

## TO TELL THE TRUTH

By Joe Dale Wilson

Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ." In the previous verse Paul had spoken of those who will use every type of trickery to keep a person from the truth: "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."

Teachers and preachers must teach the truth so God's children can have a stable life as Christians and not fall prey to error!

There are preachers who can teach about morality but will not mention what a person must do to be saved. Preachers, tell the truth about faith and baptism! Some will not preach on church discipline or the lack of morality in America and the world. We have a group of alphabet people who have scared religions in America and

politicians into accepting them. Pulpits are being filled with sexual deviates and drag men. Schools are allowing young people to be taught about two moms and two dads.

Other teachers will not preach the truth about the "one body, and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6.)

Speaking the truth in love is something every preacher and teacher must do to please God. Five times in Matthew Jesus said, "I tell you the truth." God has warned us, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7.) Preach the truth, not lies that give false hope!

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another." (Ephesians 4:25.)

Christians should be known for telling the truth. How many want to go to a doctor that will not tell them the truth? How many want to be lied to by others? How many employers appreciate an employee telling them lies? Should a teacher expect their students to tell the truth? If neighbors, lie how long will they be trusted?

Remember that Satan is the father of lies and has lied from the very beginning. (John 8:44.) Lying becomes habit forming! A person who lies has to have a tremendous memory or they will entrap themselves in their lying. When families harbor lies in their homes, there will be no trust; there will be suspicions and doubts. People can lie to themselves until they believe their own lies.

The best thing for all of us to remember is to speak the truth in love.

— Vernon, TX

## I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

By Danny Tunnell

Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16.)

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." (Luke 4:18.)

How did people in Jesus' day respond to the good news, the gospel? Well, they took Him to the top of a hill in order to throw Him over a cliff! (Luke 4:29, McCord.)

The gospel makes some people very angry, while others are ashamed of the gospel. Are you ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Are you ashamed for people to know you are a Christian at work or at school? On the ball team? In the marketplace? In your neighborhood?

To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of Jesus because it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32,33.)

The gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ. To deny the gospel is tantamount to denying Jesus Christ. Think about who He is, the Son of God!

There are about eight billion people on the earth today. It is estimated that 109 billion people have lived on the earth over the centuries, so about seven percent of all the people who have ever lived are alive today. Did you know that only a handful of the 109 billion people made any real impact on history? But one person towers above the rest. His name is Jesus. Jesus attracts more attention, devotion, criticism, adoration, and opposition than anyone who ever lived.

Jesus Allan Francis wrote a famous essay on the life of Jesus, "One Solitary Life." It takes about three minutes to read and is easily accessible on the internet. Francis wrote about a man born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman . . . What a tremendous impact He had on history and the world!

Think about Jesus. He never wrote a book, and yet more books have been written about Him than about any person who ever lived. He had no formal education, and yet thousands of universities, colleges, and schools have been founded in His name. To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed

of Jesus, Himself.

To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of the power of God. Paul said, "It is the power of God to salvation." (Romans 1:16.) Some are described in the Bible as having a form of godliness (religion), but denying the power thereof. (2 Timothy 3:5.) To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of God's power.

Some are ashamed of the gospel because it is just too simple. It requires a childlike trust and faith to respond to it favorably. Jesus said, "Unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3.) This can be hard to do, but it is necessary.

Some are ashamed of Christ and His gospel, ashamed of His miracles, ashamed of His message, and ashamed of His ministry. Jesus and His gospel became a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them. (1 Peter 2:8.) Some are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:7.) But by the grace of God, that's not us! We say confidently with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes."

— Miami, OK

# Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

### ADDRESS CHANGE!

**Due to ongoing theft of our mail at the church building, please begin directing all correspondence/contributions for OLD PATHS to my home address: 830 W. Fargo Drive, Broken Arrow, OK 74012. Thank you for your ongoing and much-needed support!**

## Deliberately Avoiding The Limelight

By Joe Slater

Today at formal banquets the host and hostess are expected to indicate where each guest is to be seated. Certain seats are for those deemed more important or honored than others. In first-century Palestine, guests seem to have seated themselves wherever they pleased with the understanding that the host might ask them to move. Jesus, having been invited to eat at the home of a ruler of the Pharisees, took advantage of this custom to teach about humility.

"So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best seats . . ." (Luke 14:7.) Sitting with the important people might make you look important, at least for a while; but, as Jesus said, the host might very well "say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place." (14:9.)

Why not purposely take the lowest place? Then the host might "say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (14:10-11.)

Jesus never sought to draw attention to Himself. In fact, He took pains to avoid it. He let His teaching and His works speak for themselves as He did the Father's will. He modeled the humility commended by Solomon: "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." (Proverbs 27:2.)

Even if no other mortal notices or honors you, be assured that God takes note. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6.)

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30.)

## IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD

By Bobby Key

God is the sovereign creator and owner of all things. God created all things, upholds all things, and gives all things.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1.)

"The earth is the Lord's and all its fulness, the world and those who dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1.)

"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2:8.)

Of course we Christians belong to God not only because He made us and cares for us, but also because He redeemed us, and because we have voluntarily and gladly given ourselves to Him. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19,20.)

We are stewards or trustees of what we have and what we are. There is a difference between ownership and possession. As between man and man, we may claim to own things; but as between man and God, we own nothing. God owns all things. We may use them, temporarily, but ultimately they are to be returned to Him and an accounting must be rendered. God has never given a deed to any man for anything.

We brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out, hence we are not absolute owners of anything.

The doctrine of stewardship is taught from Genesis to Revelation. The words "steward" and "stewardship" may be found over twenty times in the King James version of the Bible.

"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2.) - (1929-2018)

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." (Revelation 4:11.)

"Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1:15,17.)

EDITORIAL . . .

## OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

By Dalton Key

Aristotle once observed an obvious truth which is feeling more relevant by the day: "It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." To which we might add, "and to shine forth as the light for those around us."

The darkness and decadence of this age reminds us of the sordid conditions, the "perilous times," described by Paul in 2 Timothy 3. Among the apostle's warnings, take note of these ominous words: "But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:13.)

Sound familiar? From all appearances, evil men and imposters are, even now, both active and intent upon both blatant deceit and absolute destruction.

There is no way to avoid the deteriorating current state of affairs. Things are getting morally and spiritually worse nearly everywhere you look, with corruption and intolerance on one hand, bitterness and resentment on the other hand, and with both hands clenched in fists of fury, one against the other.

As God's children living in such a benighted world fraught with ever-increasing levels of depravity, we seem to share an unwanted kinship with Lot, of Abrahamic days, who while living in Sodom, was "oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)." (2 Peter 2:7,8.)

Lot's soul was tormented day to day by what he saw and heard. And he lived in a time before the internet, before our out-of-control social media, and before today's 24-hour (non) news spin-cycle!

The real problem though, which is the sin problem, is neither new nor novel. There was sin in the Garden of Eden. Grievous and widespread iniquity permeated the world during the days of Noah. Wrongness and wrong-doers have always been around and always will be until time is no more. The world has never been inclined toward God and godly behavior. As Jesus observed, mankind has ever loved darkness rather than light. (John 3:19.)

Our challenge involves going beyond merely calling out the darkness. We are called of God to be different and to make a difference; to shine forth as the "lights in the world." (Philippians 2:15.) If ever the world needed the light of Christ and the light of those wearing His name, that time is now. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21.)

Simply put Christian friend, regardless the darkness, keep your light shining! "You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:14.)

## SHINE ON

by Dalton Key

The darker the night, the dimmer the day,  
As embers of memories flicker away,  
When the brightening goodness of life seems long past,  
When the worst from the best of us leaves us aghast,  
This truth I continue to settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

I know I can't turn all the darkness to light,  
I know I can't change every wrong into right;  
My voice is so feeble, my life is so small,  
Confronted by darkness confronting us all,  
But still this one truth I will settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

You can have all your glasses half-empty with gloom,  
Your hopeless despair draining hope from the room;  
The world, to a soul, may trade darkness for light;  
There may be none left yet to take up the fight,  
But still, here is truth that I'll settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16.)



## RACIAL PREJUDICE IS A SIN

By Mark Lindley

Most Americans are somewhat familiar with the Declaration of Independence. Perhaps the lines we remember best are the following: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In view of recent, tragic killings in our nation - all the killings - one might wonder if some have forgotten that "all are created equal." We need to be reminded.

God's word teaches that we all have common origins. The first man was Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45); the first woman was named Eve because she would be the "mother of all living." (Genesis 3:20.) All people have descended from the first man and woman. Paul stated that God made of "one blood" all nations of men to dwell on the earth. (Acts 17:26.) That we are all of "one blood" indicates that we have common origins.

It was not until the time of Genesis chapter 11 that different languages and nationalities developed. (Genesis 11:1-9.) God caused the people of that day to be scattered upon the earth, and He confused their language. However, it was never God's intention for men to begin discriminating against one another. Rather, God commanded his people to love their neighbors as themselves. (Leviticus 19:18.)

Not only does the Bible teach that we have common origins, but also that we have a common fall. Scripture reveals that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23.) Red, yellow, black or white, all have sinned and need the forgiveness of God.

The Bible makes it clear that God loves all and sent His Son to die for all. (John 3:16.) Therefore, there is equal opportunity for all to be saved. Paul wrote: "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither

male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-28.) This text shows what is taught throughout the Bible: that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34-35.) Since God does not show partiality, neither should we.

Racism and prejudice are ugly and sinful before God. James set the record straight when he wrote, "But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors." (James 2:9.)

Yes, prejudice is a "sin!"

Let us resolve to love and respect all people everywhere, recognizing that each has been created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27.) Further, God's people everywhere should pray for our country that we might turn to God before it is too late.

— Ripley, MS

## JESUS PRAYED FOR YOU AND ME!

By Milton Smith

One of the most intriguing chapters in the Bible is the seventeenth chapter of John. It is in this chapter that we read Jesus' magnificent prayer to the Father for his people. Over the years, this prayer has been referred to as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" and "The Real Lord's Prayer." I've always liked that latter title because, technically speaking, this is indeed the Lord's prayer. The other prayer that we often refer to by this title could probably be more accurately called "the disciple's prayer" or "the model prayer."

In this amazing prayer in John's seventeenth chapter, Jesus pours out His heart to the Father and includes you and me in his requests! While praying for the apostles, Jesus quickly adds, in verse 20, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word."

What an amazing thought! It encourages me to know that Jesus prayed for me two thousand years ago. And he prayed for you as well, because our Lord prayed for all who would believe on Him through the

inspired words of the apostles. I do not profess to fully understand the Divine mind, but I rejoice to know that Jesus included you and me in that wonderful prayer to the Father. Before the world began, Jesus loved us, and 2000 years before we arrived in this world, He prayed for us. This is truly an amazing thought.

You and I belong to Jesus in a very unique way via the new birth. It is a very personal relationship that we share with our Savior. Jesus loves all the world, but He has a special love for those who make the choice to become a member of His spiritual family.

How could Jesus love us before we were ever born? The same way parents who are anticipating the birth of a child already love that child before he/she is physically born into this world. When parents pick out a name for a yet-to-be-born child, they already love that child! Jesus already loves the future sheep of his fold.

As Paul pondered so many years ago in his Roman epistle, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the

wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" (Romans 11:33, 34.)

— Tulsa, OK

## Old Paths

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