

BUY THE TRUTH AND SELL IT NOT - Proverbs 23:23

Intro:

- A. "What is truth?" ---- **John 18:37-38** ---- 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." 38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.
 1. Pilate asked this question and **it is a good question** that we should be able to answer today.
 - B. A long time ago the wise sage of Israel exhorted others to "Buy the truth."
 1. The terms "buy" and "sell" are terms that **we are familiar with in everyday life** and are employed here regarding the necessity of "truth."
 2. It is similar to the language of **Proverbs 4:5**, "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth," where Solomon employs the two contrasting words of "getting" and "forgetting" or "turning away."
 - C. A **part of the responsibility** that has been placed upon the heads of every rational mind is to get understanding and wisdom, to buy the truth and never sell it out, never trade it for any worldly advantage, never forget the words of righteousness or turn from them.
 - D. In this lesson, we want to confine the bulk of our study in an **analytical breakdown** of this passage, particularly to the first half.
 1. What is said there equally applies to "wisdom, instruction, and understanding."
 2. We want to carefully dissect this passage as a surgeon practicing exploratory surgery.
- II. **Truth is to be "bought."** We should purchase it upon any terms without sparing the pain involved in obtaining it! It is worth more than silver and gold.
- A. Most people today who frequent church buildings **do not place such a price on truth**.
 1. They don't come to buy the truth. They **come to pass the time**. . .talk to friends. . .make their parents and peers happy. . .do their time, etc. Then when they are adults and perhaps even members of the church, they are just as senseless, foolish and ignorant of the truth as they have always been.
 - B. Scripture **Commands Us To Know And Love The Truth**:
 1. Makes **us free** - (**Jn. 8:32**) ---- 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 2. **Sanctifies us** - (**Jn. 17:17**) ---- 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
 3. **Begets us to God** - (**Jas. 1:18**) ---- 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
 4. **Purifies** the soul when it is obeyed - (**1 Pet. 1:22**) ---- 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
 5. **Saves** - (**Jas. 1:21**) ---- 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
 - a. "That the Bible puts a **very high premium on truth** is indisputable. But sadly, the church today has largely downplayed and abandoned truth, content to follow the spirit of the age. That spirit is comprised of postmodernism, relativism, emotionalism and subjectivism. Truth cannot flourish in such poisoned soil." Truth Watch – by Bill Muehlenberg (Review of "THE TRUTH WAR" by John MacArthur)
 - (1) **Isaiah 59:14** (NKJV) ---- Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.
 - C. There are **many enemies of the truth** – (**Phili 3:16-18; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Pet. 2,3; Jude 1:3,4, 16-19**)
 1. **Philippians 3:16-18** ---- 16 Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note

those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

2. **1 Corinthians 1:18** ---- 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 3. **Jude 3-4** ---- 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
 4. **Jude 16-19** ---- 16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. 17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.
 5. Too many professing Christians have “sold the truth” – (“It doesn’t matter what you believe” – “Doctrine isn’t important” – “Standing up for convictions is arrogant” – “The preachers job”)
- D. Truth **Costs us Something** - it must be bought
1. Not enough for a person to just “hear” the truth
 2. Not enough for a person to just “learn” the truth
 3. Not enough for a person to just “know” the truth
 4. Not enough to simply “recommend” the truth
 5. We must “BUY” it
 - a. **Psalms 119:72** - The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.
 - b. **Psalms 119:127** - Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!
 - c. **Psalms 119:162** - I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.
 - (1) Can you say this? Do you say this? Have you said this? Do you live this? When you have a “ministry of truth” that you are a part of and you grudgingly throw in a \$10.00 bill or the smallest bill in your wallet in the plate, you speak the opposite in no uncertain terms from the Psalmist here!
 - (2) Can you say this? When you devote all of your time and energies to acquire gold and silver and only give a sparing amount of your time in doing the work of the church, reading the Bible, etc. you speak the opposite of this Psalmist
 - (3) Do you say this? When you get irritable at the message preached and begin to crucify the mailman of God’s word, you speak the opposite of the Psalmist here. When you tire at the preaching and complain about those long sermons where God’s word is clearly laid forth and defended then you speak the opposite of the Psalmist here who was in love with God’s word apart from knowing the great treasure of the Christ on Calvary!
- E. **Hidden Treasure** ---- “. . . he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (**Matt. 13:44**) ---- “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
1. **Pearl of Great Price** ---- “. . . a merchant . . . who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (**Matt. 13:45, 46**) ---- 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
 2. Do you see the attitude, the priority and the perspective that is placed in these parables?
 - a. How many deem the kingdom of heaven (the church) as a treasure? How many “joy” over finding it? How many are willing to sell all that they have to keep it?

b. How many look at the church as something beautiful to seek? How many consider it a pearl of great price that is worth **any cost to purchase**?

(1) Truth is to be bought - **Isaiah 55:1-3** (NKJV) - . . . Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David.

(2) Not with money – Not by merit – The truth proceeds from the grace of God, but received conditionally

F. **Requires effort** – too many today are intellectually lazy! – **Acts 17:11; Psalm 1:2; Prov. 2:4**

1. **Acts 17:11** ---- 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness, and searched** the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

2. **Psalm 1:2** ---- 2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3. **Proverbs 2:4** ---- 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;

G. **Requires proper attitude** – Love, sincerity, humility & meekness – **Psalms 119:97-104; 1 Peter 2:2; Psalm 25:9; James 1:21**

1. **Psalm 119:97-104** ---- Oh, how **I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.** 98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they *are* ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies *are* my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. 102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. 103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth! 104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

2. **1 Peter 2:2** ---- as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk** of the word, that you may grow thereby,

3. **James 1:21** ---- 21 Therefore **lay aside** all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

H. **Requires application** – Too many are hearers of the word and not doers – **Heb 4:12; James 1:22**

1. **Hebrews 4:12** ---- 12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

2. **James 1:22** ---- 22 But be **doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves.

III. **What is obvious is the fact that we are striving for TRUTH:**

A. The heart of our quest should be for “truth.” **Truth is valuable** and many blessings come from purchasing it.

1. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; **because many false prophets have gone out into the world**” (**1 Jn. 4:1**)

2. “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (**1 Thess. 5:21**)

3. “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars” (**Rev. 2:2**)

B. **Only the truth** – (**John 8:32; 14:6**) ---- 32 “**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**” ---- vrs 6 Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**”

1. Must be willing to **accept all of the truth** – (**Psalm 119:160; Gal. 1:6-9**)

a. **Psalm 119:160** ---- 160 The **entirety of Your word** *is* truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

b. **Galatians 1:6-9** ---- 6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in

the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, **if anyone preaches any other gospel** to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

2. The **need to examine doctrine** before you buy it (**1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:21; Rev. 2:2, Acts 17:11, 12**)
 - a. **1 John 4:1** ---- Beloved, **do not believe every spirit**, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - b. **Revelation 2:2** ---- 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
 3. Eve **bought a lie**, (**Gen. 3:1-6**) – Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;³ “but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.
 - a. Many today are also buying Satan’s lies instead of God’s truth
- C. Some Have **Never Bought The Truth** Because:
1. They have **not received a love for it** - (**2 Thess. 2:10-12**) ---- 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
 2. They will **not consent to the words of Christ** - (**1 Tim. 6:3-5**) ---- 3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself.
 3. They **resist the truth** - are always learning but never finding it - (**2 Tim. 3:6-8**)
 - a. **2 Timothy 3:6-8** ---- 6 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.⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these **also resist the truth**: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;
 4. **Deceived** - (**Mat. 15:14; 2 Pet. 2:19**)
 - a. **Matthew 15:14** ---- 14 “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”
 - b. **2 Peter 2:19** ---- 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.
 5. **Duplicity of character** - (**Ezek. 33:31; Jas. 1:21-24**)
 - a. **Ezekiel 33:31** ---- 31 “So they come to you as people do, they sit before you *as* My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, *but* their hearts pursue their *own* gain.
 - b. **James 1:21-24** ---- 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive

with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

6. **Shallowness of heart** - (Mk. 4:16, 17a)

a. **Mark 4:16-17** ---- 16 “These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 “and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble.

7. **Cannot anchor** with conviction - (Eph. 4:14)

a. **Ephesians 4:14** ---- 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

D. The Truth Can Be SOLD:

1. Israel **sold the truth** - (Jer. 9:1-14)

2. Others have **exchanged the truth for a lie** - (Rom. 1:18-25)

3. To **make merchandise** – (2 Pet. 2:1-3)

a. **2 Peter 2:1-3** ---- But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

4. We can be **turned from the truth by error** – (2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14)

a. **Titus 1:14** ---- 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

5. The truth can be **wandered away from** – (2 Tim. 2:18; James 5:19)

a. **2 Timothy 2:18** ---- 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

b. **James 5:19** ---- 19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

6. Can be **hindered from obeying** the truth – (Gal. 3:1; 5:7)

a. **Galatians 3:1** ---- O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

b. **Galatians 5:7** ---- 7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

7. **Can one forsake** the truth if they never had it?

a. They traded in their shares of truth for lies in Life's Stock Market! They gave up something for something. The only way you can “exchange” something for another is to have first had something to exchange!

b. They became unimpressed with the truth and obsessed with the lie!

IV. **Conclusion:**

A. Do you take a smorgasbord approach to the Scriptures, picking and choosing what you like, what you will believe, what you will accept as truth?

1. How much value do you place on the truth?

2. How much time do you spend studying it?

3. How much effort do you put into obeying it?

B. The truth has been made available so that we can be free from sin – **John 8:32**

1. God wants you to come to a knowledge of the truth that you might be saved – **1 Tim 2:4**
 - a. **1 Timothy 2:4** ---- 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
2. Please – hear the truth – believe the truth – confess the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the CHRIST – repent and be baptized – obey the truth and purify your soul – **Mark 16:16**