

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

Deliverance: From Sin to Righteousness, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 80-224

As you know if you'd been with us I have digressed for a few weeks from our ongoing story of the gospel of Luke, and I have done so admittedly somewhat reluctantly. I really was pressed in my spirit to interject a message that has now become a series, that threatens to become a lifetime. But I must continue to deliver what I feel is pressing on my heart. So we have stopped for a moment in our look at Luke's gospel, intrigued by how Jesus delivered a man from demons, and reminded that Luke quotes the words of Jesus quoting Isaiah 61 that the Messiah would come and deliver his people.

It struck me as I told you that I don't ever remember hearing a sermon on deliverance, I don't ever remember reading a theology about deliverance. So I began to look in some of the indexes in the back of theology books to see if there was any discussion on the subject of deliverance. I couldn't find anything. I began to view salvation from the perspective of deliverance and realized that this great truth is largely neglected in the church. So we're in the midst of this series on deliverance and neglected doctrine. Why is it important? It's important because I am saying to you in this series that I'm continually saddened, and I'm continually disappointed by the wide spread lack of discernment in the "evangelical church."

While it's lack of discernment is obvious to any discerning person and while we could make a long list of things that they don't seem to discern very well. At the very top of that list is one most critical matter where there is a serious lack of discernment and that is the issue of who is a true Christian. It really is amazing to me that the evangelical church, the very term evangelical connects it with the evangel, the gospel, the very gospel church, the very church of the gospel cannot or will not distinguish those people who have been truly converted by the gospel from those who have not.

There is this new latitude, there is new broadness that wants to embrace all claims to Christianity as true even if they are oblique and self-defined. In fact resents any challenge to that broadness. This series though it's only been going on this will be the fourth week has caused no small amount of discussion around here and beyond. I received a phone call on the cell phone last night from a man who was driving along listening to the series on tape. He said to me I'm listening to the series and I have to tell you something. I said what is it, he said that you know of course what people are saying about you.

I said I can sort of guess on the broad general level, but maybe you'd like to tell what you heard. He said this is what I heard, that's just John McArthur and he thinks he has all the truth. He said I'm

listening to the tape and this grieves me that this is what people are saying. This is just John McArthur and he thinks he knows all the truth. I just want you to know I don't have the truth in me, I am not the source of the truth. But I do believe there is truth. Do you believe that?

I believe there's truth. Now that puts me at odds with the whole culture. Do you understand that; this is a post-modern world there's no truth. The modern world, modern means search for truth, they searched they didn't find it. So now they decided we couldn't find it so it doesn't exist. The reason they couldn't find it is they refused to look here. I told the college students this week in chapel the biggest problem in American culture is the bible. It is the biggest problem in American culture. Do you understand that?

Do you understand that we wouldn't be having any discussion about homosexual rights if there weren't a bible? Do you understand we wouldn't be having any discussion about pornography if there wasn't a bible? We wouldn't be having any discussion about pedophilia, fornication, adultery, divorce, breakup of the family; we wouldn't have any discussion about any of that if there wasn't a bible. We wouldn't have any discussion about abortion, euthanasia; this culture is divided over this book. This book is a problem.

The left liberal secular culture doesn't mind us believing in this book, they just don't want to bring it out of the church. Keep it inside the walls, don't bring it into the public discourse, because it contains truth we don't want to hear. This book is the big problem. I understand that from the world. But when this book becomes a problem for the evangelical church that is serious. I'm not telling you that I know the truth, I'm not telling you that I'm the source of the truth. But I'm telling you the bible has the truth, and there is truth.

I wonder if people even know what the word truth means anymore. Because everybody has the freedom to define truth on their own terms. Let me just give you a simple definition of truth; truth is the way things really are. Did you get that, that's what it is? It's not the way you think they are, it's the way they really are. There is truth about how the universe got here and how it's held together. There is truth about everything material in the world and there's truth about everything spiritual in the world and the truth the way things really are.

If you want to know the way they really are then you have to go to the source of all truth, the God of truth, the Christ who is truth, and the spirit of truth, and the word of truth, and you'll learn the truth. I'm not trying to pass off my opinion, I'm not inventing this as I go, I'm just studying the bible. I'm not smart enough to even have opinions that people care about, let alone establish truth. But there is truth and that truth is in the word of God.

My friend said to me on the phone he said you should know that one of the leading pastors in America, a large church said to me McArthur gets upset about things, and he just needs to realize

that the reformation wasn't as big a deal as we've made out of it. I guess not if you don't care about the truth. I care about the truth, I live for the truth, I live by the truth, I proclaim the truth and I contend for the truth. That's why I'm saying what I'm saying and it's not because I want to gain some notoriety, it's because I believe God should be heard.

I had lunch with the owner of the L.A. Times and he said you know you've got a lot of influence. He said why don't you ever give your opinion on the issues that face us today. I said are you kidding, I said you of all people need another opinion. I don't give opinions I said, I give the truth from God. Now, if you would like a column on that, sign me up. All I'm trying to do folks is give you the truth, because the truth is the word of God has revealed it. One of the seminary students asked me if it was important in preaching not just to tell people the truth, but to show them in the scripture how it is the reasonable interpretation. In other words you can't just pontificate and say this is true; you have to show them in the word of God why this is the reasonable way to understand this truth.

I said of course, you can't pontificate, you can't just stand up and say this is so and this is so and this is so because you have some self-imposed authority. If I tell you something and you look at the scripture, and you search the scripture, and you don't find that it's the truth that's serious. My object in preaching to you is to show you the word of God and to lead you to understand the word of God so that it becomes very apparent to you what the truth is. My friend R.C. Sproul probably gave me the most kind and best introduction I've ever had, and I've had a lot of introductions by lots of different people in different places.

One time he introduced me and said John McArthur and he's my friend because if I can show him from the word of God where he's wrong he'll change. I appreciated that and that's the way it is. But there are some things in the word of God that are very clear. Those are the things that are at the heart of our faith, and one of them is to understand who is a true Christian. It's astonishing to me how confused people are. I talked to one of the students at the college who went to Amsterdam 2000 this summer, this convocation of thousands of evangelist. He is a college student, he said to me I couldn't believe what I heard. The thing was opened by a Roman Catholic priest and there was a man there who denied the resurrection of Jesus Christ and they all received applause and a standing ovation by evangelicals.

When somebody steps in and says stop this charade, this pretense of Christianity, let's get down to who's really a Christian you get vilified and marginalized, and alienated. But that's okay because what matters is the truth so we're trying to deal with the truth. The way to understand who a Christian is I've conclude after a long time trying to get to this point is to understand deliverance, the theology of deliverance. You can tell a Christian because they're delivered, that's what the bible teaches. Maybe just that point maybe we can talk practically. Deliverance I believe may be the best most comprehensive, most clarifying word to define a Christian.

But that's not the way we do it, here's how we do it. Ask yourself are you a Christian, are you? Are you justified by God? Are you reconciled to God? Have you been redeemed? Has the ransom Christ paid been applied to you? Are you a Christian? Then ask yourself how do you know that? How do you know you're a Christian? You say I prayed a prayer, that won't do it. I went forward at a meeting, I felt very emotional and maybe I cried and I went down there and I talked to somebody. No, that's not how you can tell you're a Christian. I felt really bad, I did some things and I felt really bad. I got in to a predicament in my marriage or in my life and I felt so bad I just needed help from God and I reached up; that won't do it.

I believe, I actually believe in God and I believe in Jesus I must be a Christian. Or how about I was baptized, I was baptized in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. You see all of that is looking at an event, it might have been a physical event or an emotional event. That doesn't tell you you're save; that just tells you prayed. Lots of people pray that want to go into heaven. You went forward; lots of people go forward whatever that means in some meeting; they're not save, they're not converted, they don't belong in the family of God.

A lot of people feel bad and a lot of people believe, even demons believe and feel bad about their fate. Lots of people get baptized; that's not it. There isn't any event that's ever occurred in your life that can in itself verify that you are a Christian. True salvation is revealed and manifest by the divine work of the Holy Spirit in delivering you. If you are a Christian the Holy Spirit has delivered you. We are understanding the idea of deliverance as a general truth that sums up the realities of salvation that are manifest and experiential. There are elements of our salvation as I told you last time that are not experiential; justification is not something you experience. Reconciliation is not something you experience. Adoption is not something you experience. Redemption is not something you experience.

There are elements of our salvation that are legal, that have to do with our status, that have to do with our state, that have to do with our position before God. But there are other elements of our salvation that are manifest revealed, experiential things. Regeneration, new life, new birth, conversion, sanctification, and when you begin to look at those you begin to see them in the imagery of being delivered. So that you can know you're a Christian not by an event, but by the fact that you are manifestly delivered from one thing to another.

One spiritual realm to another, one life principle to another, one set of realities to another; there is a real deliverance. What did we say the first one was? Those who belong to the Lord have been delivered from error to truth, and I've...I gave you the message and then I've been footnoting it as you remember. I need to footnote the footnote on the footnote, because this is so important in the modern climate. Colossians, go back to Colossians 1:12 and 13 for a moment. I'm just going to touch this lightly and then I'm going to say whatever relates to this, and then make a transition into the second point.

But Colossians 1 and please I'm just really delivering my soul on this so you'll have to be patient with me because of the importance of it. Colossians 1:12, we give thanks to the Father, and we believers, we who are in the family of God we give thanks to the father because he qualified us. We were unqualified, we were unworthy, we had no qualifications whatsoever by which to be accepted by him, but he qualified us and you know how he did that; by applying the righteousness of Christ to us. He qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Light is a metaphor for truth, and then in verse 13 for he delivered us, there's that concept of deliverance.

He delivered us out of the domain of darkness, which is a metaphor for error. The first category of deliverance is those who are really Christians have been delivered out of error into truth. Now listen to what I say, no one is a Christian who does not understand, believe, embrace and love the truth. What truth? The truth that we call the gospel. No one can be a Christian who has not been delivered out of false doctrine into true doctrine and that is into the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You must be delivered into the true gospel. Any other gospel, Galatians 1, results in a curse. In 2 John anybody who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, who doesn't settle down in the true teaching of Christ does not have God, 2 John 9. People say you hear this in mission discussions those people over there who've never heard the gospel the Lord's going to save them somehow. Nobody will ever be saved, nobody will ever come into a saving relationship with God who does not know the truth gospel regarding Jesus Christ, nobody.

There isn't any salvation in other name. The one who does not abide in teaching of Christ does not have God. The one who does abide in that teaching has both the father and the son. So that's what we've been saying now for a couple of weeks. Nobody is a Christian who hasn't been delivered out of error into truth, and that truth is that the bible is the word of God in which the doctrine of salvation is clearly revealed in its fullness.

That is a belief in the true God, the God who is the trinity, the God who revealed himself in the incarnation of the second person of the trinity through a virgin birth, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, rose from the grave in literal resurrection, ascended into heaven, sent the Holy Spirit, reigns with the father at his right hand, intercedes for the saints and someday will come back to establish his eternal kingdom in glory. That is the substance of the foundation of gospel truths.

Nobody is saved apart from understanding that, not obviously in all of its full ramifications. But understanding it in its truth, believing it, embracing it and loving it. When the spirit of truth regenerates he moves people from error to truth. He brings the sinner the understanding of belief in, embracing of and total commitment to the truth. That's why in Colossians 1 it says essentially that the saints dwelling in light, and it's almost a synonym have been transferred into the kingdom of his beloved son. Light and the sun are synonymous; Jesus said it I am the light.

To be in the light, that is to know the truth, is to understand the one who is the truth, Jesus Christ. Now let me just take you to a passage that will act for us as a transition. Turn to Romans 10, we will talk a little about Romans 10 and then we'll go to Romans 6. You have to understand this, I was – I had an interesting experience, I was invited to speak at the Full Gospel Business Men's lunch, a Southern California event. That is a very, very charismatic group, and it was a strange thing because they invited me to speak on the gift of tongues.

Somebody in the organization thought that I had received the gift and that I had become an advocate of that gift, and they invited me to speak thinking that. I thought they wanted to know what the bible said about that so their expectations were here's going to come John McArthur and he's going to finally have arrived at this great gift and having received the Holy Spirit he's going to give his testimony. I'm thinking they want the truth and I'm thinking how generous and broad minded of them to invite me to do this.

So I went and I just opened the bible and I showed them from scripture what it is and what it isn't, and how I believed it had ceased. It's the only time that I can remember, and this is true, actually physically being grabbed and pulled away from a microphone. I literally was physically dragged away from the microphone. They were so upset at what I was saying, and I didn't understand that because I thought that I was invited to do what I was doing. Then the man went to the podium and he began to pray for me that I would be, this is what he said, "Zapped in the middle of the night and burst forth in tongues."

They had this prayer for me. Afterwards I was – it was kind of odd, but afterwards I said to this man who was one of the leaders of this group how long have you been a part of this. He said nine years. I said not talking about tongues let me ask you a question; on what basis are you going to be received by God into his heaven? He said the way I look at it is when you die there's this long staircase and you go to the top and you knock on the door and you really hope Jesus lets you in. Absolutely no understanding of the gospel.

They're talking about the wrong subject. Totally upset about tongues, totally ignorant about saving truth. I find that commonly, sadly. Look at Romans 10, I don't know how more clear it can be stated, verse 9, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord which embodies all of his person and work and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you'll be saved." If you don't believe that, if you don't believe that Jesus is Lord and God and sovereign master, the sinless one. If you don't believe that he actually rose from the grave and all that implies, it implies that God himself was satisfied with his atonement and raised him from the dead.

That he is therefore the perfect and exulted savior. If you don't believe that you can't be saved. What the heart man believes resulting in righteousness, with a mouth he confesses resulting in salvation;

now there's no distinction. Verse 12 says it's open to everybody, verse 13 says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But you have to call on the name of the Lord, you have to believe the essence of the gospel. He can't be saved without it and that's why verse 14 says how shall they call on him of whom they have not believed. If nobody's told them the truth and nobody's given them the information to believe how are they going to call on him.

How are they going to believe if they haven't heard, and how are they going to hear without a preacher, and how are they going they going to preach unless they're sent? You get the picture? They can't understand and they can't believe unless they hear, and they can't hear unless somebody goes, and nobody goes unless somebody's sent. The point being we've got to go, because there isn't any other way. That's why Jesus said go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; that's the only hope. Nobody's ever going to be converted and taken to heaven who didn't get delivered out of error into truth, the truth regarding Jesus Christ.

Person, work and salvation by grace alone through faith alone and him alone. That's why we say in verse 15, "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things." How beautiful are the feet of those who go, because if they don't go they can't hear, if they can't hear they can't believe, if they can't believe they can't be saved. In verse 17, "Faith comes from hearing," it doesn't come from intuition, it comes from hearing the word of God, the word of Christ, actually the better manuscript the word of Christ. The word about Jesus Christ, the gospel.

That's why we have to go and believe me as I've told you before if people out there live up to the light they have, the light of conscious and the light of reason, God will make sure that you get the light of the gospel. God is not at all limited in bringing the message to those whose hearts are prepared by his spirit. Now turn to Romans 6; I wanted to talk about this verse last week and I didn't have the opportunity to. Romans 6, verse 17 just a simple thought here, "thanks be to God, you were slaves of sin," stop there. What's a slave? That's a word that carries a lot of baggage with it, a slave is somebody who is an abject, dutiful service under a master.

When we think of a slave we think of someone whose will, whose ideas, whose opinions, whose plans, whose purposes, whose future are not in their own hands. It don't matter; a slave is somebody who does whatever he's told. A slave is somebody who is under commanding authority. He says about us, we were slaves of sin. We are literally dominated by sin, sin is our master, occasionally we do something that is humanly good and kind and something that might be even humanly noble. Occasionally we express love, we take care of children, we take care of older people, we give to charity. But the basic dominating force and power in our lives is sin. That's the way it is.

Then verse 18 but you've been freed from sin and you became slaves of righteousness. This is a dramatic change, this is a major, dramatic change. You're no longer a slave to sin, you're now a slave to righteousness, your master is righteousness, your compelling power is righteousness. Where once

you found your satisfaction and you found your delight and you found your joy and you found your fulfillment in sin, you now find your delight and your satisfaction and your joy and your fulfillment in righteousness. Where once you hated the thought of doing right and loved the thought of doing wrong and now you hate the thought of doing wrong and love the thought of doing right; that's a big change.

Big change, how did it happen? The middle of verse 17 you've got to see this. You became obedient from the heart; something didn't happen on the outside, you didn't get a new set of rules and grit your teeth and grind away to try to fulfill them. Something happened on the inside. You became obedient from the heart. Obedient to what? Look at this; to that, and I'm going to give you the Greek, *tupon didachs* into which you were delivered, there's that great word delivered. *Paradidmi* in this case, to deliver, to hand over, to relocate, the reason you have changed, the reason you have stopped being a slave of righteousness, a slave of sin and become a slave of righteousness.

The reason is because you were delivered from error into that *tupon didachs*, *tupon* meaning that mold, that structure, that form, that body. The idea there is there is a body of truth, a body of teaching, a set of doctrines, truths into which you were delivered and became obedient from the heart. That's the first indication of a true Christian they have been delivered into the body of truth that saves. If they haven't they aren't Christians. If somebody can't explain the gospel, doesn't embrace the gospel, doesn't believe the true gospel they're not saved. These people that I talk to say we've got to give room for the liberals.

They're our Christian brothers. We've got to give room for the Catholics, room for the Greek Orthodox, and room for people going up the ladder and knocking on the door, and room for the people who feel God works in this way and says this and says that; they're all our Christian brothers. No they're not. I wish they were, but the only way to help them become what they're not is to tell them they're not. Not to tell them they are, I don't want to be a part of that deception. They have not been delivered from the heart into that body of truth that constitutes the gospel.

That leads me to the second point at last, and I'm just going to introduce it. The second point is this; the doctrine of deliverance means we have been delivered by the spirit of truth, listen, from error to truth. We have also been delivered from sin to righteousness by the spirit of holiness. That's right there, look back at verse 17, "You were slaves of sin," verse 18, "you became slaves of righteousness." That is a fact folks, that's a fact.

Sometimes somebody will say you know my husband is just behaving terribly, he's not interested in the church, and he's going off with this woman, he's having an affair whatever and I know he's a Christian because I – he used to go to church and so forth. I said let me tell you something, if a person wants to sin, if a person's greatest satisfaction, fulfillment is found in sin that's not a Christian. There is a new life principle, there is a new slavery, and it is a slavery to righteousness. It isn't that

we're perfect it's just the new principle that creates a new practice; it amazes me how people don't get this.

One of America's leading theologians wrote a book and talked about the fact that when you're converted it may not change anything in your life. What? That is absolutely absurd, it changes everything in your life, absolutely everything. Go back with me to Ezekiel 36, I want to show you the core principle at the very essence of being that is changed in this deliverance. The New Kings James by the way translates Romans 6:17 excellently by using the word delivered. But in Ezekiel 36 this most notable passage on the New Covenant, and the New Covenant is the saving covenant.

But I want you to notice the character of this New Covenant, salvation. Verse 25, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you'll be clean." What's going to happen when I save you, what's going to happen is I'm going to clean you and, "cleanse you from all your filthiness." That is amazing, there's going to be a washing here; synonymous with the washing of regeneration, the New Testament. The washing of the water of the word, and I'm going to cleanse from all your filthiness and your idols. Verse 26, "I'm going give you a new heart," he's – the prophet here is reaching and talking about the very seat of thought and feeling and emotion, and attitude.

I'm changing the inward character, the inward nature, the inward principle, the inward disposition, a new heart. I'm putting a new spirit, I'm going to remove that hard heart that couldn't sense righteousness, and I'm going to give you a tender heart, and verse 27 I'm going to put my spirit within you. That is just – that is coming at it every way he can come at it. I'm going to change everything about your insides and, this is so good verse 27, I'm going to cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe my ordinances.

The end of verse 28 you'll be my people and I'll be your God, and I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. When you become a Christian the spirit of truth moves you from error to truth. The spirit of holiness moves you from sin to righteousness, from vice to virtue. Called his name Jesus, Matthew 1:21, because he would save his people from their sins. Sins power, sins dominion is broken, shattered. Back to Romans 6 for a moment, and so many scriptures.

He says in verse 19, I'm talking in human terms, I'm talking in the language of slavery because it's a good human metaphor. I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh, as human beings it's hard for you to understand spiritual truths so I'm attaching it to something you do understand like slavery. Further, in using human analogies you once presented your members, your faculties as slaves to impurity and lawlessness; all your human faculties, all of them. Your mind, your thought patterns, your voice, your speech, your body, everything was basically serving impurity and lawlessness, producing further lawlessness, and now your members have become slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness, therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed. For the outcome of those things is death. But now you have been freed from sin, you are enslaved to God, you derive your benefit resulting in sanctification and the outcome eternal life. Everything is different, not only is the end different, death and life, but the life is different from slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness.

I love what it says in Romans 11, I mentioned it last week when the deliverer comes he takes away sin. That's why verse 14 of Romans 6 says sin isn't master over you anymore. It's not master, and back in verse 4 of Romans 6 you were buried with Christ in his death, you have risen with Christ in his resurrection, you now walk in newness of life. We have a new life, it's the same as 2 Corinthians 5:17 if any man is in Christ he's a new creation; old things have passed away, new things have come. I'm not perfect, but my longings are changed, my affections are changed, my desires are changed.

I want to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. I want to love and honor Jesus Christ. I want to bring honor to the spirit of God as his temple. I want to bring the word of God in clear, bold relief before the face of men, and I want to obey the word of God, and those longings are not natural longings. As a natural unconverted person I have no understanding of the things of God, the preaching of the cross is foolishness to me. I am totally blind, totally dead to that and fully satisfied to follow the course of my own sin. That's not how I think anymore.

Sometimes parents will say I have a child and I remembered when they prayed a prayer, and they were saved, and now they're just living this life where all they want to do is wrong and – look that is the manifestation of their character. Their nature is acting its normal way. If you're falling into sin and saying I hate this, I resent this, I don't want this. If you're saying like Romans 7 there's something going on in me, in my flesh that I hate. I do what I don't want to do, I don't do what I want to do, wretched man that I am please God deliver me from this; that's a Christian.

Nobody is on their way to heaven who doesn't have manifest holiness in their life, a manifest love of what is right. Jeremiah 31:33 is another Old Covenant passage, you don't need to look it up. But it essentially says the same thing. Jeremiah 31 that's the classic New Covenant passage, I should say the classic New Covenant passage and listen to what it says. Jeremiah 31:33 this is the covenant I want to make with them. I'll put my law within them and on their heart I'll write it, I'll be their God, they'll be my people. I'll be devoted to them, they'll be devoted to me.

I won't have to hold them to an external law, it'll be all over their hearts, it'll be their desire, their longing, their joy. You came in here this morning and you were asked to sing songs to the glory of Christ. What were you thinking when they were singing I'd rather have Jesus than anything? Was that an echo of your heart? Were you sitting there saying that's how I feel? Thank you God that I have Jesus; was that your attitude? That would be the elicitation of the spirit of God prompting the right

response of a believer's heart to agree with that. Sanctification is inseparable from justification; so deliverance means you're delivered from sin through righteousness.

It means your whole perspective is completely changed, completely different. The wonderful way the book of Revelation begins chapter 1, verse 5, Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. I love this too. Him who loves us, and released us from our sins. That's not just forensic, it's not just a legal release, it's a real one. That's why Philippians 3 says in verse 3 we are the true circumcision; that is we're the true people of God who worship in the spirit of God. That's a characteristic, we worship in the spirit of God, we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and we have no confidence in our flesh. That's a believer.

Do you rejoice in Jesus Christ? Do you worship in the spirit of God? Do you have no confidence in your flesh? Do you long to honor God, to know his word, obey his word? Those are the evidences of new life. Ephesians 2:10, very familiar; you're saved, verses 8 and 9, by grace, but verse 10 says we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. James says the same thing in James 2; faith without works is dead. It's by the evidence of a changed life that we know the faith was viable. There are many passages, I think of Galatians 6:15, neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision; that kind of thing doesn't matter. But a new creation, we're a new creation.

Everything has changed with regard to our view toward sin and righteousness. A final passage, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, I'll close with this, although there are almost endless texts to which we could look. We'll pick up some more on this thought next time. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you," that's election. "From the beginning for salvation," look at this, "through sanctification by the spirit and faith in the truth." There it is, the two points I've been trying to make. There has to be faith in the truth, that's the first deliverance though it's mentioned second here; and there has to be sanctification by spirit. Sanctification means a separation, that's what sanctification means. It means to separate, you are delivered from sin to righteousness.

Salvation then comes through that separation from sin and through that faith in the truth; those are the first two great points. Scripture is so consistent. Nobody is a Christian who doesn't believe in the true gospel and who doesn't have holy longings, righteous affections, love for what is right, and a deep animosity toward what is wrong. That's indication that you have been delivered. So when you evaluate somebody's Christianity many will say to me Lord, Lord. Jesus said in Matthew 7, "I'm going to say depart from me, I never knew you."

You workers of – I just look at your life and I see the product. You do iniquity, you don't belong to me. I don't care what your claim is, you do iniquity. You don't believe to me. It doesn't matter that you said Lord, Lord we did this in your name, did that, prophesied, cast out demons; that isn't the point. Look at your life, workers of iniquity. You can tell who's a Christian. It's manifest, they've been delivered.

They have been delivered to faith and the truth, in the language of 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and they have been delivered into sanctification by the spirit. That is they have been separated from error and from sin into truth and righteousness. Do you see; how can we ask the question who's a Christian, it's all right there.

They believe the truth and they live as new creations. More next time. We come to you Lord at the end of this wonderful morning of worship, and I can only ask as I have before that you would help me not to overstate or understate, not to say too much and too little, not to in any way limit these dear people in their understanding of this, and yet not to beleague the point. Lord, you know how my heart is gripped by this issue because of this pervasive confusion. So needless and how sad it is that people say that's just his opinion, and if that isn't an exact proof of the severity of the problem I don't know what is.

But we're not interested in my opinion or anybody else's, we just want the truth, Lord. You've made it so clear how you have held us accountable to the truth because it's so clear. It's not as if you have tucked it behind the scenes in some obscure passage; it's splattered all over the entire scripture. That to have a relationship with you we have to come to the knowledge of the truth and we have to be delivered from sin into righteousness. The kingdom of darkness, the domain of darkness is a domain of error and a domain of iniquity. The kingdom of light, the kingdom of the sun of your love is a domain of truth and a domain of holiness. If we belong then we've been delivered into truth and holiness.

May we honestly evaluate our own lives, our own relationship to you and if there is any fear that we in fact are not Christians may we embrace the truth in all its glory, and cry out to be delivered from sin into righteousness; may you be gracious to us. Father use us to bring the truth to bear to so many people. Not only outside the church, but inside so hopelessly confused. May we be people of the truth and people of holiness.

Give us wisdom with our families and our close friends, to be discerning, and if there's not an understanding of belief in, embracing of and love for the truth, the truth of the gospel, and there's not a passion and affection for what is right, and a longing to find all satisfaction in goodness and holiness. May we help uncover one's that one true spiritual condition and call them to a genuine faith and repentance. Use us in that way we pray in Christ name, amen.

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