

“The Value of Knowing”

Romans 3:1-2 = *“What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **Much in every way!** First of all, the Jews have been **entrusted with the very words of God.**”*

What is the value of knowing the difference between a church that God blesses & a church that God is going to “spit out?”

Read Revelation 3:7-22:

7 *“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:*

*These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. **8** I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. **9** I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. **10** Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*

***11** I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. **12** The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. **13** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

14 *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:*

*These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. **15** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! **16** So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. **17** You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. **18** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

***19** Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. **20** Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

***21** To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. **22** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Being a Jew physically is like being a “church-attender” physically...

Being a Jew spiritually is like being a Christian spiritually (vs. verbally alone).

Knowing the difference is of the utmost value... it is revealed grace!

Read Isaiah 52:12 = *But you will not leave in haste or go in flight;
for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel
will be your rear guard.*

Read Jeremiah 17:17 = *"But blessed is the one who trusts in the
LORD, whose trust is the LORD."*

If you think this is not a big deal... if you think this is not an issue for today...

Read Matthew 24 & 25... we are in the midst of eternal "birthing pains!"

Key challenge for the faith community today = "Christian Consumerism"

Many don't want God's message of truth in love... they want a massage.

Many think that once they have done enough religious activity, God owes them a certain quality of life...

Read **Luke 15**... closing verses (Prodigal son's **older brother**)

Ultimately, **Christian Consumerism creates false converts to Christ!**

Matthew 22:14 = *"many are called but few are chosen"*

The value of knowing is that you have been called...

The REAL LOVE of the Gospel is overwhelming...

The REAL LOVE of the Gospel is beyond reproach...

The REAL LOVE of the Gospel is priceless!

The problem is.... too many people (even those who have heard & know the truth) do not value the truth of the Gospel.

ESAU (Jacob's brother) is a classic & biblical example... he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew...

16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. **17** Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. - **Hebrews 12:16-17**

One of the tragic realities that typically correspond with a devaluing of God's truth is the creation of **the "De-churched" phenomenon** in our culture...

People get vaccinated with Jesus... they get just enough of Him to keep the "real" Him away.

The problem is that too many people are hearing about a God that they are not experiencing... because the Lord will not be mocked or maligned into some Sunday morning side-show or 60 minute slot on a selfishly centered schedule.

We would not have as many "De-churched" folks if they were being introduced to the true God of the Bible!

Read 1 Kings 18:16-40

Elijah on Mount Carmel

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. **17** When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. **19** Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. **21** Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing.

22 Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. **23** Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. **24** Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." **26** So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." **28** So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. **29** Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. **31** Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." **32** With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs^[a] of seed. **33** He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

34 "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. **35** The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.

37 Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

When people meet the real God of the Bible, they don't need the cheap imitations that are so often sold as Santa Claus to a world that is "calling unto themselves those who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear."

Sadly, however, there is a movement under the name of Christianity known as the "Prosperity Movement" that are leading people astray. Such teachers create a false gospel in which God's rewards are primarily short term, self-centered, Savior-less, and sinful.

Passages like **Luke 14** and **John 6** are ignored by the false gospel advocates... all to the demise of those who follow their heretical teaching & leading.

Romans 1:1 = *Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, a sent one, set apart, for the Gospel of God.*

(Note the missing “comfort,” cash, & Cadillac)

1 John 2:6 = *Whoever claims to be in Christ must walk as Jesus walked.*

Luke 12:48 = *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

One of the reasons we value knowing God’s truth is that it brings us the “good news” (actual definition of “gospel”) that only God can fulfill. In reality, it is only when one understands the truth of SIN and its consequences that one can grasp the grandeur of God’s grace and His solution to sin... SALVATION by grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone!

Inherent in the gospel message is the promise of God that no one is beyond the reach of His love. Moreover, His offer of forgiveness is available to everyone that trusts in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Those in whom the Holy Spirit takes residence (there by constituting a radically transformed, eternally secure, “born again” biblical “believer”) know the joy of being set free from the enslaving power of sin.

John 8:32 - 36 = *Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. 33 They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” 34 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

PRAYER

Note: Much of the teaching in this message was conducted via video illustrations and recorded dialog from Pastor Matt Chandler of “The Village” Church. Consequently, it is highly recommended that this sermon be “watched online” in conjunction with these notes. You will also be blessed to connect with Pastor Chandler on YouTube...