

Words of Truth

It's Not In There – Really?

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We, as God's people, are certainly supposed to be the "people of THE BOOK" (Joshua 1:7-8, Psalms 1:1-2, Psalms 119:97, Psalms 119:113, Psalms 119:127, Luke 4:4, John 5:39, John 14:23, Colossians 3:17, II Timothy 1:13, II Timothy 2:14-18, and I Peter 4:11). We know that ignorance causes people to be lost (Isaiah 5:13, Hosea 4:1-6, Romans 10:1-3, and Ephesians 4:17-19). That being said, sometimes that can get to one's head. Some have just enough Scriptural knowledge to become dangerous. If you or I become that individual, we can get puffed up through knowledge (I Corinthians 8:1). It is too easy to become a people who start acting like we know everything. Brethren, that is not ever true, for we are all growing in knowledge (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:10, and II Peter 3:16-18).

There have been many occasions wherein I have experienced people who get into trouble by thinking they know more than they do. In fact, I can think of a time or two in the distant past, wherein I sinned with that mindset. Brethren, we must always approach the Scriptures as students rather than Masters [teachers] (cf. Matthew 23:10).

Approaching the Scriptures as a student, will allow us to have a mindset geared towards learning. When someone says the Bible says something, you will approach that statement as a student. You will want to know where the Bible says that particular thing and you will want to search it out to verify if it is true (Acts 17:10-11). That doesn't mean we'll always be up in the air about everything. We can and must know the truth (John 8:31-32). A careful student of God's word is always sure to know what's right before speaking or acting (Romans 14:23, Ephesians 5:10, and I Thessalonians 5:21). It is ignorant to act or speak carelessly about a matter without having all of the information you need to know the truth (Proverbs 18:13).

A problem within many so-called "churches of Christ" is the mindset of human tradition (Mark 7:1-9, and Colossians 2:18-23). Many have the idea that if "we" haven't taught or practiced something in the past then it is certainly wrong. Brethren, that is an erring mindset. That mindset kept many Jews from understanding that being uncircumcised was just as acceptable as being circumcised under the New Testament law of Christ (Acts 15:1-5, Galatians 2:1-5, and Galatians 6:12-15). You see, they had always been taught and believed (rightfully so) that circumcision was the law of God (Genesis 17:10-14). Yet, since it had been taught and practiced for so long they could not see the rightful change in the coming of a new and better law (Romans 7:1-6, Ephesians 2:11-17, Hebrews 7:22, and Hebrews 9:15-17).

Unlike today, at least the tradition of circumcision in the first century was once the actual law of God. Today, people reject truths they've never heard before simply because it is new to them. Brethren, I have seen it many times. I am going to give some examples of this problem among "saints". Consider some of these examples as part of your studies and use them to examine yourself (II Corinthians 13:5).

Some Examples Of Rejecting Truth Based On Not Knowing It Is Truth

A woman named Barbara once brought up a charge that her Catholic sister made to her about fasting. Barbara said that her sister accused her of sinning because she never fasted. Barbara told her Catholic sister that she was ignorant because fasting was only in the Old Testament. Barbara was confident that anything her sister said was error since she was a Catholic. Barbara said that her sister in the flesh pointed her to a few Scriptures. Her response was, “like I’m going to listen to a Catholic”. WRONG ANSWER! It is not the Catholic who would be teaching you if you opened the Scriptures and read them for yourself. Had she opened to those Scriptures she may have learned that the New Testament teaches us that there are occasions wherein Christians are supposed to fast from time to time (Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Acts 13:1-3, Acts 14:23, I Corinthians 7:3-5, and II Corinthians 6:4-6). When I pointed these things out to Barbara she did not say she was wrong. Barbara was able to dismiss the truth on this, based on the fact that she had never seen, heard, or practiced fasting before. It is no surprise that Barbara no longer assembles with faithful Christians today.

There are things most people within churches of Christ are very familiar with. For example, I have yet to meet anyone who didn’t know that Acts 2:38 shows that baptism is required for the remission of sins. However, on other matters, many are not so familiar with the Scriptures. One time a question arose about whether or not Jesus ever ate any type of meat. One responded by saying, “there is nothing in the Bible about that”. Brethren, just because someone does not know where a Scripture is, that does not mean it is not in the Bible. The Scriptures do show that Jesus ate meat (Luke 22:7-15 and Luke 24:41-43). Think of how ignorant one looks when they make such a statement, in all confidence, just to find out that they were wrong (Proverbs 17:27-28).

There have been many times when I have heard supposed Christians say, “there is nothing in the Bible that says Christians are to be perfect”. Like the other statements we’ve examined above, those who make this statement do so boldly. They speak with a great amount of confidence. They have misunderstood Scriptures that teach we’ve all sinned in the past (i.e. Romans 3:23 and I John 1:8-10). Thus, they scream out that no one can be perfect. Brethren, there are MANY Scriptures that teach we are to be perfect (Genesis 6:9, Genesis 17:1, Deuteronomy 18:13, I Chronicles 28:9, Psalms 101:2, Proverbs 11:5, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 19:16-21, Romans 12:1-2, II Corinthians 7:1, II Corinthians 13:11, Colossians 1:28, II Timothy 3:16-17, and Hebrews 13:20-21). You are made clean through the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). You then are expected to stop sinning (John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-2, Galatians 2:17, II Timothy 2:19, and I Peter 4:1-2). We are all expected to be holy and blameless (I Peter 1:13-16 and II Peter 3:10-14).

Conclusion

We surely have to be cautious when we hear something “new” (Colossians 2:8). That does not mean that everything we hear that is new to us is something that is not in the Bible. We have to search those things out and be sure not to have a mindset that keeps us from growing and learning. There are people who spend much time in studying, but do very little learning (II Timothy 3:7). We do not want to become those people. For those of us meeting as the congregation at Sunrise Acres, it was not long ago that we learned some of the old songs we were singing were unscriptural. To some, studying the songs we sang was a “new” idea. Yet, it is a very old truth that we are to know and understand what we sing (Psalms 47:7 and I Corinthians 14:15). Let’s maintain our willingness to learn and never become “know it all’s”.