

Subject: *Biblical Truth Really Matters*

Scripture: *Matthew 16:13-23*

This scripture focuses on the importance of truth and having the right source of spiritual information. It also highlights the truth that is most important, the truth that we should base our lives on.

Our graduates have been in school for many years. Education is all about learning the information we need for our life and our career. I heard about one young man who went to college and he kept changing his major. Someone asked him how that prepared him for a job, and he replied, "I'm not sure about that, but I am getting good at Trivial Pursuit."

I am not suggesting that the things we learn in school are trivial. I am suggesting that all truth is not of equal value or equal importance. We must know the truth about the really important things in life. Jesus was concerned that His disciples knew the truth. After all, a disciple is a learner, one who follows his teacher, listens and learns all he can from his teacher.

Jesus asked the disciples two questions: Who do men say that I am? And who do you say that I am? They needed to know the truth about Him and His plan of redemption. As we work our way through these verses we learn that Biblical truth matters in four ways.

BIBLICAL TRUTH CORRECTS WRONG HUMAN IDEAS (vs. 13-14)

Jesus asked, "Who do men say I am?" People had their opinions, "Some say you are John the Baptist; some say you are Elijah; some say you are one of the prophets." They had high thoughts of Jesus, but not high enough. The world still has many thoughts and ideas about Jesus. People say He was a good man, a miracle worker, a great teacher, and so forth, but all of that misses the mark. If we took a poll, how many would know who Jesus really is?

BIBLICAL TRUTH REVEALS ESSENTIAL INFORMATION (vs. 15-19)

The Bible reveals the truth about Christ

Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter got it right. He made one of the greatest statements of faith in the Bible. Jesus made it clear that Peter was blessed to understand and accept this truth because God had revealed it to him. You can search and find some truth by reading, research, observation, and investigation, but you can only come to know and believe the truth about Christ by divine revelation. There is nothing more important than to know and believe the truth about Jesus. He is the Christ. He is the Son of the living God. And that is truth we can only know and believe as God reveals it to us.

The Bible reveals the truth about the Church

Jesus takes it a step further and reveals the truth about the church (vs. 18-19). This is the first mention of the church. The teacher asked her class, "Can you tell me when the church was founded?" One little boy said, "I didn't know it was losted." Jesus used a play on words here. The name Peter means "rock" like a pebble or small stone. Then Jesus used a different word when He said, "on this rock I will build my church" (bedrock, slab of rock). Jesus promised to build the church by Himself. He is the church's foundation. Other scripture makes that clear. ***1 Corinthians 3:11*** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ***Ephesians 2:20*** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. There is a sense in which the apostles and prophets had a foundational role in building the church, but only Christ is the foundation. ***1 Peter 2:6-7*** ⁶ Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be

confounded. ⁷ *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*

Jesus taught us not only about the foundation of the church, He taught us about the formation of the church (I will build...). He taught us about the identity of the church (my church). He taught us about the separation and purity of the church (church means called out ones). He taught us about the ultimate victory of the church (the gates of hell shall not prevail against it). He taught them about the authority of the church (I will give you the keys...).

BIBLICAL TRUTH DEFEATS SATAN'S FALSE WAYS (vs. 21-23)

Jesus told them that He would go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders and chief priests. The disciples understood that to mean official rejection by the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus told them that He would be killed and be raised again the third day. When Peter heard that it was more than he could take. Peter had confessed Christ, and now he wanted to correct Him. Jesus spoke to Peter and called him Satan because, at that moment, he was acting like Satan and talking like Satan. Peter was the devil's mouthpiece. Do you remember when Satan tempted the Lord? Jesus defeated Satan by the truth of God's Word.

BIBLICAL TRUTH SURPASSES ALL OTHER TRUTH

Three truths are found in this scripture: the truth about Christ's identity, His church, and His death and resurrection. These truths outweigh all other truths.

Biblical truth is valuable. **Proverbs 23:23** *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.* Get the truth at all costs and don't give it up for anything.

Biblical truth really matters. Truth is that which corresponds to reality. See **John 18:37-38**. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" This is the question of our world today. Is there such a thing as absolute truth? There is.

John 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

We learn many things in school and in life, and it is important to learn the truth about things in general. For example, it's important to know some things about history. We know that George Washington was our first president. How much more important it is to know that Jesus is the one and only Lord and Savior of our souls.

It's important to know some things about American government. We know that we have three branches of government and there is a balance of power among the three. How much more important it is to know about the church. Jesus promised to build His church. If Christ is committed to His church, shouldn't we be? Now a word to these graduates: don't think that you have outgrown your need for the church. We can never outgrow our need for the church.

We can read and study truth in many books. How much more important it is to know the truth found in God's Book. Biblical truth is the foundation of all other truth. Biblical truth is the filter for all other truth. **Psalms 119:104-105** ¹⁰⁴ *Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.* ¹⁰⁵ *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* Only by Biblical truth can we correct wrong human ideas. Only by Biblical truth can we have the essential information we need about Christ and the church. Only by Biblical truth can we defeat Satan's false ways. Biblical truth really matters.