

The Truth Of God – Demanding A Decision! – Part 2

Acts 28:16-31

Introduction:

1. We live in a day and age in which few people believe in absolute truth, yet the Bible emphatically declares itself to be truth. John 17:17; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15
2. Are you committed to the truth of God? Does it impact your daily life, your home, your decisions, and your relationships? If we are committed to the truth of God, it should be impacting our lives in tangible ways.
3. Every believer must be totally committed to God's truth. Why is this true? Let's examine our text to see why.

First, because the truth of God is distinctive

Second, because the truth of God is divisive

Third, because the truth of God is discerning

1. When we give people the truth of God, we cannot control their responses. Many times, people's responses will be disappointing. This is the case here. They simply began arguing among themselves. vs. 25
2. Paul had one final word to say to this group, and it was a quote from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. vs. 25-27
 - They could see and hear physically, yet did not understand and grasp God's truth. vs. 26
 - Ladies, have you ever been talking to your husband, and he was looking right at you and hearing every word, but he wasn't getting it? He wasn't understanding? That is how God described Israel.
3. Notice that God's heart was to heal these people from their spiritual sickness of sin (vs. 27). He desired for them to be converted, turn to Him, and be saved. This is God's desire for every person. 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9
 - Did you know that God loves you, and God cares about you, and God's heart yearns for you to be saved and to enter His family? You say, "How can I know that?" You need not look any further than the cross – it demonstrates dramatically God's love for you.
4. But notice that salvation requires a surrender of the heart (vs. 27). Israel's heart was "*waxed gross*." This means "to thicken; to fatten; to render callous."
 - Have you ever had a callous on your finger? What does it do? It keeps you from feeling any pain.
 - **Illustration:** Guitar strings dig in and create a callous over time. How do you get the callous? It comes through repetition. You ignore the pain and repeatedly allow the string to dig into your finger until finally it creates a callous. Finally, you no longer feel the pain of the strings digging into your finger.

5. People can do this same thing with their heart. The first time God convicts us of our sin, it is piercing. But if ignored, the next time the pain isn't as noticeable or intense. The next time, even less, and less... until, finally, our hearts are calloused towards God's truth.
 - Our sin doesn't bother us. The thought of sin's consequences doesn't bother us. The thought of divine judgment for sin doesn't bother us.
6. God's truth is spoken, but does not penetrate. A calloused heart leads to deaf ears and blind eyes. We may **hear** the message, but there is no understanding. We may **see** it, but we do not perceive it.
 - Maybe you have heard the expression, "I can't get it through your thick head." God couldn't get it through these people's thick hearts.
7. What if I somehow had a device whereby I could discern what you are thinking in your heart? Scary, is it not?
8. The truth of God discerns and reveals the true state of the heart. Hebrews 4:12
 - This is true before salvation, but also after we are saved.
 - When we hear God's truth taught and preached, it reveals where we are at spiritually and where our heart is. It reveals whether our heart is tender, or whether it is cold and calloused.

Fourth, because the truth of God is demanding

1. When confronted with the truth of God, it demands a decision on our part. We either accept it or reject it.
 - A person may say, "Well, I'll think about it." Guess what? You just rejected it.
2. In verse 29, the Jews left and reasoned about God's truth. In other words, they questioned it and argued about it.
 - When we are confronted with God's truth, to procrastinate, to ignore it, to argue about it, to question it, or to debate it is to reject it.
3. God calls upon man to **believe** His truth. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" Only one response will save people from the penalty of their sin. What is that response? Believe!
 - God desires to see our hearts fully resting and relying on His truth.
4. Who knows if these people ever had the opportunity and privilege to hear the gospel of truth again? While they were debating over the truth of God, it was leaving them and going to the Gentiles. vs. 28-29
5. What a great lesson. When we are privileged to hear God's truth, always respond in obedience. Why is this so important?
 - First, because you never know if you will have the privilege of hearing it again
 - Second, so that your heart will not get cold and calloused
6. This is a very important turning point in the Bible.
 - This is a final, declarative statement of judgment which denoted the withdrawal of God's favor from the nation of Israel. God's kingdom program for Israel would be temporarily set aside, and God would now deal exclusively on earth through the church, the body of Christ.

- Acts is a record of the fall of Israel, and God in His grace offering salvation to the Gentile nations. Today, every person on earth – regardless of nationality – must be saved the same way, through faith in the cross-work of Jesus Christ.
 - Israel has no more special favor before God in this dispensation of grace. They lost that here at the end of Acts. Paul never mentions Israel as a nation again in any of his epistles after this (prison epistles).
7. One day, this dispensation of grace will end. When it ends, God will resume His national program with Israel and will keep His unconditional promises to them.
 8. When will this dispensation of grace end? This is precisely the question that nobody can answer except God. This is why the Bible says: “...*behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*”
 9. As the message of Jesus Christ is now being sent to the nations of the world, it demands a decision. Have you made a decision concerning Jesus Christ? What is your decision? Will you accept Him as your personal Lord and Savior?
 - You say, “I’m not sure; I want to think about it.” This is a rejection.
 - **Illustration:** If I hold out a gift and offer it to you, and you say, “I’m not sure I want to accept your gift. I’ll think about it,” and you walk away, have you accepted it or rejected it?

In Conclusion:

1. This is the end of Paul’s life as recorded in Acts. vs. 30-31
2. What happened after this two-year imprisonment in Rome? Some believe he was set free for short time, but then later arrested again and eventually beheaded.
3. One thing we have learned is that Paul was a mighty preacher of the gospel, yet he was a man. He had problems that he went through, suffering that he endured, and mistakes that he made, yet through it all he was determined that Jesus Christ would be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death.
4. Thank you, Paul, for being an example of the believers, showing us that God loves every person – Jew or Gentile – and for providing “*a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him [Christ] to life everlasting.*” 1 Timothy 1:16