

The Truth Part 7: The Truth Requires Divine Revelation

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Matthew 16. I want to continue this morning on that theme and series that I've been trying to speak to you on which I've called "The Truth: Essential Elements of the Truth." Here in Matthew 16 our Lord asked the disciples a question. He asked them this question in verse 13, it says,

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And really that's the question of questions.

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

The words that Christ speaks here to Peter in verse 17, they tell us a great deal and that is they tell us something that is again essential to the truth, and that is that no person can know or believe the truth, no person can really believe on Christ who is the truth apart from a divine revelation.

Look again at his words to Peter in verse 17, "Blessed art thou." So many people talking about being blessed in our day and they gauge blessing on mostly material and external things which do not show true blessing at all but Christ says that Peter is a blessed man, blessed of God.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood," that is, no man and neither yourself, "hath revealed that unto you, but my Father which is in heaven." What Peter knew and believed about the Lord Jesus Christ, this man Christ Jesus, came by a divine revelation.

Now what Paul says in another place is that men can and that they will believe on what he called another Jesus, they will believe another Gospel, and they will be led by another spirit, but all of them are false. All natural revelation is false because man is spiritual blind. He comes forth born spiritually blind. He does not have spiritual faculties. He's born ignorant of God and he cannot know God unless God reveal himself to him. It's necessary that there be a divine revelation.

Turn over and look with me in Matthew 11. Christ here is talking about all those cities and people amongst which he did all of these miracles, cities such as Capernaum and Bethsaida and all of them. He says, "It'll be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for these cities." But rather than be disappointed or disheartened in this thing, Christ says this in verse 25, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things." Men cannot imagine that God is such a God as to do this but this is what he said, "thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent," those who think they know all these things, they're really hidden from them, "and thou hast revealed them unto babes." Revealed them unto babes. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Everything regarding divine truth, everything concerning God must come by a divine revelation and when I speak of a divine revelation, I'm not talking about anything that occurs to the natural senses. I'm not talking about a vision of sorts. I'm not talking about an experience of sorts. I'm not talking about the things that men usually think of and regard as being an experience or a revelation of God. And I'm certainly not talking about an extra-biblical revelation. You can beware of anybody, man, woman, boy or girl, who says, "The Lord told me this, this morning, or the Lord showed me this in a vision," because that is not the divine revelation that we read about in the Scriptures, and most of religion operates thinking that they know some things but they lack this true knowledge that comes by divine revelation.

Look over in Romans 10. Romans 10, the Apostle Paul writing of that people that he loved, that were his kinsmen according to the flesh, that thought they knew God, that thought they were saved, he says of them in verse 1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." They knew nothing of God's salvation. They knew the law, they had their customs, they had their rituals in religion, they had all their externals but they did not have this divine revelation.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God," they're zealous, you cannot deny that they have a zeal for God, "but it is not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness," they have all this, they are all of this, they're moral, they're good people it seems like, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Their zeal for God is not according to knowledge and this work by which we are taught of God, this divine revelation, is a sovereign work of God the Spirit alone.

Now when Christ was talking to John, I mean, he was talking to Nicodemus there in John 3, he makes some statements there that bear witness to this very thing. He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Then he says something like this, "Except you be born of water and of the Spirit, you cannot see the kingdom of God." He was not talking about sight with the natural eye, he was talking about seeing this spiritual reality that we find revealed in the word, and then he says, It's like this, the work of the Spirit in this revelation is like the wind. You can't see the operation of the wind." He said, "you cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes, but the wind does an undeniable sovereign work, it blows where it listeth and so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

In Matthew 13, Christ said, "He answered and said unto them," to those disciples, he said, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. The only reason that you know who I am and what I came to do and what I will do and the things pertaining to God and his kingdom of grace is because God has given it to you to know. He's given it to you like he did Peter, by divine revelation." And this revelation is always accomplished in conjunction with the word of God. The Spirit uses the word of God.

Those Jews, they had the written word of God. They rolled it up written on little scrolls and the Pharisees tied it on their garments. They had the word of God but they didn't have the revelation. They could quote the prophets like Isaiah, they could speak of Moses, but all they knew was a knowledge that was historical, they did not have the revelation that everything that the prophets said had to do with the Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. He accomplishes this divine revelation of God himself in the person of Jesus Christ. He reveals Christ through the word. He doesn't say, "Well, this preacher over here or this preacher over here is right because he quotes a little Scripture and he speaks a little bit about the Bible and all that kind of stuff. He takes the words and reveals who Christ is, not in some extra-biblical revelation and definitely not contrary to the word of God."

God never reveals anything to a sinner in salvation that's contrary to this book. So the person who stands up and says whether he be preacher or an individual, and he stands up and this is his testimony that God revealed to him that he loved everybody. No. No. No, because the word of God shows exactly the opposite. It says that he hated Esau. It tells that he hates all workers of iniquity and anything that comes from God by his Spirit in the way of divine revelation is always in accordance with this written word. And furthermore, when the Spirit does this work of revelation, there is no doubt that he reveals the true Christ and his emphasis is on him. It's not on gifts of the Spirit. It's not on all these other things that men emphasize, but when the Spirit of God does this work of revelation in our hearts with the written word of God, the emphasis is always on Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look over in John's Gospel 14, and I'm just telling you what Jesus says in his word. In John 14, he spoke to men and he said this in verse 16, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," that word is Paraclete, it means one to walk alongside of you; it's the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, "I'll give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." I'm gonna send you the Spirit of truth. The truth. Not the Spirit of just a few true things. Man can say a lot of true things like, "I believe Jesus is God." Well, that's true. Or, "I believe the Bible is the word of God." That's true. But these things are not the truth because the truth is a body which God the Spirit must reveal you concerning Christ and he says in verse 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit, "whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Spirit of God, he says, will teach God's people and reveal to them the truth.

Look over in John 16, it gets even more clear. John 16:13, he says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth," all truth, "for he shall not speak of himself." As a matter of fact, when you hear somebody always talking about the Spirit, the Spirit, the Spirit, you can guarantee, be sure that he's not the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit magnifies, emphasizes and exalts the Son of God. Now listen, "but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me." Me. I spent almost 40 years, Brother Mayhan spent longer than that, Brother Rupert spent his entire ministry emphasizing the one person, the one thing that the Scriptures always magnify and that the Holy Spirit always glorified, that's Jesus Christ and him crucified. I'm not interested in a program. I'm not interested in an extra church activity, I'm interested in telling men the truth about Jesus Christ, about magnifying his name, exalting what the Scripture says that he does. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He'll take, the Spirit of God will take the things of Christ and reveal them and show his majesty, and his glory, and his perfection, and his salvation, and everything God has to give in grace to him, in him. And if God reveals himself, if he reveals his salvation to anyone, it will be by the truth.

God who is himself called the God of truth, he doesn't use lies. He doesn't use half-truths. He doesn't use man's wisdom. He doesn't use man's methods or man's means. Somebody said, "Well, these kind of man-made means, they're justifiable because of the end they'll bring." Well, first of all, they'll never bring the right end, and secondly of all, God himself has ordained the means and the means themselves will all glorify him. They'll glorify him, the Spirit of God, and this is so contrary to our fleshly ideals, it's so contrary to the super-salesmanship of preachers in our day, the pressure gimmicks and things that they use to try to get men to believe something that they don't know about or understand or cannot in any way comprehend or lay hold of until God reveals it. But that just doesn't get the job fast enough. We're gonna put pressure. We're not gonna wait for the wind of the Spirit to blow and reveal the truth. We'd rather have a notch on our soul-winning gun.

We'd rather have a number on our rows. We'd rather have something like that that we can glory in rather than have the work, a genuine work of God's Spirit in the heart.

There's nobody that has ever believed or that is believing right now who has not heard the word of truth. When Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:13 he said that those Ephesians like himself, they trusted in Christ, they trusted in him after that they heard the word of truth, which was the gospel of their salvation and that the Spirit of God is the one that revealed it to them and witnessed to them. But nowhere in this book is it any more clear than what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2. This isn't my opinion, this isn't my theology, this isn't how I think it is, or this isn't my interpretation. One time a guy said something about election and a man said, "I don't believe that." He opened up the Bible and he read what Paul says there in Ephesians 1 and he said, "Well, do you believe that?" He said, "Not the way you read it." This doesn't have anything to do with the way I read it, this has to do with what God says through this apostle and in chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians he says this to them, to the church at Corinth, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." Paul was not a great orator, it was not by his ability to speak, it was not because he had a charismatic personality, it was not because he used good illustrations or told funny stories, he didn't have any of these. He came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you, what? The testimony of God.

"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." This sounds like a weak man. This sounds like a man who would not be invited to speak at an evangelistic conference. This sounds like a man that was not an entertainer but he was merely an instructor in the Gospel. Well, "but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I always pray that the Spirit of God will shut my hearers' ears to what I might say foolishly but to open their hearts to what might be said by the word of God.

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." This is a hidden mystery and what a mystery is in the Bible is something that has not yet been revealed. All throughout the Old Testament and such, the hidden wisdom of God, Christ and him crucified, though it was in types and shadows, it was for the most part hidden except to those Old Testament saints like Abraham to whom it was revealed. You say, "Well, Abraham didn't know anything about Christ." Abraham said of Christ, "He saw my day and he was glad." How did he see? He saw by the eye of faith. He saw because God revealed this to him.

"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." That's the condition of man. Paul wasn't a great orator, man was

spiritually blind and dead just like all the history showed in the fact even that they would not have crucified the Lord of glory had they known, had they had this revelation. But they did.

Now look down at verse 10, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Those believers at Corinth, all of God's true people over the course of time, God revealed him unto them by his Spirit. Do you know what that word "revealed" there means? It means to take the cover off. Have you ever thought about something, about anything in life, and thought so convinced of yourself that it was this way or that way, if anybody asked you, you'd say, "I can tell you how it is. I know how it is," only to find out, only to find out that it was not that way at all? Hasn't that happened to you? When you found out the truth about it, when it was revealed to you how it actually was, that's the way Naaman was. When he went to the prophet to be healed of his leprosy and the prophet told him to go and dip in that River Jordan seven times and he'd be clean, Naaman was mad at the first. He said, "I thought," he said, "I thought the prophet would wave his hand over my leprosy or pronounce some mumbo-jumbo over it," just like men think today. You see, our ways are not God's ways and when the Lord moved him to go and to dip in the water of the River Jordan seven times, that muddy river, he came up with skin young and youthful, free of leprosy like a baby. But if he had kept thinking the way he thought, if the Spirit of God had not revealed to him. Some of those men with him said, "Master," they said, "if he said some great thing, you'd of done it. If he'd said you'll give \$100 or if you'll give \$1,000 or if you'll walk on your knees through the dust, if he'd told you some great thing, you'd of done it. But he just told you the truth." Well, if God had left that man to himself on that day, he'd of died a leper.

Well, do you know what the Bible says that God is going to do for his people that he chose in Christ before the world began and he gave to Christ so that even in that Psalm he could refer to them as his people, thy people? They hadn't made a decision, they hadn't joined a church, they hadn't been baptized but they were Christ's people given to him, he was responsible for them, he died for them, and Christ was told by the Father in Psalm 110, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." In the day that the Spirit of truth works in their heart and reveals the truth to them. He says,

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit knoweth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit which is in man." I don't know what you're thinking, I don't know what your opinions are or anything about you except you know your spirit knows. And the Spirit of God knows the deep things of God, even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.

Now look at verse 12. This is one of my favorite verses in all of Scripture, "Now we have received," the people of God have received, believers, true believers have received, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." One great way by which you can test whether or not the Spirit of God is in a ministry, or in a preaching, or in a conversation, or anything else is this: those who tell people to do something in order to be saved, to do something in order to be blessed, if you'll do this the Lord will bless you, what arrogance.

If you'll quit this, the Lord will bless you. And you see, that's natural to us because we, by nature, are blinded to the way of God and we want them to tell us to do something so we can do it and feel good about ourselves but that's not the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God does not take the law or the 10 Commandments or anything like that and use it like a whip on you all the time to keep you straight; lay it out before you like a rule that you're to obey if you want assurance or if you want hope or anything like that.

No, "but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given," freely given, "to us of God." All the gifts of God. You see, that's what grace is. Grace is all a gift. It's not in what you feel, although it does produce some glorious feeling but it's not in what you do, it's in what God gives in Christ and that is a full and finished and final and eternal salvation. He's done it all and he gives it as a gift. And the Spirit works to convince us, everyone God saved, the Spirit convinces us that we cannot do anything of ourselves and that's why in our doing, all we wind up with is discontent, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, a view of everything and the world and God and everything else that is simply nothing but doom. But the Spirit tells about a gift, a perfect gift, the gift of salvation. Men talk about a Jesus that if you'll do something or if you'll let him do something, he'll do something for you. We talk about the Jesus of whom it was said, "Thou shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin." He's going to do all the saving.

The things that are freely given. You know, the Bible speaks about everything being given as a gift to God's people in Christ who is described as an unspeakable gift. The Bible speaks of the gift of faith. Faith's not something you have. If you're ever enabled by the Spirit of God who must give you faith to believe, it's because he gave it as a gift, "For by grace are ye saved and that not of yourselves, through faith and that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God." No man will see God, no man will be accepted by God without righteousness. In Romans 5 he talks about the gift of righteousness. Nobody is ever saved who doesn't repent and that repentance is a changing of mind, of our minds and hearts concerning God. It's repentance toward God that is wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God. We can't change ourselves but it's a gift.

He says, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man," that's the way I was born, the way you all were born, the way every person is born, natural carnal man whose minds and hearts are at enmity against God as he is. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." You say, "Well, if that's the shape we're in, if the Spirit of God works in whoever he wills, if we must have God divinely reveal himself to us and his truth revealed to us, there's nothing we can do." You got it. But he does something. His Spirit makes his people willing in the day of his power. He reveals to them that this word is the truth. It's not what men say about it, but it is this word that's the truth and he reveals to his people the things that are freely given.

You know, this is how backwards we are. We love freebies naturally in the world. Just let us hear that it's free, we're gonna beat a path to there. If the sign on the counter says, "Free," we're gonna take one of them. We just like free except in the things of God, except in salvation because we want something that we can glory in. We want to depend on our work. We want to do something for God but you can't do anything for God. He owns the world. He's all-mighty. He's all-wise. What are you gonna do for him? No, he's got to do something for you. He's got to do something for you.

You remember when Joseph was down in Egypt and his brothers, they had to go to Egypt to get corn because that was the only place in the midst of the famine, that was the only place you could get it, you had to go to Pharaoh's man and get it from him. He could give it to you or not give it to you. And those brethren, sons of Jacob, they went down to Egypt to get corn and the man they had to deal with was a man who was really their brother in whom they had taken, put down in a pit, bloodied his beautiful coat, took it to their father, told him that his favorite son was slain by a wild beast and then sold him into slavery. He went down to Egypt and God raised him up. When they went in before Pharaoh, he called them in there, they didn't know who he was and when they found out who he was, when they began to find out who he was, they began to get scared. And that's what happens when God the Spirit reveals himself to us. In the first, we begin to realize that. I can remember this so well, my own experience when I began to think God is not who I thought he was. God is not how I thought he was. I'd read those pages, I'd preached from these pages and just kind of gloss over the parts I didn't want to deal with.

But then it says that Joseph revealed himself to his brethren and he said, "This is what's happening, the Lord in your doing all that you wanted to do and all that you did for evil, the Lord used it for good and he sent me to provide, to bring a salvation of sorts to the land and I don't have anything against you. Go get your father and move down here to Egypt where there's plenty." And that's just like Christ. He has to reveal himself to us and he's not revealing himself to us for bad, he's revealing himself to us for our good and for his good.

John says it like this, "And we know that the Son of God hath come and he hath given us an understanding, a revelation, he's taught us the truth, that we may know him that is true and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ and this is the true God and eternal life." Eternal life is not making you happy, healthy, wealthy, wise. Eternal life is to know the true God in his Son Jesus Christ and to know all that he has in grace given you, blessed you, saved you. What do we say? What then? Thank you. Praise him. Live according to his word and don't do it to be saved, do it because you are saved and rejoice.

"Blessed are you, Simon Peter, you know the true Christ. You know that I'm the true Christ. Flesh and blood has not revealed that to you. If flesh and blood had taught you that, somebody else could come along, flesh and blood, and unteach you. So flesh and blood has not revealed to you that but my Father which is in heaven." The Holy Spirit always reveals Christ using the truth of God's word. The truth requires a divine revelation and I can't do that for you. I try to preach the truth but the Holy Spirit has to take that truth and reveal it in your heart, convince you of the truth of it.

I've often thought, can you imagine what Saul of Tarsus thought of himself, of what he knew? He'd been taught by the religious teacher of his day. He was a moral man. He was recognized and honored among the Pharisees. He was a Jew. He thought he knew God. He thought he knew a lot about God. And he was zealous, he was on his way to Damascus to put Christians to death because he thought they were wrong. What happened to him? The Lord Jesus Christ revealed himself to him. He stopped him in his tracks, as I like to say, he un-horsed him, he brought him down and he no longer thought that he was lord over everything but he knew that the one that he was talking there was the Lord. But Christ revealed himself to him not to destroy him but he revealed himself to mercy. He said, "I'm Jesus whom you persecute and I'm your salvation. You go down the street called Straight and you speak to a man by the name of Ananias and he'll tell you some very important things." And he's Paul the apostle. Paul the apostle. What did he say? Galatians 1, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me. I didn't speak to this disciple, I didn't speak to this apostle as to whether or not it was true or not, it was true. He revealed Christ in me." And if God ever reveals Christ to you, he'll reveal him to you through this written word and he'll reveal him in you by his Spirit in your soul.

The truth requires a divine revelation or nobody would believe it. Like the preacher said, "Ain't nobody but a fool or a Christian will believe this Gospel."

Our Father, we thank you this morning for your goodness and your mercy, your salvation, for every gift that we receive by your grace in Christ. We thank you that your Spirit reveals an accomplished, finished work that satisfies your broken law, that honors your inflexible justice, that reveals an accomplished work which is all our salvation. Give us grace and strength to praise Christ and to trust him, to rely upon him, to rest in him. Oh, to have that rest that's in him. We thank you and we pray in Christ's name. Amen.