

## INTRODUCTION

We have been delighting ourselves in the exhortation from our Lord's apostle that we, God's household, pray with all prayers for all men. We learned in the past couple of sessions that we are praying for all nations of men, all sorts of people, which is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wills all nations of men, all sorts of people, to be saved.

Right at that point the bible adds something, not just saying that God will have all men saved, but that God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. What do we make of that?

It does not mean that men being saved is one thing, and coming to the knowledge of the truth is another. Instead, coming to the knowledge of the truth is an aspect of men being saved, a means to that end. It is mentioned as part of what we pray for, in praying for all men.

This phrase, "the knowledge of the truth" appears several times in the pastoral epistles, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. Seeing how the apostle makes use of this language in these places, it comes clear what this means, and how it relates to the exhortation to prayer.

So let's see what is meant by men coming to the knowledge of the truth, and what that shows us about the church praying for the salvation of all men.

## TEXT

1 Timothy 2:1-4 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, (2) for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires [will have] all men to be saved **and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

## BODY

- I. The Truth To Be Known Is Specifically the Truth of the Gospel
  - A. 1 Tim 2:7 the truth as opposed to a lie
  - B. 2 tim 2:15 the word of truth, the holy scriptures, the bible
  - C. Most specifically the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ
    1. 2 Tim 2:18
    2. 1 Tim 2:5b-6a Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all
  
- II. The Knowledge of the Truth Is More Than Mere Intellectual Knowing
  - A. Greek
    1. not usual *gnosis*
    2. but emphatic *epignosis*
      - a) perfect knowledge
      - b) full knowledge
  - B. Poole, as others: not a notional knowledge, but a practical acknowledgment
  - C. Titus 1:1-2 It is almost synonymous with faith and hope
  
- III. The Coming to That Knowledge Is By God's Gracious Work
  - A. Titus 1:2b-3 By His manifesting what was long before promised
    1. the promise of eternal life was made,
      - a) perhaps meaning to the Son before the universe was created
      - b) perhaps meaning to the world when Adam and Eve sinned
    2. in Jesus Christ, God makes the promise manifest
      - a) in Him personally, what He has done for us
      - b) in the preaching the good news about forgiveness of sins in Him
  - B. 2 Tim 2:25b By His granting of repentance even to those who had opposed the knowledge of the truth

- IV. See, Then, What It Is for Men, for People, to Come to the Knowledge of the Truth
- A. God promised eternal life, even to those who have sinned against Him
  - B. In the fullness of time, God sent forth His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to do for sinners all that was promised long before
    - 1. He died for our sins, according to the scriptures; He was buried; On the third day He rose again, according to the scriptures
    - 2. He commissioned His church to go make disciples of all nations by proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name
    - 3. He ascended to heaven, leaving the promise that He will come again
  - C. He filled His apostles with the Holy Spirit so that they preached the truth about Him, the gospel message, in power
    - 1. 1 Timothy 2:6-8 ...to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle...a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere...
  - D. He has made His church to be the pillar and ground of that truth, preserving the gospel message by its passing from faithful men to other faithful men, based on what is written in the bible
  - E. 2 Tim 3:6-7 in some cases the sinner does not come to the knowledge of the truth
    - 1. A sinner is in an awful condition: loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts
    - 2. a false teacher creeps into his or confidence, and teaches things other than the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ
    - 3. the sinner is always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth
  - F. 2 Tim 2:23-26 in some cases the sinner comes to the knowledge of the truth
    - 1. A sinner is in an awful condition: in the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will
    - 2. a servant of the Lord, avoiding quarreling in foolish disputes, patiently teaches and corrects sinners
    - 3. God grants repentance
    - 4. the sinner comes to the knowledge of the truth; he comes to faith in Jesus Christ; he comes to hope of eternal life; he is saved!

## CONCLUSION

So, we are exhorted to pray for all men!

-we pray that the church will maintain the truth of the gospel

-we pray that the church's ministers will not be bogged down in disputes over foolish things, but instead will be able patiently to instruct and correct, so that the truth will be made known

-we pray that God will grant that sinners hear such doctrine, and that they repent, coming to the knowledge of the truth

-we pray that this will take place all over the world, so that men of all nations, people of all sorts, will be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth

JRY:

One of the main things Paul means is that God will have men saved, and that entails their coming to know the truth; that entails their hearing it faithfully preached and taught.

-1 Timothy 2:6-8 ...to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle...a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere...

-2 Timothy 3:6-7 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, (7) always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

-2 Timothy 2:23-26 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. (24) And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, (25) in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, ~~so that they may know~~ [to **the acknowledging of] the truth**, (26) and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

-Titus 1:1-3 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and **the acknowledgment of the truth** which accords with godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, (3) but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

More than once, Paul connects this with being in captivity.

-2 Tim 3:6 those without knowledge of the truth are made captives

-2 Tim 2:26 those without knowledge of the truth are captives of the devil

1 Timothy 2:4b

και [G2532 CONJ] εις [G1519 PREP] επιγνωσιν [G1922 N-ASF] αληθειας [G225 N-GSF] ελθειν [G2064 V-2AAN]

and to knowledge truth come

Geneva and come unto the acknowledging of the truth

KJV and to come unto the knowledge of the truth

NKJV and to come to **the knowledge of the truth.**

ESV and to come to the knowledge of the truth

come [G2064 *erchomai*] to the knowledge [G1922 *epignosis*] of the truth [G225 *aletheia*]

Poole (on 2 Tim 3:7)

The word is *epignwsin*, which rather signifies a practical acknowledgment than a notional knowledge.

JFB (on 2 Tim 3:7)

Greek, “the perfect knowledge”

Ellicott (on 2 Tim 3:7)

“to the *full* knowledge of the truth”—for this is the more accurate rendering of the Greek word

RWP (on 2 Tim 3:7)

full knowledge

2 Timothy 3:6-7

NKJV For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, (7) always learning and never able **to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

gullible

loaded down with sins

led away by various lusts

always learning

Calvin:

in such a manner as never to arrive at any certainty or truth. It is ill-conducted study, and widely different from knowledge.

Poole:

ever learning the truth, but cannot obtain of their lusts a leave to acknowledge the truth in their practice

Bengel:

for the indulgence of curiosity

Gill:

partly because of the teachers, which they heap up to themselves, who are unapt to teach, are blind and ignorant guides, and know not the truth, but are enemies to it, and resist it; and partly because of themselves, the sins they are laden, and the lusts they are led away with, which hinder them from coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Clarke:

the knowledge of the saving power of Christianity

Barnes:

they never acquire the true knowledge of the way of salvation

They may learn many things, but the true nature of religion they do not learn.

There are many such persons in the world, who, whatever attention they may pay to religion, never understand its nature. Many obtain much speculative acquaintance with the "doctrines" of Christianity, but never become savingly acquainted with the system; many study the constitution and government of the church, but remain strangers to practical piety; many become familiar with the

various philosophical theories of religion, but never become truly acquainted with what religion is; and many embrace visionary theories, who never show that they are influenced by the spirit of the gospel. Nothing is more common than for persons to be very busy and active in religion, and even to “learn” many things about it, who still remain strangers to the saving power of the gospel.

Ellicott:

A morbid love of novelty, and a hope to penetrate into mysteries not revealed to God's true teachers  
for by their evil life their heart was hardened

2 Timothy 2:23-26

NKJV But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. (24) And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, (25) in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, ~~so that they may know~~ [to **the acknowledging of**] **the truth**, (26) and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

in opposition  
in the devil's snare  
taken captive by the devil to do his will

God grants repentance to the knowledge of the truth  
God grants that they may come to their senses

Titus 1:1-3

NKJV Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and **the acknowledgment of the truth** which accords with godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, (3) but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

What God promised before time He now manifests through preaching  
By that preaching, God's elect are brought to  
-faith  
-knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness  
-hope of eternal life



Calvin:

And the knowledge of that truth I consider the copulative and to be here equivalent to that is; so that the passage might run thus: “according to the faith of the elect of God, that is, the knowledge of that truth which is according to godliness.” This clause explains what is the nature of that “faith” which he has mentioned, though it is not a full definition of it, but a description framed so as to apply to the present context. For the purpose of maintaining that his apostleship is free from all imposture and error, he solemnly declares that it contains nothing but known and ascertained truth, by which men are instructed in the pure worship of God. But as every word has its own weight, it is highly proper to enter into a detailed explanation.

First, when “faith” is called “knowledge,” it is distinguished not only from opinion, but from that shapeless faith which the Papists have contrived; for they have forged an implicit faith destitute of all light of the understanding. But when Paul describes it to be a quality which essentially belongs to faith — to know the truth, he plainly shews that there is no faith without knowledge.

The word truth expresses still more clearly the certainty which is demanded by the nature of faith; for faith is not satisfied with probable arguments, but holds what is true. Besides, he does not speak of every kind of truth, but of the heavenly doctrine, which is contrasted with the vanity of the human understanding. As God has revealed himself to us by means of that truth, so it is alone worthy of the honor of being called “the truth” — a name which is bestowed on it in many parts of Scripture.

“And the Spirit will lead you into all truth.” (Joh\_16:13.)

“Thy word is the truth.” (Joh\_17:17.)

“Who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal\_3:1.)

“Having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of the Son of God.”

(Col\_1:5.)

“He wisheth all to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti\_2:4.)

“The Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth.” (1Ti\_3:15.)

In a word, that truth is the right and sincere knowledge of God, which frees us from all error and falsehood. So much the more ought it to be valued by us, since nothing is more wretched than to wander like cattle during our whole life.

Which is according to godliness. This clause especially limits “the truth” of which he had spoken, but at the same time commends the doctrine of Paul from the fruit and end of it, because it has no other object than that God should be worshipped in a right manner, and that pure religion should flourish among men. In this manner he defends his doctrine from every suspicion of vain curiosity, as he did before Felix, (Act\_24:10,) and afterwards before Agrippa, (Act\_26:1;) for, since all questions which do not tend to edification ought justly to be suspected and even hated by good men, the only lawful commendation of doctrine is this, that it instructs us to fear God and to bow before him with reverence.

Poole:

to which faith men are brought by the knowledge of the truth, and it worketh by the owning, profession, and acknowledgment of the truth; not all propositions of truth, but that which is productive of a godly life, lying in the true worship of God, and a universal obedience to the Divine will.

Gill:

by which is meant the Gospel, often called the truth, and the word of truth; in distinction from that which was shadowy, the ceremonies of the law; and in opposition to that which is false, it being from the God of truth, concerning Christ, who is the truth; and containing nothing but truth, and what is led into by the Spirit of truth. Now to preach, spread, and defend this, was the apostle constituted in his office as such; and which he did preach with all clearness and faithfulness, to bring souls to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and so to an acknowledgment, a public owning and professing of it

Barnes:

In order to secure the acknowledgment or recognition of the truth. The object of the apostleship, as it is of the ministry in general, is to secure the proper acknowledgment of the truth among men.

JFB:

and (for promoting) the full knowledge of the truth,” that is, the Christian truth

VWS:

For acknowledging *rend.* knowledge. For the phrase, see on 1Ti\_2:4. Governed, like πίστιν faith, by κατά. The writer is an apostle according to the faith of God's elect, and according to the truth which is contained in the faith, as that truth is intelligently apprehended and held.

Ellicott:

More accurately rendered, and the full knowledge of the truth which is designed for godliness, or, which leadeth to godliness. Here the further purpose of St. Paul's apostleship is specified. St. Paul was appointed an Apostle that through him the elect of God might believe and heed "the truth"—that truth, the knowledge of which produces as its fruit in the individual a holy, useful life.

Fairbairn:

As the elect, or genuine people of God, not only have a knowledge, but a special or peculiar knowledge of the truth, so the word used is ἐπίγνωσιν—knowledge intensified, or in the fuller sense (see at 1Ti\_2:4)

RWP:

"Full knowledge," one of Paul's favourite words. For the phrase see note on 1Ti\_2:4.

Hebrews 10:24-27

NKJV And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, (25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (26) For if we sin willfully after we have received **the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Call to Worship: Hosea 6:1-3

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9

Sermon: "To Come to the Knowledge of the Truth" 1 Timothy 2:4b

Benediction: 2 Corinthians 2:14

Prelude: Trinity 19 "O Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord" - Dorita

Trinity 400 "Come, Thou Fount" - Dorita

Grace 155 "The Gospel of Grace" - Anna

Trinity 178 "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" - Camille

Trinity 7 "Now Blessed Be the Lord Our God" - Dorita