

A Study of the Book:
Handling the Word of Truth – Part 3

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^{NAU} 2 Timothy 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

Opening Worship:

Invocation... C: Amen.

First Reading: Romans 3:10-20 ESV – *No one is perfectly right; no degree of doing good will ever save a single person!*

¹⁰ ...it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

¹³ “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. ¹⁴ Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. ¹⁵ Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.

¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-5 ESV – *When we were spiritually dead in our sins, God took powerful action to make us alive in Christ!*

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive

together with Christ--by grace you have been saved...

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

Prayer:

- Terrified sinners should never look to themselves in any manner, but always to Christ alone for their forgiveness.
- God has done everything for our salvation – *showing us our sins, making us sorry, giving us faith to trust in Jesus, and keeping us trusting in Jesus alone as our Savior.*
- ...through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **C: Amen.**

Chapter 6: Looking in All the Wrong Places:

Terrified sinners should never look at what they are doing but at what Christ has done!

- “Spirituality is not to be confused with faith.” (53-54)
 - Spirituality comes from within a person; it could be described as a *feeling or something that characterizes a person*. Such things are not necessarily bad, but they can lead to a *false sense of security*: Proverbs 14:12➔
 - Faith comes from God; Martin Luther wrote: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him [1 Cor. 2:14]; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith [1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 1:6].” (Apostles’ Creed, Third Article Explanation)

- Think about Peter’s preaching in Acts chapter 2: “Peter did not counsel his hearers to turn inward to their own prayers and spiritual struggling. Nor did he call them to amend their sinful lives so God might have pity on them. Rather, Peter said: ‘Repent [*see your need*] and be baptized [*receive God’s rescue*]...for the forgiveness of your sins...” (Acts 2:38; page 55)
- Improving your actions will NOT save you; Jesus has already saved you; *so receive Him by faith!*
- “Walther observes...three [preaching] errors.
 - First, there is a denial of the complete reconciliation of humanity with God through the saving death of Jesus Christ. (*Salvation is ONLY RECEIVED, not achieved!*)
 - Second, ...the Gospel [is] spiritual principles that, if implemented, will lead to life with God. (*Problems: No one can perfectly implement them AND the Gospel is not a demand but God’s gift of forgiveness in Jesus!*)
 - Third, ...making faith into a work...” (56-58) (*That makes sense, but the Bible says that God does everything!*)
- God does everything for our salvation:
 - “Faith is passive, receiving only what Christ gives.” (58)
 - ^{NAU} 1 Corinthians 1:30 But by HIS DOING you are in Christ Jesus...
 - ^{NAU} Ephesians 2:4-5 “But God...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ...”
 - Robin Leaver: “As in God’s original creation the creature could not

and did not assist the Creator in His bringing it [*the creature*] into existence, so in God’s re-creation by His Spirit, man is remolded and refashioned without his cooperation: It is entirely the work of God through His Spirit.” (58)

- How does God do His saving work? He works through ♦Baptism, ♦the Bible, ♦Absolution, and ♦the Supper to freely forgive our sins:
 - Through Baptism: ^{NAU} Titus 3:5 He [*God*] saved us...by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...
 - ^{NAU} John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 - Flesh: from our parents; spirit: from the Holy Spirit!
 - Through the Bible: ^{NAU} 1 Peter 1:23 ...you have been born again...through the living and enduring word of God.
- How does God do His saving work? He works through ♦Baptism, ♦the Bible, ♦Absolution, and ♦the Supper to freely forgive our sins:
 - Through Absolution: ^{NAU} John 20:21 So Jesus said to them... ²² ... “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them...”
 - Through the Supper: “The Lord’s Supper is not a sacrifice that we offer to God but the Sacrament in which He feeds us with the fruits of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross...” (59; Matthew 26:26-28)

Chapter 7: By Faith Alone: God has done everything; He even gives and sustains our faith!

- Faith is more than agreeing with certain teachings; *think about the vast knowledge of demons, yet it does not save them:*^{NAU} James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
- “Saving faith...believes God’s word of truth as the true and efficacious [*effective*] promises that He extends to sinners....
 - faith...believes not only the history but also the effect of history... [*in other words*]
 - Faith is trust [KAT] that all of God’s promises in Christ are for me.” (64-65)
- Faith alone saves, but works will be part of every Christian life: Walther wrote: “The inefficiency [*or ineffectiveness*] of a faith that fails to work by love is not due to a lack of love, but to the fact that it is not real, honest faith. Love must not be added to faith but grow out of it.... Faith...proves its vitality [*that it is alive*] by bearing fruit.” (65)
 - Anytime a person has faith in Jesus for eternal life, the results will be a *desire* to love God and neighbor!
 - How does a person show love for God?
 - How does a person show love for his neighbor?
- Passive faith saves; active faith serves:
 - “Dying to sin, the believer is made alive [*he is passive, God does everything*] for [*or which results in*] a life of love that flows from faith in Jesus Christ.” (66)
- So Christians have *faith* AND *works*, but they never add them together for salvation!
- Luther: “All who boast of works to justify themselves in the eyes of God [*even to help justify them along with Jesus*] show that they understand nothing about Christ or faith.” (66)
- True Christians *humbly* and *by grace* rely on Christ alone for their entrance into heaven.
- True sorrow for sin does not cause forgiveness.
 - For example: Judas was truly sorry, yet he did not – by faith – receive God’s forgiveness.
 - Instead: “Repentance is the recognition of one’s need for a Savior.” (66)
 - Walther: “As long as a person has not been reduced to the state of a poor, lost, and condemned sinner, he has no serious interest in the Savior of sinners.” (66)
 - “Repentance is not a cause of forgiveness, but it is only in repentance [*sorrow for sin*] that a person will [*by God’s gracious work*] apprehend Christ by faith.” (66)
- No one can make himself believe, God must do it.
 - “One does not choose a Redeemer for oneself... The heart is a rusty old can on a junk heap.... But a wonderful Lord passes by, and has mercy on that wretched tin can, sticks his walking cane through it and rescues it from the junk pile...” (68)
 - “Faith is not doing our part. Faith is not a decision that we make for

Christ. Faith is that trust in the mercy of God in Jesus Christ that is created by the promises of God....” (68)

- What is faith?
 - “Faith is not a choice that we make. Faith is God’s gift that makes alive those who are dead in sin.” (68)
 - “Faith,” says Luther, “is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times.” (69)

Tonight’s Conclusion:

↑arise Creed (Apostles’ Creed, *Second Article – Redemption, and Luther’s Explanation – EXPANDED*):

P: What is the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed?

C: And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried, He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

P: Who is Jesus Christ?

C: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord.

P: What has your Lord Jesus done for you?

C: He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.

P: With what did Jesus buy you back?

C: Not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

P: Why did Jesus buy you back?

C: That I may be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

P: What makes you certain of such things?

C: He is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity.

Closing Prayer...

Lord’s Prayer...

Benediction... (2 Thessalonians 3:16) C: Amen.

- *Thanks for attending this Worship-Study!*
- For those who did not attend last Sunday, an offering plate is available on the hallway table. [Tithes, offerings, good works; they “are not the root but the fruit of faith.” \(Handling the Word of Truth, 32\)](#)
- Please join us next Wednesday at 7:00 for part 4.

Upcoming chapters; please join us each Wednesday in January at 7:00 p.m.

Part 4 – January 18:

- **Chapter 8: Right Repentance:** *It hammers away at everything a sinner seeks to cling to for security and comfort that is not of Jesus Christ!*
- **Chapter 9: The Power of Sin:** *For those who share in Jesus’ victory over sin, their lives are no longer dominated by sin!*
- **Chapter 10: The Church: Community of the Gospel:** *People are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by their association with churches that rightly teach God’s Word!*

Part 5 – January 25:

- **Chapter 11: Evangelical Sacraments: Faith, Not Ritual Works:** *God’s gifts are received by faith, not by going through the motions!*
- **Chapter 12: Alive by the Gospel:** *Let us understand that being converted, awakened, born again, etc. is God’s work to make us alive in Christ!*
- **Chapter 13: The Gospel Gets the Last Word:** *The Law is never to be used on an unbeliever to entice him to stop sinning, thus to become more godly!*