

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

August 14, 2016

Am I Willing to Accept the Truth?

by Frank Himmel

Jesus knows our hearts. He knows them more accurately than we do ourselves. Therefore, when the Lord warns of a heart problem, we had better listen.

John 5 records an occasion when Jesus healed a lame man. The fact that He did it on the Sabbath ignited a controversy. An even greater controversy erupted, however, when Jesus defended His action as equivalent to the Father working on the Sabbath (v. 17). It was a claim to deity. Jesus' critics understood His reasoning, yet they rejected His conclusion. It would take a lot more proof than this miracle to convince them Jesus was divine!

Was their lack of faith due to a deficiency in evidence? Not at all. Jesus rehearsed the evidence available to them: His own claims, the testimony of John the baptizer, the testimony of Jesus' miracles, and the Father's testimony in the Old Testament Scriptures. What, then, was the problem? It was the hearers' hearts. The Lord made that clear. "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (vv. 39-40). They did not believe because they did not want to believe.

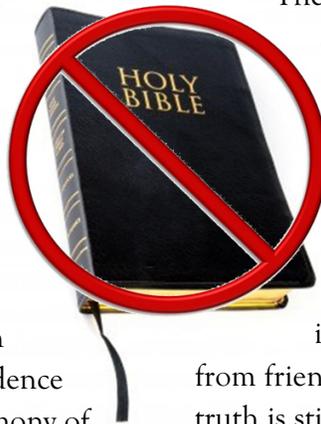
Some seem slow to believe anything the Bible says. That may be because they have heard so many contradictory positions attributed to it that they have lost confidence in it. We must not allow men's errors to make us skeptical about God's truth.

Often there is a particular point someone just cannot "see." It may be a behavioral matter, such as divorce or homosexuality. It may be a question directly relating to salvation, such as the exclusiveness of Christianity or the essentiality of baptism. It may be something in the area of what the Bible says about Christians' assemblies, such as the kind of music we have or women's roles.

The Bible's instruction on these subjects is straightforward. Are we willing to accept it?

One may have trouble accepting the truth because it is different than what he has always believed or been taught, or it is so opposite societal norms. He may struggle because of the truth's implications: it means he must change, it will separate him from friends and family, etc. Just remember this: the truth is still the truth, regardless of whether we accept it or reject it.

On Jesus' next visit to Jerusalem, when people were asking where He got His teaching, Jesus answered, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7:16-17). Our title question is a challenging one, yet a vital one. Am I willing to accept the truth? ■



Repentance Only

by Frank Himmel

If the Bible teaches anything, it is that we are justified or saved by faith. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Some take this a step farther, however. They assert that we are justified by faith only, apart from anything else we may do. Thus, one is right with God at the point in time at which he believes in Jesus. As one creed puts it, “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort” (25 Articles of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Article IX).

Faith-only advocates often try to build their case on verses that talk about faith as a condition of salvation but do not mention any other requirement. John 3:16 and Acts 16:31 are favorites. The argument is, because these say nothing about confession, baptism, etc., those things are not essential to salvation.

Using this approach, one could just as easily build a good case for salvation by repentance only. Consider the following passages.

“Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they

suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-5).

In the great commission, Jesus ordered “that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

Thus, in his second gospel sermon, Peter preached, “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away” (Acts 3:19). And Paul concluded his great sermon at Athens with these words: “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

None of these passages mention faith (see also Acts 11:18; 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9; etc.). Shall we therefore conclude that faith is not essential? Of course not. In these references, *repent* is used to summarize man’s response to the gospel, just the terms *believe* and *faith* are used in others.



Instead of pitting one verse against another, take into account all the Bible says on the subject. “The sum of Your word is truth” (Psalm 119:160).

Service Leaders for the Week			
	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Carlos Garcia	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Albert Harrison Sr	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	Bruce Williams	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	J B Williams	J B Williams	
CUP	Howard Moore	Howard Moore	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Kerry Gray		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Greg Winget
CLOSING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Jason Chandler	Justin Candella