

Perceived Truths Demand Action and Reaction

While working in the Washington D.C. area after college, I ran into a female co-worker that believed women should be allowed to preach from the pulpit on Sundays. I asked the woman if she believed that the word of God is the final word on any given religious topic. She replied, “yes.” The next day I brought my Bible and read to her from I Corinthians 14:34-35. Her reply indicated an inability to act based upon revealed facts. She replied, “I don’t care, I still believe a woman should be able to preach at the church.” When faced with truth, the woman chose her own course rather than God’s divine standard.

The word of God gives examples of others who were faced with truth yet refused to act upon those facts. King Zedekiah is a good example. Zedekiah often sought Jeremiah’s council for the latest word of Jehovah, yet when he received the message; i.e., “*obey the voice of Jehovah*” he ignored it (Jer. 38:20). Zedekiah knew the command of the Lord but said, “*I am afraid*” (Jer. 38:19). Zedekiah’s spiritual lethargy is illustrated when out of fear he allows Jeremiah to be thrown into a miry pit by the prophet’s detractors, yet later turns around and frees him with the aid of thirty men (cf. Jer. 38:4-5, 7ff). The King went to his grave rejecting the Lord’s commands (Jer. 52:11).

Zedekiah reminds us of Pilate when Jesus was on trial. Both seem to lack any backbone when it came to heeding their own consciences. When the angry mob shouted “*Let him (Jesus) be crucified*” Pilate replies, “*why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him:*” (Matt. 27:22-23; Lk. 23:21-22). Matthew records, “*So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it*” (Matt. 27:24). After the mob persisted that Jesus be crucified, “*Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done*” (Lk. 23:24). Like so many today, Pilate had the opportunity to do what was right yet he sidestepped his better judgment to appease the people.

The first king of Israel is another example of one who knew God’s commands yet due to a spirit of fear he failed to do as the Lord commanded. King Saul was given a command to “*utterly destroy*” all the Amalekites yet he spared the king (Agag) and many of the flocks (I Sam. 15:3ff). The prophet Samuel termed Saul’s acts as “*evil in the sight of Jehovah*” (I Sam. 15:19). Saul had “*rejected the word of Jehovah*” much like Zedekiah did. Such individuals are presented with God’s truths yet rejected them for their own vices (I Sam. 15:26).

When the apostle Paul made his defense before the Roman governor Felix and his wife Drusilla, the truth was presented and, nevertheless, rejected. Philip the Evangelist had been preaching in the area of Caesarea for approximately 24 years and so Felix had “*exact knowledge*” of the gospel message (cf. Acts 24:22). Paul’s message was one of righteousness, self-control, and judgment (Acts 24:25). Felix and Drusilla were unlawfully married and the message was alarming to them. When faced with the decision to accept the message, Felix replies, “*Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me*” (Acts 24:5).

Another good example would be in the case of those Jews of Acts 8 who were unable to prevail against Stephen in debate because; “*they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake*” (vs10). These Jews heard the truth and were without excuse because of the confirming “*wonders and signs*” that Steven had wrought among the people (Acts 8:8). When Stephen said, “*ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye*” (vs51), this was more than the rebellious Jews could stand. They rushed upon him, gnashed him with their teeth, drug him out of the city, and stoned him to death. When faced with truth, the Jews of Acts 8 turned to anger and violence.

The above five cases illustrate how individuals may perceive truth, be pricked in their hearts regarding their error, and yet fail to act upon their knowledge of right and wrong. In every man and

woman's life there comes a time to make a decision. Will I obey the gospel when the truth put before me? Will I commit this sin though I know the truth on the matter? Will I accept a false doctrine without investigation simply because a beloved brother in Christ has brought this too me? What will your answer be when the time to make a decision based upon presented facts are delivered to you? Will you be angry? Will you be filled with fear from peers?

Whether you and I reject truth or accept it will never change the consequences of sinful living. Those who reject God's plea for repentance shall suffer an eternity of punishment with the devil and his angels (II Thess. 1:8; Rev. 20:10-15). There are consequences for not acting upon divine perceived truths. Now is not the time to let fear, anger, peer pressure, and procrastination keep you from God's gracious promise.

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