

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! In this edition I'll be discussing what the scriptures say about the truth.

I would encourage you to go to <https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info> as I continue to update the site. I have links to several specific features below. Let me know what you think, whether you have any suggestions, or any requests.

As always, I'm extending an invitation for submissions to be published in The Gospel Notes Newsletter (TGNN). Additionally, if you have a subject or a question that you would like to have covered in a future edition of TGNN, feel free to send me a note and I'll do my best to address it.

The primary criteria for inclusion of articles are these:

1. It should be oriented towards the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. It should use the scriptures as a source of information.
3. It should include references for any quoted 3rd party sources.
4. It should not be political.

If you have a testimony to share, please send that to me and let me know if you would like it to be included in a future edition of the newsletter. Please keep in mind the four criteria listed above where applicable.

You can view previous editions of The Gospel Notes Newsletter (TGNN) in PDF (Portable Document Format) at <https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info/TheGospelNotesNewsletter>

Or you can access other educational/informational/inspirational resources at <https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info/Resources>

You can find the current preaching schedule for the Springfield, Missouri Restoration Branch at https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info/Resources/Service_Schedule.php

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, please let me know. All responses to me will be treated confidentially unless you tell me otherwise.

John 17

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

In this passage Jesus is praying for his disciples, showing how passionate he was towards the lives they had and the needs they would have as they would later go out into the world to preach the Gospel.

The apostles were at this point rather naïve about what the ministry was going to require of them because up to this point they always had Jesus there to keep them on the straight (and strait) course. He steadied their faith and kept them out of harm's way. But that was going to change. The time would come when they would not have him in person, but in Spirit by the Holy Ghost, and they would be required to do so much more than they had done so far.

It is true enough that by "them" he refers specifically to the apostles, but also to all those that he called to the ministry:

John 17

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

These are his ordained disciples, those whom he would soon enough send out into the world. Yet we understand that these twelve would eventually be replaced one by one as some would die for their testimony or by old age, etc. There was something special about that first group of men though – they were eyewitnesses of Jesus showing them the way of truth.

What fascinates me in this passage as much as the tender care that Jesus expresses towards his disciples is the effect of the truth on individuals. In fact, we read his words which say, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (verse 17). Isn't that a curious statement?

When we look at the meaning of the word "sanctify" we find a few definitions:

From the Meriam-Webster online dictionary, (<https://m-w.com>) we find the following:

1. to set apart to a sacred purpose or to religious use : consecrate
2. to free from sin : purify
3.
 - a. to impart or impute sacredness, inviolability, or respect to
 - b. to give moral or social sanction to
4. to make productive of holiness or piety

These all for the most part point in the same direction, which is to say, that "to sanctify" is to make one more spiritually pure, righteous, and chosen. These are not things the disciples could do for themselves, but something only the Lord of Glory could impart to those that

dedicate themselves to him. That is why Jesus prays **for** them – to have a notable effect upon them. This is perhaps just as important as any healing he had done or any devils he had cast out – this is for the continuing ministry of the Gospel and it **should** have a notable effect upon people.

Because “they have kept thy word” (verse 6) they had made his word a part of them, and this changed them, just as it can make a change in us.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. It is by virtue of the Word of God that we know good from evil, and by having this knowledge it can guide us away from “the evil” which Jesus prayed to keep his disciples from falling into.

But the word of God is not just about knowing the difference between good and evil, it is also about having an understanding of how to approach the subject – the doctrine that teaches how to answer the important questions.

Jesus began his ministry with the sermon on the mount, and in it we find this “manner of thinking” that he gave them, with examples to show how to practically deal with daily decision-making. This is where his doctrine is manifested, and he continued to teach it to his disciples throughout his ministry.

The scriptures do not provide this accounting of events just so that we can appreciate how blessed the apostles were, but to show us that the same truths that sanctified them are the same truths that can sanctify us. You can experience it for yourself when you read the scriptures. You gain a perspective from the testimonies that have been handed to us that the Lord is both living and active in our lives, even when we aren’t aware of it.

But it changes you also. You gain strength of both mind and character. Jesus’ prayer is such a powerful prayer that it applies to you also if you are willing to, as the apostles did, “keep thy word.”

What Jesus gave his disciples - and indeed what we have received in turn - are living words that convey the Spirit of Life to us. Jesus also said,

John 6:63 It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

The life we can have is provided by what Jesus is prepared to give us. His words convey his Spirit to us. This sentiment is given by Nephi in some of his farewell words –

2 Nephi 14

4 Wherefore, I said unto you, Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

5 Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them, it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

6 For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

7 Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ; and there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh.

8 And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.

This shows us that life is not just in the hearing of words, but in the doing of them.

Receiving the words of Jesus Christ changes you, but doing them changes you more, giving you the opportunity to receive more. That word can sanctify us just as it sanctified them of old.