Grace to You :: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

Deliverance: From Error to the Truth, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 80-222

Well, as I said last week, I have taken a bit of a diversion from our study of the gospel of Luke. I warned you a few weeks in advance that I was prompted to write a book on the subject of deliverance because the theology of deliverance which is so intensely biblical is so completely neglected today. And when I was away for a couple of weeks in Italy, it really began to weigh heavy on my mind that I needed to address this subject. And so it became like Jeremiah, fire in my bones and I can't go back to the gospel of Luke until I have delivered my soul on the subject of deliverance.

As I said last week, and I would just encourage you, if you weren't here last week to get the tape and listen because what I said last week is essential and foundational to this discussion. It's not one of those messages that's sort of optional, it's a mandatory theme to be understood by all of us. So if you didn't hear the message, you certainly can pick up the tape out at the tape center today.

I said last week that one of the great words in the Bible is the word "deliverance," though it is not commonly used in the Christian vocabulary. Sad to say, rarely do you hear theologians talk about, rarely do you read theologians write about the truth of deliverance, and yet it is nonetheless a profoundly important term for understanding God's redemptive work. God is in the business of deliverance. And deliverance may be the best, it may be the most clarifying and it may actually be the most comprehensive word to explain God's gracious and powerful work in our lives. We were prompted to this discussion by the fact that Jesus came with a ministry of deliverance. And when we began to see that in the case of Jesus, it drew us into the greater theme of deliverance which covers really all of God's redemptive purpose.

Now the theology of deliverance is not just some academic exercise, it is not merely a matter for theological discussion. The theology of deliverance is practical, it is intensely practical and it is extremely necessary for all believers to understand because it is the theology of deliverance that defines what salvation really does in the believer. A person who is a true Christian has been delivered from certain realities. True salvation, we could say, is deliverance. It is the dramatic rescue of the sinner from all of the elements of life that threaten to destroy and damn him. In fact, deliverance defines what it means to be a Christian. There are the undelivered and the delivered. We are the delivered. In Romans 11:26 Paul writes, "The Deliverer will come and He will remove ungodliness and He will take away sin." The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ is there identified as the Deliverer. In fact, every time in the Bible you see the word "save, saved, salvation, or Savior," you can translate it with some form of the word deliver. Essentially it means the same thing. But deliver communicates

well to us because we understand in the English the meaning of deliverance.

Now as I said last time, for you who were here this I hope is still ringing in your mind, the theology of deliverance and understanding of deliverance is a critical area of truth. And it becomes critical at the point of understanding who is a true Christian. And that, I pointed out, is absolutely essential to the health and well-being and effectiveness of the church. If the church blurs the line between Christians and non-Christians, it then invites the enemy into the camp, totally distorts its own identity and allows Satan to gain a foothold. It is a matter of being content or even inviting the tares to be sown among the wheat. And yet that is exactly what is happening in evangelicalism today.

The evangelical church is inviting non-Christians in and then redefining them as Christians. I told you last week, the greatest failure of professing Christianity in this day and for this century past has been the failure to distinguish between true Christians and false. And it's worse now than it's ever been. It's been going on all through the century and it's now worse than it's ever been. The true church is the society of the delivered and we have to keep that distinction very clear because the Lord wants a pure church, He wants a chaste bride and He wants a bride without blemish and without spot. The church must be made up of true believers and it must be clear who is a real Christian and who is not so that we protect the church from the encroachment of Satan, and also so that we protect the lost from being deceived. Not only when we allow non-Christians to be defined as Christians do we pollute the church, but we also aid and abet the deception of Satan and people live as though they were Christians when in fact they are not.

I told you last week than when people ask me what is the biggest problem in the church? I say it's the inability to discern. And when we talk about what is that the church doesn't discern, the top of the list is they don't discern between who's a Christian and who is not. That is a deadly error.

Now as we closed last week, I told you that there are a number of categories in which we have to understand the nature of deliverance. Being a true Christian is being delivered. And it's being delivered from several very important realities.

The first one is the one I want to talk to you about this morning. True Christians have been delivered from error to truth--from error to truth. Now this is not an easy message for me to preach to you for a number of reasons. One, I have too much material in my head...too much to try to sort out so that it takes a tremendous amount of effort mentality and a confidence in the Spirit of God to help the filtering process. Secondly, you're going to have to think with me because there are going to be some subtleties, as well as some not so subtle things that you're going to have to comprehend as we go through. But this is very, very important. Nothing is worse than a person thinking they're a Christian when they're not. Nothing is more deadly to the impact of the church than embracing non-Christians as if they were Christians. So we're dealing with an issue that is at the very center at what the church really is and it applies in all the lives of folks who come near the church.

So the first thing we want to know about the doctrine of deliverance, or the theology of deliverance, is that true Christians have been delivered from error to truth. Turn with me in your Bible to Colossians chapter 1 and let's start there and we're going to try to go through this as rapidly as we can. And I will have to leave some things out. But in Colossians chapter 1 I think we can get a good start. Here is a passage that expresses the great miracle of deliverance. And verse 13 is the notable verse, verse 13, Colossians 1:13, "For He...that is the Father mentioned in verse 12 to whom we give thanks...He the Father delivered us, rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son."

Back in verse 12 Paul says, "We therefore give Him thanks because He has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Now here you have that very familiar biblical contrast between darkness and light. We have been delivered out of the domain of darkness. We have been delivered into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, as the Greek literally says, which is a Kingdom made up of saints in light. Darkness is synonymous with ignorance, darkness is synonymous with error. Light is synonymous with truth. We have been taken out of error, out of darkness and delivered into a Kingdom of light ruled by the beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ. That's the first category of deliverance.

True Christians understand the truth. They have come from darkness to light. They have come from error to truth. Psalm 119:130, "The entrance of Thy Word gives light." "Thy Word," we read in Psalm 119:105, "is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path." That is the first great area of deliverance. Out of the darkness of error, into the bright light of truth.

The Apostle Paul when he was commissioned to preach, according to Acts 26:18, was sent to sinners to open their eyes that they might turn from darkness to light so that darkness and light are really symbols or metaphors of error and truth. And notice please, in verse 13, that truth is synonymous with Jesus Christ. We are delivered from the domain of darkness which is the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of His beloved Son and He is the light of the world. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world and whoever comes to Me will never walk in darkness." The light is synonymous with Jesus Christ. It is synonymous with entering into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

So the first thing that is true about the delivered, the true Christians, is that they do not believe error because they have come to the light. They have come to the truth. To borrow the language of Ephesians chapter 6, they are engaged in a battle against the spiritual forces of darkness but they are triumphant because they have put on the armor of God and the first piece of armor is the belt or the girdle of truth.

A Christian is someone then who understands the truth, who has been delivered from Satan's lies to God's truth. To be saved, according to 1 Timothy 2:4, to be saved is to come to the knowledge of the

truth. That's a very important verse, write that down, 1 Timothy 2:4, "To be saved...and translating it this way...even to come to the knowledge of the truth." That is to say, one and the same. Being saved is not some kind of mystical cryptic, some kind of inexplicable feeling. Being saved is come to the knowledge of the truth. Luke tells us in the book of Acts that when the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people believed and they continued in the Apostles' doctrine. They started there and they continued there. A true Christian is a person who has been deposited, rescued out of ignorance and deposited in the realm of truth. They came into the realm of truth and they continue in the realm of truth. To be saved is to come to the knowledge of the truth. The Christian is someone who understands the truth, who believes the truth, who embraces the truth, who loves the truth and who submits to the truth.

And, you know, it amazes me that there are so many people in evangelicalism today, leaders in evangelicalism, pastors and writers, who believe a person can be a Christian without ever being delivered from error to truth. I'm reading today that there are those saying there are people in countries in obscure places and tribes in hidden back waters of the world who have never had a Bible and never hear the truth of Jesus Christ who are going to be saved because God is going to be gracious and kind to them and they're going to be saved even though they've never heard the truth. Well, that is a lie. If, according to Romans 1, they live up to the light they have and if they see the creator in the creation and through reason and according to Romans 2 follow their conscience back to a lawgiver, if they live up to the light they have, Christ who is the light that lights every man who comes into the world, John 1:9 says, God will reveal more light to them and they'll come to a greater light because God will give them a greater light. But no one will ever be saved who doesn't come to the knowledge of the truth.

They're saying today that you don't have to come to the knowledge of the truth. Call all the missionaries home. Stop proclaiming the gospel to every creature, even though Jesus told us to do that. But the Bible tells us that when you're delivered, you're delivered out of error into truth and you come literally into a paradigm, a realm, a domain, a kingdom of light. In the words of John 6:45, all believers are taught by God. They possess an enlightenment which sets apart the teaching of God from all the teaching of men. True believers understand the truth as opposed to error. They have received by regeneration a new nature and that new nature has a capacity for the truth. That new nature has an infinity for the truth. That new nature has a devotion to the truth, has a love for the truth. We have an anointing, 1 John 2:27, from God and it abides in us, he says, so that we don't need anybody to teach us. We don't need a human teacher to explain the world to us. We don't need some human approach to life philosophically. We don't need some religion invented by men or devils because we have been delivered out of darkness into light. We live in a realm of truth.

Listen, we have been given, according to John 14:17, a Spirit of truth who has taken up residence in us and we understand the truth. And it is that truth that saves so that 1 Timothy 2:4 is the sum of it all. You have been saved, meaning you've have come to the knowledge of the truth. You've believed it,

you've assented to it, you've embraced it, you love it and you submit to it. In John 8, Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall...what?...set you free." The search is over. You're out of the darkness. You're no longer wandering around blind and dark because you've been liberated, you've been set free. The truth has made you free. And let me tell you something, folks, the only thing that will ever set the sinner free is the truth. Until the sinner comes to the truth, he's locked in darkness. Ephesians 5:8, Paul explained it this way, I love this, "Once you were darkness, now you are light in the Lord," does that say it? Once you were darkness, now you are light in the Lord.

Simply stated, being saved demands coming to believe whole-heartedly the truth...that saves. And if you don't believe the truth that saves, you can't be saved. You have to believe the delivering truth to be delivered.

A woman once wrote to me, she said she thought Christianity was fine but frankly she was in to Zen. And she liked to listen to Christian radio, she says, because quote: "The music soothed...smoothed out her karma." But she said I interrupted that karma because I am too narrow minded and too minded toward other religions. So she wrote to encourage me to be more broad minded. And she said, here's a quote, "God doesn't care what you believe as long as you believe. God doesn't care what you believe, she says, as long as you're sincere." She went on to say, "All religions...all religions lead ultimately to the same reality, it doesn't matter which road you take." That's pretty reflective of our generation, isn't it? That's a popular and pervasive lie that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something and as long as you're sincere because everybody's going to get to the same end any way. That's not what Matthew 7 records that Jesus said, He said, "The gate is wide and the way is broad," that's the religious road that most people are on, "and it leads to destruction." And in Proverbs 14:12 it says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death."

Now I understand it's political correct to have this kind of lattitude. I understand it's political correct to not say your religion is right, and your faith is right and you believe right and everybody else is wrong. That doesn't fly today, does it, in a post-modern world disinterested in truth? The great goal of post-modernism is that everybody is accepted no matter what it is that they believe and they certainly have a right to believe that. And who are you to come along and say you have the truth? We all know there is no such thing as real truth, it's only a matter of preference, whatever makes you feel better is fine for you to believe. But don't tell me it's the truth and everything other than that is error. That's not popular.

Now that kind of indiscriminate view of truth, or a view of non-truth is so pervasive that it is literally infecting evangelicalism and people are now saying that there are folks, as I said earlier, and all over the world and tucked off into little corners who never will know the truth and God will take them to heaven any way. And there is a book, I referred to this when I was teaching in Italy a couple of weeks ago called Ecumenical Jihad. Jihad is a holy war and the writer of the book, Peter Kreeft is a Catholic

apologist, is saying that if we're going to win the holy war which is the war for the culture, if we're ever going to get the world to be more moral and get the world to be behaving itself better and end the wars and the crime and all the rest and get a moral world, we've got to fight that holy war together so we have to get ecumenical, so we all have to get together. We can't do it alone.

So he says in the book, we have to recognize that we're really all God's children, we're all going to...down the same road to the same heaven. And he writes the book in a very clever way. It opens up with him surfing in California, I guess, and he gets turned over by a wave and he hits bottom and has an out-of-body experience. He goes to heaven. And when he goes to heaven he's amazed to find out when he arrives in heaven he sees Buddha, in whom anybody would recognize, I suppose, he's a rather unique looking character. No doubt he didn't have too long to discover who this was and he meets Buddha and he says, "What in the world are you doing in heaven?" I mean, Buddhism is not Christianity. What are you doing? He says, "Well, you know, I was in to contemplation, I was into peace and I was into tranquility and what I didn't know about Jesus God sorted out when I arrived."

And then he went a little further and he ran into Mohammed and he said, "What are you doing here? You just believe Jesus is another one of the prophets like Mohammed. What are you doing here, how did you get here?" And he said, "Well, we were into morality." In fact, Kreeft says in his book that Muslims are better Christians than Christians because they don't fornicate, adulterate, commit homosexuality and other things...it's against their standards so they tend to do it less than people who claim to be Christians do and so they're actually better Christians than Christians. And Mohammed says...What I didn't know about Jesus, God straightened out when I arrived.

And he goes a little further and he comes across some Jews who didn't believe in Jesus either but they were worshiping the true God, the God of the Old Testament and that was good enough for God because they were worshiping Him, the true God. And what they didn't know about Jesus they found out when they arrived in heaven.

And then he ran into a group of atheists. And the atheists were searching for truth, and since God is truth they were really searching for God and that was good enough for God. So they were there, too.

And Peter Kreeft's point is that look, when we get to heaven we're going to find each other there anyway, why are we fighting down here? Let's all get together and win this war.

Well, toward the end of the book, I'm going through it rather rapidly, he says, "Now we need a general, we need a great leader to lead us if we're going to fight this war...getting all the Muslims, and all the Buddhists, and all the Jews, and all the atheists, and everybody else together. And there were others as well. And we're going to all get together, we have to have a leader." He says, "There's one great leader, the great winner of unwinnable wars." He calls him, "The Pope, and he'll be our leader and we have to have an internal power and so we all have to devout ourselves to Mary. Mary is the

great spiritual power, the great spiritual source. So we'll all get together, we'll all worship Mary, we'll have the Pope as our leader. We'll all embrace and we'll win the jihad."

And you say, "Well, that's pretty bizarre stuff?" Well what is even more amazing is on the back is an endorsement and the endorsement is by Chuck Colson and this is what it says, on the back of the book. "Peter Kreeft," the writer, "is one of the premier apologists in America today, one of our most valiant, intellectual warriors," end quote.

Peter Kreeft is a deceiver and a liar. He's not one of our most or premier apologist. And even more shocking was a quote from J.I. Packer who talks about the book and then asks at the end of his little blurb, "What if he is right?"

Are we asking that question? Is he right? Is everybody going to heaven no matter what they believe?

You say...How can...I can understand the lady who's in to Zen having that kind of tolerance, but evangelical leaders? How can you have the Amsterdam meeting over there, that great convocation of evangelists sponsored by the Billy Graham organization? The opening prayer was by a Roman Catholic and one of the messages was by Archbishop of Canterbury who denies that Jesus rose from the dead. How do you embrace all of that and call it Christianity? Where does this end?

It is the nature of fallen man...it is the nature of the undelivered to believe lies. It is not the nature of the delivered. We have been delivered out of the lies into the...what?...the truth. We have been rescued from that.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 10, I have to show you this passage. I've referred to it before, it's pertinent to this discussion. Second Corinthians chapter 10, I'm really going to have to hurry here, 2 Corinthians 10 verse 4, Paul says...well, verse 3, he says, "We are making war, we can't make war in the flesh, that is with human weapons, human ingenuity, human cleverness, human thoughts, theories, ideas, techniques, marketing," whatever. "We can't fight this battle with human weapons." Verse 4, "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh," they're not human, he means, "but mighty unto God, divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

He says...Look, we're in a spiritual war. The spiritual war that we're in is a formidable thing. We're attacking these great fortifications. We're attacking these massive fortresses. And the picture is of some huge granite fort. And he says we've got to go in and destroy them. We've got to have pretty powerful weapons. We can't go in there with all the little clever ideas, we've got to destroy those fortresses.

What are those fortresses? Verse 5, here's what they are. Verse 4 ends, "...the destruction of fortresses." Verse 5 begins, "We are destroying speculations," the NAS says. "Imaginations," some

other versions say. This is defining the fortresses. These great fortifications, these great prisons are nothing other than speculations. They are logismos is the Greek word, it means ideas, ideologies...ideologies. What kind of ideologies? Follow verse 5, "Every lofty idea raised up against the knowledge of God." Any unbiblical idea, anything contrary to the truth of God, we have to destroy. Why? So, verse 5, "We can take every thought captive to Christ." In other words, the world is full of people imprisoned in ideological systems, in lies, in error, in darkness, in blindness. And our responsibility is to go and smash those ideologies down in order that we can set the prisoners free because those fortresses become their prisons and eventually their tombs.

This is a tremendous responsibility. Every lofty thing...that's a proud, intellectual thing, a complex system, or whatever. Any idea, idea of philosophy, religion, theology, psychology, whatever, any idea that is contrary to the knowledge of God must be assaulted or those people will die captive to that lie. What we want to do is smash those ideologies and bring everybody's thinking captive to Christ. We want them to think the way God thinks, to have the mind of Christ to see the truth and know the truth and love the truth.

Now how do you smash that? Well it's very simple. What is the one thing that destroys error? Truth, that's why you have to preach the truth. People say, "Well, you know, you're preaching is so dogmatic and..." I'm just trying to preach the truth, it's the only thing that destroys error. And if we don't bring the truth then they don't come from darkness to light, they don't come from error to truth and they don't get delivered and they die in their sins and they're perishing.

The first thing that is true of a Christian is a Christian—a true Christian, not one who says he's a Christian, a true Christian—is somebody who has come from error to truth. Satan doesn't care what people believe. He doesn't care how sincerely they believe it as long as what they believe is wrong.

Did you get that? It's important. He doesn't care what they believe, he sponsors all kinds of religions. He sponsors every religion on the face of the earth that isn't true. He's behind them all. He's got enough diversity for everybody. He's provided an absolutely irresistible smorgasbord. There's somewhere for everybody to plug in. He doesn't care what they believe. And frankly, he is really into sincerity. He's into the strange and goofy people in India who hang themselves by hooks put their flesh. He's in to the self-immolating people who crucify themselves. He's in to the people who are so sincere they put needles inside their belt to tear the flesh on their waist when they walk around every day...somehow trying to expiate their sins. He's in to all of that. He's deeply into sincerity. He doesn't care what you believe or how sincerely you believe it as long as what you believe is wrong because wrong damns, right saves. That's why Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life and nobody comes to the Father...what?...but by Me. There isn't salvation in any other." And anybody who doesn't hold to the truth is damned, Galatians chapter 1, look at it, verse 6. He talks about a different gospel. Somebody's coming along and preaching a different gospel.

Well listen, there isn't a different gospel. The gospel means good news, there's only one good news, all the rest is bad. They may say it's good but it's bad. So he says it's a different gospel, verse 7, which is really not another. There isn't any other good news than the true gospel of Christ.

There isn't another gospel. So he says in verse 8, "If anybody comes along, even we, or an angel from heaven," and he's using sort of hyperbole there, "and preaches to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be damned...let him be damned." He doesn't say, "You know, you've just got to be a little latitudinous and it's got to be a little broad, you know, it's really, you've got to be kind here and who are you to say who's right and who's wrong." He says, "Damn those people who preach anything else."

You know, there's new in the elite academia, you know, the liberals who assault the Bible with their darkened minds, have invented a new hermeneutic and it's given a pretty inviting title, it's called "the hermeneutics of humility." Hermeneutic is an English word, it comes hermeneuo in the Greek which means to interpret or explain. And hermeneutics is the tool...is basically a word that refers to explaining the Bible. And there are certain hermeneutical principles, certain principles that help us understand the Bible...the language and the grammar and all of that, the history behind it, the context in which it's sitting and so we use all those hermeneutics to interpret the Scripture. Well the new hermeneutic is called "hermeneutic of humility" and this is what it is..."Oh, I am too humble to ever think that my interpretation of Scripture is right. And I am too humble to ever think that your interpretation could be wrong."

Isn't that magnanimous? But that is a damning approach. There is a right and a wrong interpretation to Scripture. But that's the climate of hermeneutics of humility...it's really the hermeneutics of darkness. Christianity is true and exclusively true and anything contrary to it is false. And the content of what we believe is the issue. I know this doesn't fly in the relativistic values of modern culture, I know that. I know pluralism is a big deal and diversity is the issue of today. And we have enshrined pluralism and tolerance on a higher throne than truth, haven't we? We don't even care if the candidates battling out for political office lie. It doesn't matter to this society anymore. It doesn't matter. So used to lying leaders, we'd feel uncomfortable if they told us the truth and we probably wouldn't believe them anyway. So there are people who think it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you call it Christianity...just label it Christianity and that's all that's required. Everything from Roman Catholicism, which denies that sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, to the extreme charismatic word "faith movement" which corrupts the nature of Christ, corrupts the death of Christ, the doctrine of Christ and makes salvation some ticket to wealth and health. And the liberals question the Bible who have a works salvation, want to embrace them, have them in for the evangelistic meetings, bring in everybody, the liberals, the Catholics, the fringe extreme Charismatics, everybody because doctrine doesn't really matter.

This isn't new, by the way. The church has fought for its own purity for a long time. It's just new to evangelicals. Modern evangelicals are eager to downplay doctrine, they say doctrine divides. And they want to tolerate everything. It's amazing to me they even want to tolerate explicitly contradictory belief systems so they forge alliances, spiritual alliances with Catholicism, eastern orthodoxy, Charismatic extremists, liberals. And you know, it's so clear in 2 Corinthians 6, "What fellowship does light have with darkness? What concord has Christ with Satan? How can two walk together except they be agreed. Come out from among them and be separate, don't touch that unclean lie."

People who have been delivered, true Christians, agree that there is a body of doctrine that is nonnegotiable, okay? We might not agree on the mode of baptism, we might not agree on the timing of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ or the Rapture of the church. We might not agree on all the ways in which God acts in history with regard to the church and Israel. But I'll tell you one thing, there is a body of doctrine that is absolutely non-negotiable that constitutes the necessary faith for salvation. It is the faith once for all delivered to the saints. There are real fundamentals of the faith that must be believed and when they're not believed we are to break fellowship because light and darkness can't walk together, they can't enter into the common ministry together. Nothing is more serious in Scripture than that a boundary exists between the true and the false and that Satan wants to confuse us as to that boundary. That's why Satan and all his demons appear as angels of...what?...light. They are darkness. They are all darkness. They are nothing but darkness. They are in the domain of darkness and they want to appear as angels of light to blur the line. When you blur the line, then Satan sows his people in the church, strips the church of its power, strips the church of its consistency of its testimony because then the world looks at people who are in the church and sees that obviously Christ hasn't transformed them. Even the world can recognize what the church sometimes is unwilling to see and it undercuts our testimony.

John the Apostle in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but tests the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world." They're everywhere. They're ubiquitous. They're like ants, they're all over the place. That's Satan's strategy. Come out and build the fortresses of lying speculations, lying ideologies, lying belief systems and make the people prisoners in those fortresses and keep them there until they die so they'll go to hell and populate Satan's hell.

So you can't just accept everything. This is the strategy of Satan. We've got to be discerning. Second John really says it. Second John verses 9, 10 and 11, "Anyone who goes too far and doesn't abide in the teaching of Christ, that is the true doctrine of Christ, true teaching of Christ in the gospel, if he doesn't, he does not have God." If a person doesn't have the truth, then he doesn't have God. "If anyone comes to you and doesn't bring this truth, don't receive him into your house." Don't put him on your platform, don't make him a part of your meeting, your conference, your crusade, or whatever, don't put him on your TV program, don't receive him into your house, "Don't give him a greeting, not

some kind of affirming welcome, if you do that you are participating in his evil deed."

I don't know how you can say it more clearly. If anybody comes along and doesn't have the truth about Jesus Christ, don't let him in your house, don't affirm him, and don't greet him. If you do, you are a co-conspirator. Now these verses command us to keep spiritually separated from those who corrupt the essential truths of the gospel. This is a very stern language, 2 John, very stern. There's a severe curse there on people who preach a corrupted gospel, or people who believe darkness and propagate it as if it were light. But there's also a stern and severe warning against those of us who blightly let those people in. False Christianity accepted by true Christians is one of the most heinous sins imaginable, according to that text. You cannot justify any spiritual union with anyone whose belief system and teaching corrupts the New Testament gospel.

Now that leads to the final question...what is the body of truth which delivers? What is the body of truth that must be believed? Does the Bible clearly identify specific truths as essential?

The answer is yes, loudly, firmly, yes! And the strongest words of condemnation are reserved for those who corrupt those essential truths. There are truths in the Bible that if you don't believe you'll go to hell. The gospel of salvation must be believed and embraced and loved and so it must be, first of all, understood.

What is essential first and fundamental? I'll give you several things. You must believe that all divine truth has its origin in Scripture. See, that's why the Mormons are out. They believe that God has spoken to them through the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, The Doctrines and Covenants, something other than the Bible. Those who have been delivered believe that God's revelation is contained in Scripture, not tradition, not papal decrees, not modern visions, not prophecies, not intuition, not any other source of authority. Those that have been delivered believe Scripture is able to make you wise unto salvation, that the Scripture is to make you adequate, equipped for every good work. We believe that the Word of God contains all that is fundamental, all that is necessary for salvation. That's where it starts. So you start with the conviction about the Scripture, that the Spirit of God, I believe, works in the heart of an individual. That is one of the great marvels of the work of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, I think it's a sure test of a true Christian how they react to the Scripture. Do they desire it like the Psalmist, do they love it? Do they hunger for it? See, unregenerate, undelivered people, they don't have that kind of response to the Bible. They don't have any moral ability to respond to the Bible. They don't have any faculty to love it. And they don't have any capacity to obey it. In fact, they don't have any interest in it, "The natural man understandeth not the things of God, to him they are foolishness." 2 Corinthians...or 1 Corinthians 2:14.

You see, undelivered people don't respond to the Bible. Jesus said in John 8, "Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me." Isn't that an interesting statement? If I told you a lie, you'd believe it because you're tuned in to lies. You're in the domain of darkness, you understand lying and deception. It's the truth you can't compute. Sometimes people say to me, "You know, I'd really like to go into the university system and teach the truth." You can't do that. I suppose, maybe here and there there's an occasion where you can sort of let it leak in, but you step into that environment and teach the truth and nobody's going to get it, nobody's going to understand it. They're going to resent it, resist it, hate it. Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. And then he goes on to say, "He who is of God hears God's words, therefore you don't hear because you're not of God." If you're not of God, you're in the dark, you're in error, you can't even understand the truth.

On the other hand, that's why in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul said to the Christians at Thessalonica, "For this reason we thank God without ceasing because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us you welcomed it not as the word of man but as it is in truth the word of God." See, when regeneration takes place, when the life is changed...whew!!...the Word comes through and you hear it and you understand it and you embrace it and you love it and you long to obey it. First John 4, verses 5 and 6, "They are of the world so they speak as those of the world and the world hears them. We are of God, he who knows God hears us, he who is not of God does not hear us." Then he says, "By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

Do you know how I know who is a true Christian? They hear the Word, they understand the Word, they grasp the Word, they embrace it, they love it, they obey it. A true Christian responds to the Word.

I get people that write me letters and vilify me for what I say. I just say...why would I expect someone in the darkness to understand the light? The lady writes me, she's into Zen, she wants her karma smoothed out. Of course she can't understand me, I speak the words of God, she doesn't understand those. But what is amazing is you have Christianity or evangelicalism sort of sucking in these people who don't commit to the truth, don't understand the truth, don't know the truth. Many of them get put in positions of leadership where they are provided platforms to teach elements of their error that are rebranded with the term Christianity.

So it starts with believing Scripture. We...we...to be a true Christian, you must believe that the Word of God is authoritative and that it speaks the truth of God...sola scriptura. You see, in the Roman Catholic Church it's just not that way. The Roman Catholic Church commonly threatens eternal damnation on anybody who questions the decrees of the Pope or the dogma of Church council. For example, Canon one of the seventh session of the Council of Trent pronounces anathema, damnation on anyone, who says there are more or less than the seven Sacraments established by that council. You're going to go to hell if you deny that there are seven if you say there are six or eight. That means that if any Catholic questions the Sacrament of Confirmation, Penance or Extreme Unction, to say nothing of Protestants who question all of them, even though none of them is

mentioned in Scripture, not one of them, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction not at all mentioned in Scripture. If we question those things we are subject to excommunication and in the Church's eyes we are worthy of eternal damnation. The canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, by the way, are loaded with dozens and dozens, up to a hundred of such anathemas. They are impudent enough, one writer said, to declare as fundamental their own wood, hay and stubble. But according to the Bible, no supposed spiritual authority outside the sacred writings of Scripture can give us any wisdom that leads to salvation, right?

To be a true Christian you must believe that all that pertains to salvation comes from the Scriptures. You don't need the writings of Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Frye or Ellen G. White, or Madame Lavatski(?) or Judge Rutherford, or Joseph Smith or anybody else, or the Pope, or a council, or oral tradition, or some latter day prophecy.

Secondly, we not only believe the Bible is the source of these truths but, secondly, that the truths fundamental to salvation are clearly set forth in the Bible. That is we're not talking about some secret hidden thing, some mystery, some cryptic message somehow written backwards, upside-down, or across at angles. Jesus said He didn't...He didn't reveal these things to the wise and prudent, but He hid them from the wise and prudent, Matthew records, and He revealed them to babes. It's not riddles, it's not cryptic, it's not secret code, it's not backwards writing, it's not something that is hard to understand. The testimony of the Lord is sure and it makes even the simplest wise.

So there are very clearly revealed truths in Scripture. Some of them with proof text, some of them just the composite of Scripture. And they are clearly set forth. Anything pertaining to salvation is crystal clear in Scripture. We may not understand what it means to be baptized for the dead in 1 Corinthians, that's an obscure thing. We may not understand all of the nuances of passages in the Old Testament because we can't reconstruct all the historical background, but anything pertaining to salvation is crystal clear in the scriptures.

So one, we believe the Scripture is the source of salvation truth. Two, we believe it's clear. Three, the doctrines that must be believed are those upon which eternal life depends. So we go to the Scripture, we go to Scripture and we find what's clear and what pertains to eternal life. And what is it? You must believe, according to Hebrews 11, you must if you come to God believe that He is. What does that mean? You must believe in the God who is God. You can't believe in any god you want, you can't reinvent God. Somebody said to me just the other day, "You know, I think there are going to be a lot more Mormons in heaven than we imagine." And my response was, "How can any Mormon be in heaven, they don't believe God is a trinity, they don't believe Jesus is God, and they don't believe you are saved by grace. How are they going to get there?

What do you mean? If you're going to believe in God you have to believe in the God who is God, not any god you want God to be. Can't believe in Allah. You can't believe in whatever god there is in

Buddhism. You can't just believe in the God who is the Old Testament God like the Jews do, you have to believe in the God who is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. You can't believe in the "holy other" as one theologian called Him. You have to believe in the God who is God, that means you have to believe in the trinity, you have to believe in the God who became flesh in Jesus Christ, the incarnate God. So you have to believe that Jesus was God in human flesh, fully human and fully divine. That He lived a sinless life, that He died on the cross a substitutionary death for sinners. That He arose again physically and bodily the third day and ascended to heaven. Sent the Holy Spirit and now intercedes for us and will come back in glory. That's the drive train of salvation truth that Jesus is the true God revealed incarnate in human flesh. That He is God a very God, a member of the trinity, that He is to be worshiped and honored and loved and adored equally with God the Father and God the Spirit.

You must believe in His substitutionary death on the cross as a perfect sacrifice with no sin in His own life, He was not a sinner and He didn't go to hell to suffer for His sins, as the Word Faith Movement says. He was a perfect spotless Lamb. He died there, though He didn't deserve to die, as a perfect substitute. He atoned for our sins which are imputed to Him that His righteous life might be imputed to us. He was raised from the dead, conquered death for us. If you believe in your heart that Jesus is...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, Romans 10:9, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you'll be...what?...saved. You believe that He is God, a member of the trinity incarnate, virgin born...that's the only way God could come into this world...that He lived a perfect life, died a substitutionary death and rose from the dead. If you believe that, you're saved. If you believe it to the point where you assent to it, embrace it and love the Lord Jesus Christ. Fist Corinthians 16:22 says, "If any doesn't love the Lord Jesus, let him be devoted to destruction, anathema.

You must also believe that salvation is by faith alone. That justification is by faith. Romans 4:4 and 5, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor but what is due, but to the one who doesn't work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Great statement. You don't get saved by works, not of works lest any man should boast. You're saved by grace through faith. And what happens, this great statement, you believe in Him who justifies the ungodly. It isn't that He justifies the good and justifies the godly who have the good works, He justifies the ungodly. He justifies the wicked and the evil and the sinner who believes in Him, who comes and says I have no good of my own, I have no godliness of my own. Casts himself on the mercy of God who justifies the ungodly. That is one of the great phrases in the entire New Testament, Romans 4:5, He justifies the ungodly. That takes works out of it. You don't have to be good to get justified, you just have to recognize you're bad and cry out to God.

The Roman Catholic Church doesn't believe that. They believe He justifies the good, the people who take imparted grace that gets fused into them by their Baptism and the Mass and other Sacraments and mixes it with good works and do enough good works and enough good works and enough good

works, God will justify the good. That's what liberal theology believes. It's not what the Bible teaches.

An error in understanding justification is the very reason that Israel was set aside, the very reason Israel was apostate for not knowing about God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own righteousness and were not subject to the righteousness of God, Romans 10:3. That is the precise error of Roman Catholicism, same thing of any works system, any religious system, any of the cults, any of those things connected to Christianity other than the truth.

You must believe in the doctrine of sin. You must believe that man is a sinner. If we say we have no sin we make God...what?...a liar and His truth is not in us. If you say you're not a sinner, you're not a Christian. Because if you say you're not a sinner then God's word isn't in you. First John 1:8, verse 10 as well, "If you say you haven't sinned you make Him a liar and His Word isn't in you." Verse 8 says if you have no sin you deceive yourself, His truth isn't in you.

So we affirm our sinfulness and we affirm our ungodliness. And then we affirm that we can't do anything to be saved. And we affirm that Jesus Christ paid the price for our salvation and we desperately cry out as the ungodly to have God put the righteousness of Christ to our account. You see, that's the...that's the body of truth that must be believed. Now if you're a Muslim, you don't believe that. If you're a Buddhist, you don't believe that. If you're a Jew who doesn't accept Christ, you don't believe that. If you're an atheist, you don't believe that. If you're a Mormon, you don't believe that, etc., etc., etc. And you're still in the darkness. And if you believe somehow that all you have to do is say "I believe in Jesus" and you're going to go to heaven and you don't know the Jesus you're talking about, who He is and what He did and by what accomplishment on the cross He purchased your salvation and you don't embrace that as it's revealed in Scripture, you don't...you don't have to understand the fullness of it, but you have to understand the clarity of it. You may not understand all the implications of the doctrine of justification but you must understand this, you're a sinner, you're unworthy, you can't do anything, He did everything.

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. Every spirit that doesn't confess Jesus is not from God, the spirit of Antichrist. If you're wrong about who Jesus is and why He came, then you're a spirit of Antichrist.

See, really, everything that we need to believe to be saved is summed up in Christ, right? We see in Him the trinity because He's a member of the trinity incarnate in human flesh. We see in Him the perfect righteous standard of God lived out. We see in Him the substitutionary death on the cross, the power of resurrection over death. Everything is summed up in Christ. That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3, "For you can't lay any other foundation than the foundation which is Jesus Christ."

So, we believe in the Bible. True Christians believe in the Word of God. You know what happens when you're delivered, God plants in you a love for His truth. We also believe in the great doctrine of

justification by grace through faith alone. We believe Jehovah, chanu(??)in the Hebrew, the Lord is our righteousness cause we have none of our own. We believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. We believe in His perfect deity. We believe in His sinless humanity. We believe in His atoning death. We believe in His resurrection. We believe in the truth of every word He spoke and the reality of every miracle He did. Then go back to 2 John 9, "Anybody who doesn't abide in these teachings about Christ does not have God. Anybody who does abide in these has both the Father and the Son." Isn't that great?

Well, summing it up, there are non-negotiables truth...the absolute authority of Scripture, sola scriptura, justification by faith alone, sola fide, In Christ alone the perfect God/Man, sola christos. The Reformers had it all right. Those were the issues. And true Christians, beloved, have been delivered out of error into this truth. And whoever does believe a lie is not of God. And here's the church, back to where we started, blurring the line between the true Christian and the non-Christian. We have no business receiving into the communion of the church, the fellowship of the church, forging spiritual bonds with people who are in the darkness and are guilty...by doing that we become guilty of a heinous sin, we become partakers of their evil deeds. It's like the arrogant Corinthians, you know, who had embraced a man who was living in the grossest kind of sin, having a sexual relationship with his father's wife and Paul said, "I'm going to have to turn that man over to Satan.

If it pollutes the church for somebody to be having a sexual relationship inside the church, what does it do to the church to embrace those who bring in lies? False teachers never wear a sign declaring themselves as false teachers. And they always come, according to 2 Corinthians 11:13 disguised as an angel of...what...that's why they always tell you they have the truth. We have to keep our church pure and we have to keep people alerted to the reality of what it is to be a true Christian. Nothing is more desperately needed in the church right now than to restore biblical discernment and to restore it at the level it starts at and that is who is a Christian and who is not.

The first realm of deliverance then is to be delivered from error to truth. Let's pray.

Lord, Your Word is light and it has shone brightly on us this morning. And we remember the words of Jeremiah who said, "I didn't send these prophets but they ran, I didn't speak to them but they prophesied." And, Lord, the world is so full of those You didn't send and those whom You never gave a message and they are disguised as angels of light and the church is so gullible for this. Father, we pray that You'll protect Your people, that You'll give them a passion for the light, for the truth. And help us to know the true Christians because they're the ones who have come out of the lies, out of the deceptions, out of the darkness into the clear, shining, brilliant, bright light of truth. Thank You for that deliverance and You did it, we could never have done it because in our darkness and in our deadness we couldn't see the light, we couldn't perceive the light. We were blind to it, deaf to it, dead to it. But You gave us life and light. We thank You for that deliverance. Amen.

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