

THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH ***(The Knowledge of the Truth – Sin)***

Paul tells us that God desires all men to be saved and to come to “**the knowledge of the truth**” (1 Tim. 2:4). There is gospel truth of which one must be made aware, and then, by the grace of God, respond to in faith, in order to be saved (cf. Rom. 10:14-15).

This “knowledge of the truth” begins with the “knowledge of sin”. Paul, in the book of Romans, gives us the most extensive and systematic presentation of the gospel found in the N.T. After the prologue (Rom. 1:1-17), Paul immediately launches into a detailed treatment of our SIN problem (cf. 1:18-3:20). Here he shows that the Pagan, the Moralist, and the Religionist are all likewise under the condemnation of sin. His conclusion is damning (cf. Rom. 3:9-20, 23). ALL are found to be guilty sinners before God without exception. There is NONE righteous, no, not ONE!

Romans 3:20 (NKJV)

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is **the knowledge of sin**.

Paul in his great gospel treatise in Romans begins with the issue of SIN. For Paul, the knowledge of the truth begins with “**the knowledge of sin**”. The LAW presents the glory of God’s moral standard (cf. Rom. 3:23) of which we all come short (cf. Rom. 3:19-20, 5:20, 7:7, 13).

No one measures up to God! Paul is telling us that in order to be saved we must first come to the knowledge that we are completely spiritually bankrupt before God and that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves (cf. Mt. 9:12-13, Phil. 3:7-9)! Our mouths are thus STOPPED as we admit our guilt and helplessness (Rom. 3:19). Thus, we are no longer defending ourselves, denying our guilt, or clinging to self-righteousness (cf. Rom. 10:2-4).

However, mere knowledge in and of itself stops short of saving faith (cf. Rom. 1:18-19, 2 Pet. 2:20-22, Heb. 6:4-6, Heb. 10:26-29). The urgency and warnings in the N.T. are strong that we must respond with sincere REPENTANCE (cf. Heb. 6:1, 6) to such knowledge while we have

opportunity. Today if you hear His convicting voice, do not harden your heart (cf. Heb. 3:7-8).

The knowledge of sin must lead to repentance. The goodness of God leads to repentance (cf. Rom. 2:4). Sometimes the N.T. emphasizes REPENTANCE in order to be saved (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9) and sometimes it emphasizes FAITH (cf. Rom. 5:1). Jesus said we must **repent** or we will perish (cf. Lk. 13:3-5); but He also said whoever **believes** in Him will not perish (cf. Jn. 3:16-18). There is no conflict here. To repent essentially means to have a “change of mind.”

A saving faith involves a change-of-mind kind of faith. Saving faith always has the stuff of repentance and biblical repentance always has the stuff of faith. The issue is the nature of saving faith! We are saved by faith alone, but it must be the RIGHT KIND OF FAITH! Repentance involves a fundamental change of mind about sin/self, and about Jesus as Savior and Lord, which is brought about by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God.

I fear there are many bogus converts who have made a profession of faith but have never come to the true knowledge of sin. They have never been broken over their depravity (Mt. 5:3-4, 21:44), they have never been humbled (cf. Lk. 18:10-14), and, in fact, have never come to true biblical repentance (Acts 26:20). In reality, they have never come to truly have a saving faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and therefore, their lives remain essentially unchanged!

To appreciate the good news of deliverance, one must first know and be humbled by the bad news of sin. And I am so very THANKFUL for a Savior who is the complete and total answer to our sin problem! Thank you Jesus!