

“Ye Shall Know the Truth”

By Chris Ulrich

Sunday, August 17th, 2014

Good to see everybody. Another nice Sunday, a little bit cold again, but...

A couple of weeks ago—I know not everybody that’s here this morning was here a couple of weeks ago, but, for those that were, and for those that weren’t—Parrish preached a message titled “Jesus Saves.” He had some of our youth up here, reading some of the headlines that they did. I think they appreciated the opportunity to get up here as well, and felt a great sense of participation. I know you mentioned a lot of things from the time of Christ, to the Renaissance, to the Revolutionary War, the Industrial revolution. But the common theme was that through all those periods in history, was that Jesus Saves. I thought, in a lot of ways, it was like being in a good history class. It made me realize that regardless of whatever’s happened over the course of time, historical events, events that we face now, Jesus does save. He is the author and finisher of our faith, and the message is always going to be that Jesus saves.

Last week was a service dedicated to the families of our ministry and several people came up to share about their experiences, and what keeps their marriages strong. Andy made a statement about how we can’t leave our marriages up to chance. I appreciate that, because the same thing with our relationship with God. I also appreciate a point his wife Sonia made about a seminar they had attended; she shared something interesting, that—May I ask you, Sonia, I’d like to bring you up, the point you had made, and I want to make sure that it’s clear, was that, you said the number one gift that keeps couples is godliness. I just want you to share real briefly, kind of recap that.

SONIA: Definitely godliness. If we don’t have that love for God first in our lives and it’s not strong, basically, our marriage is not going to be strong, it’s not going to be anything. There were many other points, you know, with respect, and loyalty, and many other aspects in marriage, as with a relationship, like if—besides God being our number one relationship, our most important. Second to that would be our relationship with our spouses, just like Andy and I shared, and I want to reiterate that we need to protect our relationship with our spouses.

Amen. Thank you. Thank you very much. I know I was sitting back there, and, you know what? A lot of what she just shared—when she first had mentioned that the number one gift, at first, honestly, I thought, “Maybe it’s a ring, maybe it’s time together, maybe it’s a trip together,” and if she had shared that, I would have gone along with that and said, “That’s fine.” But when she mentioned godliness, that really struck home. I mean, I had to shout, “Amen!” I mean, personally, because, you know what? that’s what it’s all about. I mean, there is a matter of staying in the faith, and realizing that’s our number one goal is to make it to heaven, eternal life.

So, this month, our theme is about sound doctrine.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

So, I’m sure a lot of us have heard this before: It’s—I mean, I’m not saying that you had to go to court to hear it, but, it’s in sworn testimony, “Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” How many’s heard that? How many haven’t heard that?

Well, you heard it for the first time. I especially like that last part about so help me God. I don't even know if they still do that in court, especially the last part, but we're talking about sworn testimony; we're talking about the truth. We're not in court today thank God, but the goal for any sermon or any setting, for that matter, is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help us God.

Our main Scripture this morning:

John 8:31-32 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

So, again, as I mentioned earlier, our theme for this month is Sound Doctrine and the title of the message today is, "Ye Shall Know the Truth." Personally, I think that the term 'truth' gets thrown around a little too loosely. I mean, it's not a matter of just pointing out the obvious, saying, "Well, it's cloudy today," that's the truth. "The leaves are green, and in the fall, they're going to change," that's the truth. Or looking at it like just stating an account, but it goes deeper than that. Telling the truth can be as simple as telling the events of a day but that doesn't mean that we're Christians. It means we're honest, which is important, but truth goes well beyond just being honest. So what does Jesus mean exactly when He says, "Ye shall know the truth..." What does it mean in Proverbs 23 when it says to, "Buy the truth, and sell it not..." Or, Pilate when he was questioning Jesus, he said, "What is truth?" It's a matter of looking at it like—I think we've all had different ideas or philosophies in our lives as far as what we thought truth might be. I think a common one would be the American Dream. We've all heard that. We look at it like, okay, to be successful, to be good to your family, to be good to your spouse, those are all good things, but none of those things are going to save us. We have to look at it beyond—I know that a lot of us have a similar seeking. We wouldn't have wound up here if we weren't. I mean, we don't just accidentally plop into knowing the Truth of God; I mean, it just doesn't happen by accident. There's a matter of seeking and soul-searching. Looking at it like, what does this life really have to offer? What is the truth?

John 14:1-6 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

I'm not going to suggest that all the secrets of the universe can be divulged in one sitting, especially since I don't know them anyway. Nobody here really does, either, for that matter. As far as secrets go, we're going to touch on that a little bit later. But the first point today is that Jesus is the Truth. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. I think most of us already knew that, maybe a few visitors are hearing that for the first time, or anyone that might be straddling the fence. We've all heard that expression, "Multitudes in the Valley of Decision." (Joel 3:14) I'm here to tell you that Jesus is the truth, and without compromise. We're not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. I know there's a lot of different religions out there, and I know that, even under the umbrella of Christianity, there's a lot of different philosophies and teachings and traditions, and so on and so forth... we're going to get into the deep-rooted Truth, the Truth of God. Again, it's not a matter of just saying, "Okay, we're going to talk a little bit about the plan of salvation." It's not just all about that, because it's a lifetime experience. And once we know it, we know it for the rest of our lives, whether we ever deny it or not, whether we ever compromise it or not, whether we ever decide, "Well, I don't want to stick with this; I don't want to live this life," we still know. The Bible talks in Titus about, "The grave of God that bringeth salvation hath

appeared to all men.” (Titus 2:11) that’s where God is fair. I’m sure we’ve all heard, “Oh, God’s not fair!” “Well, maybe He is,” “Maybe He’s not,” well, He is. He gives each of us an opportunity to hear it; it doesn’t matter if your background was really poor, really rich, somewhere in the middle, this country, that country, some other country, but I believe that. I believe most of us here do, as well, that the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. It’s something that God let’s us hear that Truth, and it’s something that once we do know it, we know it for the rest of our lives. I want to put some extra emphasis on that with what I’m going to share next.

This was something—maybe some have heard about it—this was a few years ago, I think it was a couple of pastors that were of these churches, and I think it was in North Carolina. The place and location really aren’t important, but, I believe, just to give validity to the story, that that was the location. Anyway, it was on World News Tonight and on the internet and on and on and on. It was basically, these two pastors, unbeknownst to each other, it wasn’t like they were in collusion, but it was a matter of them making these claims that they had been pastors of their churches, and they had been preaching for 20, 25, 30, 35 years, but they were now denouncing it, not just a little bit, but—not just saying, “I’m not going to do this anymore,” but they went on to say—and, of course, the media’s going to pump it up, that’s a fact. “Oh, Christianity is a complete hoax.” I’m looking at it like, “Okay, well, if that’s what you think, that doesn’t shake my faith.” But it is a matter of looking at it like, “Okay, if that’s what they decided that they want or their lives, if that’s the direction that they want to go...” Now I’m going to share my opinion on this. Bear with me for just a moment, because this is an opinion. In other words, if somebody’s teaching false doctrine, because that’s what they had known in the first place, because there’s a lot of false prophets. Malcolm, I appreciate what you shared, maybe a month ago, about there’s probably 99% of churches that don’t teach baptism in Jesus’ name. That is a main point, that is a cornerstone. That’s something that’s a landmark. That’s something that just never changes; it will never change. That’s something that, no ifs ands or buts about it, that’s the starting point. But, getting back to—if they didn’t teach the Truth in the first place, which, again, I know I’m just sharing an opinion, so bear with me for a moment, please—it’s a matter of looking at it like, okay, I firmly believe that we’d all be susceptible the same way. If it was a matter of, you know what? you’re teaching something that you know, deep-down—God has shown you the Truth, but you’re teaching something that’s false doctrine, after a while, I’d be sick of it. I’d be like, “I can’t live this way. Forget it; I don’t even want to live this life; I don’t want to teach it, because I knew it was a lie in the first place. I know they’re not going to tell you that in the media; they’re not going to tell you that on World News Tonight, “Oh, yeah, they were teaching lies in the first place.” It doesn’t work like that. They’re going to say, “Oh, they were pastors of churches and they were high and mighty and astute.” That’s, you know..

So, getting back to Sound Doctrine; The truth of God is the most powerful message there is, bar none. And knowing the truth of God is more than just a few religious experiences or maybe even many years of religious experiences. It’s not a matter of us sitting here trying to bash other religions. It has nothing to do with that, but, if somebody’s not teaching the foundational points from the get-go, the Bible talks about a foundation that’s built on sand (Matthew 25:24-29), and it’s going to wash away, just like down at the ocean. You know, I look at it like, are we getting closer to God as the years go by, or are we drifting away? The Bible talks, in the Old Testament, about how the household, the kingdom of David waxed stronger and stronger, but the kingdom of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. It’s one of those things where, “Am I drawing closer to God? or are we drawing closer to God?” We’re going to get a little more into the popularity of the message later on, but I want to look at:

Romans 3:3-4 *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

So, looking at that, looking at maybe an extreme case, say, everybody else in the world doesn't believe, but God has proven to us that this is right. Is it going to sway me enough to say, "Well, they must all be right." We've all heard that before, "What about all these people? What about my family? What about this, that, or the other?" We can't justify or make excuses. The goal is to try to win people to Christ, but we can't sit there and think, "Well, if they don't really know it, then I'm just going to go join them." It has nothing to do with that. As much as we hate to see people reject the truth of God, we need to realize that we can't be shaken.

Which brings up the second point today which is, "We can't let others' uncertainty about or unwillingness to accept the truth affect us." I know that's a kind of a long point, but we can't let their uncertainty or unwillingness to accept the truth affect us. This was about 4-5 years ago and I was at work, and I'll just kind of create a little bit of a scene here. I work at a particular office location and we had cubicles that were adjoining; they were a little bit taller, so you couldn't always see the other person. Well, I got in, one particular morning, getting ready to start the day, as we do, and a guy that I'd known several years was sitting across in one of the other cubicles. So, just out of the blue, I mean, he makes this statement; he said, "Nobody really knows where they're going when they die." So, I'm thinking, "Is he directing that at me, or just floating it in the air?" I was kind of like, prayed a quick prayer, "God, should I say something?" I believe that God just gives us those words at times when we need them, and I remember saying, "well, I know that we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ; we're all going to be judged whether to go to Heaven or Hell. That is the truth." So, we went back and forth a little bit, and—You know, this guy's a friend. I mean, this guy's not argumentative, or trying to start a doctrinal warfare... I mean, it was just a matter of looking at it like, "Okay, that had to be heavy on his mind on that particular day, and he just blurts it out. I'm thinking, "Well, I would agree with you, but, again, we can't let others' uncertainty about or unwillingness to accept this truth deter us, or keep us from doing God's will." We've got one more verse we're going to look at, and a couple more after that. We're talking, again, about the secret things, those things that are the unknown; those things that we don't always have the answers for.

Deuteronomy 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Remember that part, about ten minutes ago, about the secrets of the universe? Sometimes when people try to challenge us with some of the most outlandish questions, and, you know what? sometimes the best answer is, "I don't know." If they're weighing their decision on whether to follow Christ on whether we can tell them that there were dinosaurs, or whether there was life on other planets or how do the bones grow of a child that's in the womb, that's from Ecclesiastes 11:5, because God knew, in His wisdom, that people were going to ask these kinds of questions. You look it up in the Old Testament, it's there, there were people that were disputers, philosophers, people that were argumentative, and it's not like we want that. It's not—the goal is that we want to see ourselves saved, and others saved as much as possible, but, a lot of times, it's not going to happen. I'm not saying that to discourage anybody. I know, Jose Galvez, we had talked a couple of weeks ago, just asking for prayer about dealing with people that reject Christ. I talked to a lady that I've known for several years, down at work, and this was probably a couple of weeks ago, we just to talking a little bit, after we worked out, and she said, "I've really had some struggles here, lately." She termed it some soul-crushing experience that, "I just don't know where I'm going to land here in the next couple of months." She asked, "What is it that you rely on?" and I said, "I trust in God, and I'm not unsympathetic to your challenges, but the Bible says, 'Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.'" (Proverbs 3:5) She told me, "Oh, well, I'm Jewish." So I asked her, "Do you believe in the Old Testament?" "No, no, not really traditional, and I sort of believe that we're all going to end up together

like the molecules..." I'm like—I wasn't laughing. You know, God is always there to instantly give us wisdom and understanding how to react, because a lot of times, if we don't know—getting back to the Truth, it's like, Kirk, I'll use you and example, as a fitness trainer, and, some of the things that you have to know about health are difficult, and challenging, and intricate. It's not just a matter of, "Oh, yeah, just at protein, and carbs," and throw things together as if somebody's an expert, and it takes time to gain that understanding. I mean, it takes time to understand what the Truth of God is. I'm not talking about the plan of salvation, I'm talking about a life experience in the Truth of God, because that is a thing where, yes, the secret things belong to God. The last part of that verse where it says, "...the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children, forever." That's talking about the plan of salvation; that's talking about getting your life started in Christ. That's talking about knowing, okay, a lot of times, like when we had the prayer meeting the other night, you know, we're not going to know exactly what's going to happen in this country. I want to talk about—and I know this is a nerve—but how many have heard about the situation going on in St. Louis? I mean, that's a lot of problems, and, you know what? I don't know what went on down there. You could say, "Well, I'll take the side of the cop." "I'll take the side of the kid." "I'll take the black side, white side, whatever..." and, you know what? I don't know, because we're only fed certain details, and it's a heart-breaking situation. I mean, there's a kid that's dead because of that. It's like, "Should we crucify the cop?" and "It's got to go to court," and there's been—I mean, I've got to say, it's—I don't want to say that it's minor, but, compared to what happened in 1992, after the Rodney King verdict... Ed, you were in Detroit in the sixties, when you had tanks rolling down the street, and gunshots... There were a lot of people killed in some of those cities, and it's tragic. And it's one of those things where it's like, what's the truth? What is the truth? Are these people right? Are those people right? You know what? it's a matter of, I don't know what happened. We've got to trust in God. We've got to keep putting our trust in God, and that's not an excuse to do nothing, either. It's not a matter of looking at it like, "Oh, well, I'm off the hook because I'm a Christian and I don't—I'm just going to sit back and pray." Well, there's action to take. There's a lot to be said about the way that we treat people, about encouraging people; death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21), the things that we say, the things that we do. We're not going to stand in judgment for everybody else; we're only going to stand in judgment for what we do as individuals.

I know that third point wasn't really a lengthy point, but I'm going to segue into one last main point. The truth isn't, has never been, and will never be a popular message. Jesus said in Matthew 7 that strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life and few there be that find it, but broad is the gate and wide is the way that leads to destruction and many there be that go in there at (Matthew 7:13-14). I can go in a lot of directions with this but I'm going to stick with the fact that we need to know this in order to not get discouraged because of other people's rejection. As I was putting this together, I thought about Noah. The Bible says that eight souls were saved by water (1 Peter 3:20). So, what was the population at that time—we can only speculate—a couple of million? maybe five million? But think about the very low percentage of people, because, even if one soul perished, that's too many. It's still a fact that there were plenty of people that did, and it's a matter of looking at it like, you know what? I'm sure that as Noah was doing it, it was something that was on his mind constantly, "Anybody going to decide that they want to get on the ark as well?" The Bible says that violence was pervasive throughout the land. It was something where it was like, I mean, you look at today and it just seems to be escalating. I know there were a lot of problems a couple of weeks ago at the Gaza strip which seems to have lessened a little bit in the last week or so, but, who knows when that's going to flare up again? The Bible says that iniquity shall abound and the love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12). I mean, sometimes there's a threat that hangs over all of us. I mean, you think about it, like, nuclear catastrophe, and it's like, it's terrifying. "Oh, yeah, you could survive it." I don't think so, I mean, who would really want to? I mean, like, living in a nuclear wasteland? I don't think so. I'm not here to try to scare anybody or "Yeah, I want to accept the Truth because of what you said..." Accept the Truth for

what it is! I mean, it's God's plan for our lives. That's an on-going thing. That's not just for one day; that's not just for a few experiences; that's for a lifetime, and God really does have our back.

One thing for sure is that, once we're convinced of God's truth, we hold on to it, but we don't tell others the truth for our own sake, we tell them for their sake. That's part of preaching and evangelizing—and I think sometimes people get this idea it's like, there's strings attached. There's no strings attached. For those of you who are visitors, and are hearing it for the first time, if you choose to accept it, Amen! If you don't, I, you know, I can't force anybody, and none of us can force anybody to accept God's Truth. But it is a matter of looking at it like, it is the best life; I can guarantee that. Does it have its ups and down, mountains and valleys—we've all heard that—yes, it does. But, when I think sometimes about just the miraculous power—I mean, Ed, like your sister—I'm thinking, "How does that, I mean, like, certain prayers that radiate this..." It's just God that does it. It's as simple as that. I'm going to be closing in a moment here, but we've all heard the old song, "I saw the light, I saw the light, no more darkness, no more night..." I'm going to read one last passage here and then I'm going to make a few closing comments. This has to do with evangelizing. This has to do with people hearing the Truth. Us, as well as others. Not giving up, and not quitting, ourselves, but not giving up on others, either. God is a restorer; God will heal us; He'll forgive us of our sins, and that's important.

Daniel 12:1-3 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

When I think of that, and a lot of times I think about that at nighttime, especially when you're in a remote area, maybe out in the country or in the mountains, where you actually see the firmament, you see the brightness of it. I know I'm kind of touching on those that like to go camping, or, you know, go a little bit outdoors, but it's just magnificent. I mean, you think about it, and Gods going to have us shine as the brightness of the firmament. That's only God that can do that.

I know I'd be remiss if I failed to mention anything about our Seniors, because today we have dedicated to our Seniors—we're going to have a luncheon here in a little bit—not just here, but those who can't be here due to illness or other circumstances. I'd also like to give a quick shout out to my own parents who hit their fifty-first anniversary today. I know that everybody claps. I know that a lot of us remember Louise Smith, and remember Bob Granburg, and Christine Schultz, Jim and Martha Allsopp, and Hazel Dunbar and there's many others, and, if I've missed anybody, please forgive me. Sister Lena Reed, and others who've fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and they're with God. That's what it's all about. For those who are still with us, as far as—I know you mentioned about, well, who's a Senior Citizen, and what's the cut-off age—well, it's not really important, but I know that, for those that have that wisdom, and experience, and many years... Maybe getting a little frail, maybe getting a little slower, we've got a friend of the family in Bellows Falls, Vermont that we like to visit. Her name's Alice Atwood, and she's 97. The thing about it is, she's very alert. The interesting thing is that myself, and a cousin of mine, and my mom went up to visit her when I was there in July, my cousin Molly is thirty-three years old, and has done a little mountain climbing, so, anyway, Alice Atwood, the older lady, knows Molly's father. When she came out to greet, she said, "Oh, hi, Molly, I've heard a lot about you. You know, your parents told me about the accident you had years ago. Hopefully everything's going better." It was kind of incredible hearing a woman, or anybody, for that matter, that's that age—it's something that I look at like, "You know what? I know that dementia exists; I know that Alzheimer's affects people, and, really, it's not something that we have any control over, but I know that—let's

appreciate our Seniors while they're here, while they're still among us. I just want to thank you all for your time. God bless you.

