

The Word of God

Our discussion is based on something that would seem to be so very, very simple – the Word of God. Yet, there is much discussion about what the correct Word of God is in this hour. We hear many different aspects of the Word of God – some good and some that are not so good. Some aspects are really “out there.” Many things we hear of and believe are truly based totally on the true Word of God. Why is there such a discrepancy concerning what the true Word of God is?

I believe the main reason for the discrepancies we have today is the devil. Yes, it is the devil who is the main enemy against the true Word of God. Many of us would declare that it is man who would make up false doctrines and other discrepancies concerning the true Word of God. Yes, there have been many doctrines over the past 2000 years. We have heard and will continue to hear many untruths concerning God's Word. However, the bottom line is that it has been and always will be the devil who is behind it all.

So, what is the real truth? What is the true Word of God? I am not even going to try to weave through all of the doctrines and teachings that we have in this world today that say that they are God's truth. As I had mentioned there are many, many of them. I do have some thoughts and I will share them as we go forward in this essay. However, let us first review some facts concerning the Church in general as of today.

As of this past year, the “global body of Christ” is said to be more than 2 billion Christians and that they are separated into thousands of denominations. There are Catholics, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Apostolic, Methodist and the list goes on. Estimations show there are more than 200 Christian denominations in the U.S. alone and a staggering 45,000 globally, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity which is just one group that studies this area.

The early church, which spans from the start of Jesus' ministry, in A.D. 27, to approximately A.D. 325 when the Roman Catholic Church came into prominence, was divided primarily based on geography. The early Body of Christ and any differences were based basically on worship styles and the basic understanding of Jesus' teachings. These varied based on the regional cultures and customs of the different believers.

This was not a bad thing and it was actually encouraged by the main church leadership as we see in Acts 15. It is important to remember, that different worship styles and the differences between the Jewish believers and now the new Gentile believers never were meant to change the basic fundamental truths about Jesus and who He was, who He is and what He will do when He returns.

As we read in the letters of the New Testament, even in those early days of the Church, there were many false teachers and false prophets who tried and unfortunately, many succeeded in bringing in false truths within the Body of Christ. As we know, the writers of the New Testament such as Paul, Peter, John, Jude and James wrote the letters that we have today.

These men of God tried to combat the attacks of those false teachers. Those false teachers would give many different accounts of what the true Gospel truly was and they tried to dissuade the believers concerning the truths that were given to us by Jesus, Himself and the many apostles and true teachers whom He had truly called to bring us the truth – God's truth.

However, it was around 325 A.D. when everything really started to change and we started getting many, many different aspects of what “the faith” should be or actually was. As mentioned, the Roman Catholic Church was started up through the Roman Emperor named Constantine who was influenced much by his mother, Helena, who went to Israel and began to believe in Jesus. When Helena returned back to Rome, she influenced Constantine to change the state religion from their pagan ways and to believe in and begin following after the ways of Jesus or what we know today as, Christianity.

As we know, Constantine, being a good son changed the state religion of the Roman Empire to Christianity. However, He was also a smart politician and he incorporated much of the pagan idolatry and worship into this new state religion of Christianity. This was to appease both His mother as well as the pagan society of Rome. We must remember that Rome and its “culture” took after the ways of the Greeks which meant that there were plenty of sinful activities and sinful lifestyle ways that was flowing throughout the Roman Empire. What Constantine did was that he incorporated Jesus into that woefully sinful lifestyle.

In 1054, we see that the Eastern Orthodox Christians split from the Western Roman Catholics in what is known as the “Great Schism.” The two groups disagreed on the taking of the sacraments, as well as disagreeing with the Roman Catholics beliefs that priests should remain celibate and that the Roman pope had the final authority in all religious matters.

From there we see that there was much dissention and problems going forward concerning the truth about God and His Word. In 1517 A.D. we see “The Reformation,” which began by Martin Luther's “95 Theses” being posted upon the door of the church. He emphasized a personal faith in the Father and in Jesus rather than a faith built upon church doctrine. Martin Luther and his followers claimed that the Bible and not a church hierarchy, was the ultimate authority over all people, including priests and the pope, and that several ecclesiastical practices, such as granting indulgences (paying the church money to be absolved of sins), were corrupt.

We see that the area of Christian “denominations” began to truly multiply and grow following this. There were many different ways of worship that entered the scope of Christianity – some good, some not so good and some were just downright incorrect and sacrilegious. In other words the “church” itself was changing which brings us to today.

As mentioned previously, there are over 4500 different denominations, not counting the different offshoots of many of these denominations. That is a far cry from what Jesus told us in His Gospels and what we read of in the New Testament. That was the very thing that all of the writers of the New Testament wrote about and tried to stop and avoid the Body of Christ from falling into.

Jesus stated this very thing during His time of prayer in front of all the disciples. He declared in John 17:21-23, *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that **they also may be one in us:** that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²² And the glory which thou gave me I have given them; that **they may be one, even as we are one:** ²³ I in them, and thou in me, **that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”***

We must never forget that this is the essence of true faith in God the Father and in Jesus. We do this now, in this hour, through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what it is all about - to be one with the Father and with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. However, we must realize that this also means that we must be one with every true believer Jesus. We can only do this in and through the fullness of the Holy Spirit who is now on this earth and who is in every **true** child of God.

Jesus stated that the true believer in Him would be in oneness in their belief and worship of the Father and Jesus. Jesus also states that He would live within the true believer and that every true believer would be in oneness with each other. That is what true Christianity is all about. We are one with the Father through Jesus **AND** we are one with each other in and through Jesus. They go hand in hand. It is all part of the same “equation.”

If the believer loves God, than they are to be in oneness with all the other true believers in Jesus. If they are in oneness with all the true believers then, and only then, are they in oneness with God. As I stated previously, it goes “hand in hand.” This is a valuable part of the essence of “the faith.” In John 15:4-5, Jesus teaches that we, as His true believers, are one with each other as He states, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Abide in me as I in you.”* We are truly all of His branches but Jesus is the source for all of us.

In Galatians 3:27,28, Paul states it this way, *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all **one** in Christ Jesus.”* Paul is stating that as a true believer we have been changed. We are no longer what we were but rather now, through Jesus we are made one in Him. We are now referred to as the “one new man in Christ.”

Jude writes concerning this very aspect. Even back in that time, the time following Jesus’ death and resurrection, there were factions who were coming into the church spreading their lies and incorrect doctrines concerning Jesus and the faith. Jude writes in verse 3 and 4 of His letter, *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, **it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints. ⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Jude thought it was imperative that he write to his readers about, not their common salvation in Jesus, but rather he thought it vital to write to them because he was so very much concerned about those “ungodly” men who were coming into the churches spreading their lies and deceitfulness. They would come in looking very innocent but their words and teachings were way off base. This was happening from the beginning of the Body of Christ and it is still happening to this very day. Hmm.....

The essence of “the faith” that we are to “earnestly contend for” is very simple. The basic fundamental aspects of “the faith” today must be the same as Jesus taught (the Gospels). It is found in both the Old and New Testaments. It was known as the “Apostle’s doctrine” (Acts 2:42). It was what they taught and preached concerning salvation in and through Jesus.

What are the basic fundamentals of “the faith” that we are to “earnestly contend for?” The following items explain the basics of the true faith.

- Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” (Matthew 16:16) Jesus said that this was the “rock” on which His church would be and is built upon.
- Jesus was crucified (1Corinthians 1:23)
- Jesus has risen (1Corinthians 15:20)
- Jesus will come again (Acts 1:10-11)
- Loving God and loving others as Jesus had loved the Father and each of us. (This encompasses all the commandments and role-modeled by Jesus) John 17:21-23

These are the basics of the essence of “the faith – the faith concerning Jesus. This must be the basic understanding and belief by every true born again child of God. Yet, today we hear of everything else spoken about. We are told that there is no longer any need for most of the Bible to be read or even spoken about nor taught to those who come to church.

We are told that everyone is now saved. We are taught that what used to be sin and found to be sin, even in the New Testament, is all of a sudden no longer sin. They teach and tell us that it is okay to live the lifestyle that was once told to us as being sinful but now, all of a sudden, is okay with God. What??!!!

Today, in many places of what are called “churches,” they no longer even speak about Jesus. He did what He did and now we can all go on with our lives as usual. They no longer believe that the letters of John are truly scriptural nor are they valuable to a believer. Many parts of Paul’s writings are no longer useful except his teachings on “grace.” We are told that all his other teachings are when he was older and he got “a little out of whack” with them. What??!!!

Yes, that is how far we have come. We have made the true Word of God “of none effect” in our lives. We have made God exactly what we want Him to be. Well, that may be all well and good; however, the truth of the matter is that all of that is a bunch of lies and deceptions. God’s Word tells us that Jesus, who is the Word, is the same yesterday, today and forever. Therefore being that Jesus **is** the Word, then the Word is actually the same – yesterday, today and forever.

Yes, the Word of God never, ever changes. It is the same and we all must simply believe that truth. Oh yes, there may be some different understandings of how we are to look at the Bible and some of the things in the Bible. However, the most important thing that unites us and makes us “one in Christ” are those things we mentioned earlier – Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man; Jesus, our Christ was crucified and died; Jesus, our Christ, rose from the dead and Jesus, our Christ, will come again. That is the essence of our faith along with the fact that now, as believers in Jesus, the Christ and our Messiah, we are to love one another as we love God and as we love God we are to love one another.

That is the key to all of us being true believers in Jesus. That is the full Word of God in its encapsulated form. That is what “the faith” truly is. The writers of the Old Testament wrote that this will come to pass. The writers of the New Testament tell us that this is exactly what God had done in through His son, Jesus. Until Jesus returns, we have been given the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us through this life.

God now desires us to love one another. He desires us to tell the lost that are in this world that there is a way out of that spiraling lifestyle that will lead them to hell. The only “way out” for all those who are spiraling towards hell is Jesus - the Christ, the Messiah, who is the true Word of God.

So, as we conclude our discussion, as I had mentioned in the very beginning of this essay, there are many different things that we can say the Bible is telling us. However, the true understanding of salvation and eternal life is all very clear and it is very, very simple. It is found only in Jesus. Most importantly, we must never put Jesus on the side. He must be in the forefront of our lives from the very first day we accept Him as our Savior and Lord and that must continue forever and ever and ever. Jesus always points and leads us to the Father. It never ceases. It is not only until we reach heaven but rather it only truly begins when we reach and enter into heaven. It continues in heaven forever and it never ends.

God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit is the fullness of God as found in the entire Word of God – from Genesis to Revelation. I encourage all of the true believers to get back into the Word of God – the entire Word of God. Read and study it for yourselves. Allow the Holy Spirit to truly lead, guide and teach you - not in your own truth; not in anyone else’s truth, but only into God’s total truth. He alone is the Truth and He has given us His Word so that we may know and live in His Truth. It is only His Truth that shall make us all free indeed.