

Peter then declared: “knowing this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation...” (2 Peter 1:20)

The most neglected resource of spiritual formation divinely enabled by God is His word. The basis for this disregard begins with the denial of sin. Malcolm Muggeridge said, “The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact.” It was Adam’s sin that brought about The Fall of mankind and the rebellion that besets us. If you are ignorant of scripture, then you are unaware of sin– Our dilemma as human beings? – To naturally resist God’s truth– His word.

Relative to denial of truth, biblical negligence amongst Christians provides that the church is a reflection of the culture, an error that excuses the mishandling of scripture to fit a speculative point of view that justifies sin. In a post-truth world, the interrelation of God's word with truth is considered hate speech. To communicate, it is irrational and insane, though the universe operates on the law of fixed truth. Exposure to God’s word and its truth renews the thoughts of man, enabling him to break free from the anti-Christian mold the world seeks to press him into (Rom. 12:1-2). God’s Word is the primary and objective source of truth about Christ and what it means to follow him. (Petitt, 2008)

God’s word is truth written and incarnate. Jesus’ authority is unrestrained and implicit. God established in His Son the kingdom God. The word of God is the Story of Jesus and the Story of Israel to its telos point. The story continues with the church and a yet to come consummation. Jesus transcends and fulfills the Law of Moses by His word. He is the essence and image of God– full of grace and truth. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:1-3)

The Word of God is dynamic in the development of Christians. God uses it to form man into the image of Christ by producing comprehensive righteousness. No part of God’s word is irrelevant, yet the neglect of Holy Scripture creates a church full of broken rebels who justify themselves. At the center of this image is a lack of biblical fortitude with a disregard for the Gospel of Jesus

Christ. Time and again, due to improper hermeneutical insight, a chasm is formed between informational reading and formational reading. Paul's message to Timothy expresses the importance of studying the word of God and becoming a reflection of it by correct exegesis. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

Restated, one cannot know God without His word. One cannot know Jesus Christ without the Gospel. One cannot be the church without the Spirit of God. God divinely enables these three essential resources, and their cohesiveness is the truth. Jesus prays for His disciples that they may be sanctified in the truth of God's word, "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:14-18)

Gospel centeredness is more than a confessional stance, but a how we live stance. Dogmatic ignorance allows one to claim a position that they desire. Most churches are liberationally, socially, and politically centered. The Gospel on the other hand is the closing argument of what it takes to please God spiritually.

Two Principles

Formal: the authority of God's word

Material: the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Without both you will have an exegesis that is shallow, psychological, and moralistic.

Two Imperatives to win souls – 1Corinthians 9:16

External objective reality – The Gospel

Internal subjective reality – attitude, disposition, motive (all must be of concern) – what is the subjective attitude of the preacher?

1Corinthians 8:9 – don't be a stumbling block – the freedom issue: your freedom is not to connect with the world, but what freedoms you give up to be the picture of Jesus Christ to connect; selfishness, immaturity, mirrored image of the world – commit to Christ and not the world; I don't have to follow any non-moral expectations. Become a slave to all to win more.

Vessels of honor and dishonor – clay pots were used for waste; plates to eat from

Pettit, Paul. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: a Community Approach to Becoming like Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., 2008.