of the lesson… our sins are washed away to be seen no more by God… if we continue to walk in the truth. Now let's explicitly answer the question we just posed above as to how God and Christ make Their home with obedient believers.

We also see from Acts 2:38 that we **"receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"** when we obey the command to be baptized. When we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we receive the Spirit of

God into ourselves, and that is how God and Christ make Their home with obedient believers. They live with them by the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. God imparts this gift to them upon obedience to the command of baptism. Anyone who does not obey this command does not have the Spirit of God living in them, and the Spirit of God living in us is what God uses to identify us as His possessions. It is His seal of ownership… His mark upon us. It is that simple.

Christ tells us in John 14:6… **"…I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** Christ is the only way to eternal life, there is salvation found in no other… He represents the truth from God… He is the Mediator for God's divine plan for the salvation of mankind … and no one will go to heaven that is not "in Christ"… which is what Christ means when He says **"except through Me"**. To get into Christ you must obey the commands found in Acts 2:38, which are to repent of your sins… meaning to turn from your old life… and be baptized for the remission of your sins. We find confirmation for this in the scriptures of what puts us into Christ when we read Galatians 3:27 which says… **"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ".** This passage clearly states that we are **"baptized into Christ"**… you don't get **"into Christ"** any other way.

The Gospel of John, especially the 14th through the 17th chapters, reiterates over and over again the necessity of obedience… and of showing our obedience through loving Christ and God by keeping Their commands. Those not doing so, do this at their own peril. We never know when the Lord will return to claim those that are His. He has promised that He would return… and the Lord always keeps His promises.

In Malachi 3:6… God tells us…**"For I am the Lord, I do not change…"** and in Hebrews 13:8 we are told the same thing about Christ when the scriptures tell us that…**"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."** We are not dealing with people here, we are not dealing with human nature and those with human failings… we are dealing with our God and Creator, and His precious Son. Isaiah 45:18 says**… "For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is no other."** God is our creator and there in no other being like Him. He does not think as we do… He tells us this in Isaiah 55:9 where He says to us**… "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."** Because of this we must conform to what God teaches us… He knows more than we do, and He has told us to do certain things in certain ways… and even if we don't understand His purpose for something, we should never second-guess Him, or question Him. That is not our place. We must learn what He has told us to do, and we must do it… no questions asked.

Because of Their divine natures we can always count on Jesus and God to keep Their promises, if we will live by the commands They have given to us. Likewise, we can also trust Them to bring to bear the consequences They have promised to those who do not obey the teachings given. In John 15:6 we see this when Christ tells us… **"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**" We must live according to the truth of God, as given to us by Jesus Christ, to claim the promise of eternal life.

In John 14:2-4 we are told again by our Lord and Savior… "**In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."** We know the way to eternal life… Christ has laid the way out for us… we need to follow it… and not deviate from it in any way, and we will have the eternal life that God promises through Christ.

Revelation 2:10 says … **"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."** May we all do this and have the reward promised to us. Let none do otherwise. God bless us as we strive to do this with all of our hearts.