

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



Volume 2

September 14, 2014

Number. 32

## Abusing Truth

**T**he possession of truth is the greatest possession of all. It doesn't matter what people say against us. It doesn't matter if we are forced to stand alone. If the truth is on our side, we can stand tall and with confidence. Never is this more true than when considering the truth of God's Word.

Jesus said, *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). There is no greater truth than the Word of God. God's Word is the truth that sets one free from sin and the tyranny of the Devil (John 8:32). God's Word is the truth that purifies the soul and leads to everlasting life (1 Peter 1:22). However, the truth of God's Word can be, and sometimes is, abused. Let's notice a few ways in which truth might be abused.

### Truth can be changed into a lie

In regard to the Gentiles, Paul said, *"Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen"* (Romans 1:25). The Gentiles did this by denying the existence of God. The reality of God is seen clearly by the creation of the world. *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"* (Psalms 19:1). Only the fool denies the existence of a Creator in view of creation. When you see a watch, you know there is a watch-maker. Who would look at something like a car and then conclude it was somehow accidentally formed by chance? Only the fool! The universe we live in is far more complex than any watch or car. Yet, some would advocate that it all came about by chance. The universe, they say, came about by some unexplained explosion of dead matter billions and billions of years ago, and from that explosion, all that exist, including man, eventually came. "Oh, man did not arrive as he is now," they say. Instead it is believed that man has evolved over the years. I wish the atheist would explain to us why it is that man has suddenly stopped evolving. Modern atheists are like the Gentiles of old. They hold truth in unrighteousness by denying God's existence. They have turned the truth of God's existence and creatorship into the lie of evolution. It starts with willfully denying truth and ends with an ignorant denial of truth by the offspring of the original deniers. The end result, however, is the same: God's wrath (Romans 1:18).

Many have turned truth into a lie. The Judaizing teachers of the first century did it by demanding circumcision upon the Gentiles. False teachers do it today by exchanging God's plan of salvation (*hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized*) for man's own plan (*faith only*). Some members of the body of Christ do it by changing the true gospel into a social gospel. All of these are examples of men perverting and corrupting the Word of God. It is a clear abuse of truth.

### Truth can be disobeyed

A part of treating truth properly is obeying it. The brethren at Galatia were guilty of abusing truth. *“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”* (Galatians 5:7). Truth is God’s instruction to man. When one refuses to obey truth he is being rebellious towards God, the end of which can only be bad. Nadab and Abihu refused to obey truth and were destroyed by the fire of God (Leviticus 10:1-3). King Saul refused to obey truth and so God rejected him as King of Israel (1 Samuel 15:1-35). On one occasion, even Moses, for the most part, a faithful servant of Jehovah, abused truth by not obeying it, and as a result he could not enter the land of promise (Numbers 20:1-12). Ananias and Sapphira refused to obey truth and lost their lives as a result (Acts 5:1-10). God deserves man’s respect. It is only right to honor God by obeying His voice and keeping His commandment (Ecclesiastes 12:13). To do otherwise is to abuse the truth which so many have died for over the years, giving us free access to it. Is it worth it? To disobey God’s Word is not only to abuse truth, it is to secure for ourselves spiritual death. Why not choose to obey truth and live?

### **Truth can be spoken without love**

The responsibility of every child of God is to preach truth. Paul said, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine”* (2 Timothy 4:2). First century Christians gave us an example of this when the church at Jerusalem was persecuted. *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word”* (Acts 8:4). Preaching the gospel to the lost necessitates contending for the faith (Jude 3) and defending the gospel against error (Philippians. 1:17). However, when we are called to do this, we must still preach truth with the proper attitude. Preaching truth in anger will not do. Preaching the truth with a “holier than thou” attitude probably will not accomplish much. Preaching the truth just to win an argument isn’t the right motive for doing so. We must preach the truth with love! This should be how and why we preach truth, i.e., because we love those to whom we are preaching. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:”* (Ephesians 4:15). This is not only the right way to preach the gospel, it is the most effective. In another place Paul said, *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”* (2 Timothy 2:25). To preach the truth in any other way is to abuse that truth. The nobility and honor of truth itself demands that it be preached with the proper attitude. In fact, there have been those who have mistaken truth for error because of how the truth has been preached. Let’s not do that to the truth. Always speak the truth with love.

### **Not rightly dividing Truth**

Paul said, *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). If one does not rightly divide the word of truth, error is inescapable. Some teach error because they fail to rightly divide the covenants of the Bible. The Bible is composed of the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament covers two dispensations - the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. Beginning with the Mosaic dispensation, God’s people were under the law of Moses. The New Testament covers the dispensation of Christ in which man is under the law of Christ. When one does not rightly divide the Word, and binds the law of Moses on those who are under the law of Christ, the end result is error. A person must recognize that the law of Moses has been abolished (Ephesians 2:15) and taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14), and now the prevailing law is the law of Christ. All men are now subject to Christ, not Moses, for Jesus has been given all power (Matthew 28:18).

Also, one must properly divide the New Testament. In order to do this a person must always

recognize in a given text who is speaking and who is being spoken to. Not knowing these things will also result in error. For example, in John 14:26 Jesus promised His apostles that God would send them the Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit, and that He would teach them all things. This was a promise relating to inspiration. The Comforter would inspire the apostles so that all that they would teach would be infallible. However, some have concluded that this promise applies to more than the apostles. Why? Because they do not rightly divide the word of truth. Hence, the truth is abused by the teaching of error. Many other examples could be given. Some passages apply exclusively to elders, or women, or to parents. Some teaching is only applicable to men or to husbands or wives. One should be able to see, then, that the word of truth must be rightly divided or else it will be abused.

Nothing is more valuable than truth, especially God's truth. It can and should have a great impact upon our lives. But to really benefit from truth, we must obey it. Let's develop the attitude that David has towards truth. He said, "*For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth*" (Psalms 26:3). Let's walk in truth. Let's defend the truth. Let's determine that we will be the pillar and ground of truth (1 Timothy 3:15) After all, only the truth can set us free (John 8:32).

*Don*