

"Bringing Truth to Life"

Dallas Willard, Navigators Conference, Colorado Springs

Scribe's Comments - The session was transcribed from the audio recordings in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** and underline offer the scribe's emphasis and the [brackets] offer commentary or clarity to the content.



"Bringing Truth to Life" Series (separate files)

- 1 ["Truth Overview & Relational Discipling"](#) [41:55] [YouTube 1/5]
- 2 ["What is Truth?"](#) [1:05:30] [YouTube 3/5]
- 3 ["Good News that Makes Disciples"](#) [48:40] + Q&A [YouTube 5/5]
- 4 ["Bible as the Source of Truth"](#) [49:25] + Q&A [YouTube 3/5]



Session 4 – "The Bible as an Indispensable Source of Truth" (audio) [1:07:50]

"Sanctify them in the truth. Thy Word is truth." John 17:17

God makes His Word accessible to us in various forms and in various ways at different times. But it has never been given to humanity in any way comparable to how it was given in His Son Jesus as a person & as a Teacher.

We live in a day when the Word of God is not readily accessible. This has happened over and over in history.

Amos 8:11-13

11 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord God, "When I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. 12 People will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. 13 In that day the beautiful virgins and the young men will faint from thirst."

We live in such a day. And in that condition you find people taking on all kind of things to meet the desperate need of their heart. Today much of that is done under the heading of spirituality. They all have in common two things: They promise **Identity & Power**.

Identity - Listen to Oprah or look at people touting devil worship or many other ways. In our world such as ours of mass society, there is no clear word

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to direct life. The issue of Identity becomes a burning matter for people to deal with. *Who are you?*

Power - The other issue is Power. In a society such as ours there is a sense of powerlessness to deal with all of the things that come in life. Often individuals do fairly well. Generally, there is a pervasive sense of powerlessness before the forces that are coming in our world. Spirituality offers those things.

The spirituality of Jesus Christ offers the same thing. It puts you in position in what God is doing in human history. It tells you who you are and it empowers you to do the good that comes to you in that position.

The Bible is central to making the Word of God available to us in our life in this world. There is nothing like the Bible. The Bible is a continuous explosion across the global landscape.

* Alister McGrath - *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution*

The Bible is available to everyone. It allows everyone to judge their relationship to God and to know God's will and to live in God's will. The proclamation is the breakdown of all the human layers that are imposed by those who wish to control human life. The Bible stands as an exit from that domination. It comes to every individual and says, "The Word of God is here" and you can find it.

* Luther - the plowboy and the milk maid could read the Word of God and know the will of God. They are as much a priest, not because they could do what the priests do, but in doing what they did, they were already priests. "Priesthood of all believers"

That's why the Bible is an explosive book. You see in story after story of the individual standing forth in the Kingdom of God.

* Moses going with God among the Egyptians and bringing the Kingdom of God to bear on life where he was. The Kingdom of God is God in action. Theologians say, "It is the reign of God." Reigning means to have governance, to see what is done.

The Bible is a book about people living with God and having knowledge of how to act with God. Moses goes in that knowledge and God is with Him. The plowboy and the milkmaid can live in that same power.

* Little David before Goliath knew by experience how God acted with him. He had learned the action of God with him. He explained how he had learned

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the action of God with him. He was outraged a big clumsy guy was hollering and the Israelites were hiding in the bushes. "What's wrong with you?" He explained how he learned the action of God came with him. A bear, a lion and with God's action I conquered them. This fellow was nothing. David said, "I come to you in the name of the Lord." That's how you live in the Kingdom of God.

* Paul - **Colossians 3:17** - {"We quoted it this morning"} [7:10]

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Learning to live in the Kingdom of God is living in the power of God.

* **II Chronicles 16:9** - *"Eyes of the Lord run to the whole Earth to find the hearts of those who are completely set on him."*

* **Romans 8**

"What shall we say to these things, if God is for us, who is against us?"

"The Word of God has gone out across the Earth."

What grinds on me as an academic is how history refuses to write the great missionary movements.

* St. Boniface - Cut down the great sacred tree in the Northwoods. They later killed him. They gave their lives.

* One of the greatest missionary movements out of Korea

A story of *"If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare His own son..."*

When we talk about the Kingdom of God, that's what we're talking about.

"Jesus Christ who was raised is seated at the right hand of God."

That's what is present in the Bible. That's what makes it a subversive book. That's why people want to control it. The Word of God that lives in the Bible does not submit to control by human beings. That's why it is not a denominational book. Nearly everyone wants to claim it.

If you think you've really got it nailed, all you have to do to find out you don't is to keep reading the Bible. It is a subversive book. We don't come in arrogance in pride, we come to it in repentance and humility.

The power of this book in nations is a fact of history.

* Founding of America - There's was a faith that was biblical.

"Deists" - When people say, "The people who founded this country were not Christians, they were Deists", those folks really don't know the about the people who used the language in those days. They can not understand it. They were like a dog watching a chess game. They can see movement but they don't know what's happening. The behavior and the language, if you know anything about Deism, of the people who established

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this country and called upon God, and presented the Bible as the way of life without which the country could not function, those people didn't mean anything like academics today who quote their words and give them a different term.

[12:03]

Today in this country we suffer from a tyranny of a minority of people who have learned how to use the political and legal system to frustrate the will of the people and the point of that has been to deflect policy from conformity with the Scripture.

Scholarship says there is really no meaning in the text of the Constitution or the text of the Bible. The meaning of a text is whatever you can make it mean. Then you negotiate that through the legal system and the court system and the political system determines what is to be done. They turn it away from the teaching of the Bible and use other principles they regard as sacrosanct for interpreting texts to get what they want. That's what we have now in the system.

We have that because the churches have turned away and the pastors have turned away from the responsibility of leadership. In many respects they have bought the same view that is pushed by the academic world to protect us from the Bible.

One reason why in our world today there is a lack of access to the word of God is precisely because of the way our social institutions have developed that now prevents access to the Word of God.

* CS Lewis - *"Jesus was either a mad man or who He said He was."*

It doesn't carry any weight any longer in most contexts because now the approach is that no one knows what Jesus said. That's where the "scholarship" comes out.

That's why you have the "Jesus Seminar" that is designed to make sure that no one has any idea of what Jesus said. Then Jesus is re-made into what they call themselves, a "gentle cynic" like them. You wind up making Jesus in your own image by undercutting the standing of the Scriptures of an avenue to His words.

Never mind that the world has been full of gentle cynics. None of them had even the beginnings of the effect of Jesus. Jesus stands on the pages of Scripture and is available to those who will find them there.

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The Four Great Questions

[15:20]

[See ["The Value of Truth" by Dallas Willard @ 39:00](#)]

- 1.) What is reality?
- 2.) Who is really well off?
- 3.) Who is a really good person?
- 4.) How do you get to be a really good person?

Every religion, every culture, every person is going to try to answer those questions. The great philosophers answered them.

* Aristotle - you'll see that he extends himself to answer these four questions. The classical moralists like Plato or Aristotle were more interested in the 4th question than any other. They did most of what they did to answer that question. They were emerging from the Tribal life in which the answers were in the tribal rituals and stories. Greek culture was in a process of finding answers that were trans-tribal and not tied to the particular stories in Homer or others but were based in an understanding of human life and human nature.

Jesus Answers the Questions

[17:19]

1.) What is real? God His Kingdom

What is real is what you can count on. What won't let you down.

Everyone understands an illusion will betray you. Sooner or later, it will let you down. Reality will not betray you. If you get in its way, it will run over you. **That's why TRUTH is so important.**

2.) Who is well off? Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God.

Does not matter what else is going on, how hard life is. Many people can not accept that.

* A poor person in the Kingdom of God is as well off as a rich person.

"Blessed are the poor" and "Woe be to you who are rich".

What makes the difference? The Kingdom of God!

A rich person in the Kingdom of God is ok, not because they are rich but because they are in the Kingdom of God. A poor person is ok in the Kingdom of God. There is no blessing in being poor. The blessing is in the Kingdom.

Jesus is teaching in a culture that thought:

Rich - you are well off! No, that's not it.

Poor - cursed! No, that's not it.

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Reverse the order on those things. Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God is well off forever.

3.) Who is a really good person? Anyone pervaded with Agape love.

John - *"Anyone who loves is of God. He that does not love is not of God, for God is love."* The whole law is summed up in love - love God with your all and your neighbor as yourself.

4.) How do you get to be a really good person?

You learn that and you'll be well off and firmly situated in reality.

You get to be a really good person by trusting Jesus.

You trust Jesus when you turn your life over to Him. He is not a meal ticket to Heaven. Jesus is marching through human history. You don't want to be left out of what He is doing. The lost person is the person who missed out on Jesus. The saved person is now participating in what Jesus is doing on Earth. They have a life in them that is eternal.

Colossians 3:1, *"If you have been risen with Christ..."*

That's salvation - having the life of Christ living in you.

Bluntly, only the Bible answers those questions in a way that is adequate to the human need and faithful to reality. The four answers - you test them in the Bible and test them against life and you know their adequacy because of what you find when you live in them. You do that by discipleship. To say I am a disciple is to say,

"I am learning something right now from Jesus. I am His student and He is the maestro."

The maestro of life has come to town and is giving masters classes on how to live in the Kingdom of God. [22:45]

You want to be left out of that? No. That's how we present Jesus as the master of life in Himself and His teachings. We make Him available through our lives and through our words.

I would have been out of the ministry had I not known the word of the Kingdom of God that Jesus brings to us in His own person has a life of it's own and I don't have to do anything but do it and speak it.

I don't have to get people to do things, I just turn the Word loose. That's what freed me up as a minister so I didn't spend my life grinding my life away at religion trying to get people to do something.

Teaching on the Sermon on the Plains & Mount

[23:50]

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—> "Call me Lord and Lord and doesn't do what I say?
Like a man who did was like one who built his house on a rock."

As you look candidly at that passage, would you think he intended for us to do what He said? The ordinary Christian today doesn't know what to do with it. They read it in terms of performance. They set out to try to what Jesus says and get stuck at the level of the Scribes & Pharisees.

Matthew 5:20 - This is the key to Jesus' answer to the 3rd question:
- *Who is a really good person?*

Someone who lives beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees - the righteousness that says, "*I didn't do anything wrong.*"

This righteousness of the scribes & Pharisees stops at performance.
What's beyond performance?

Most people think what lies beyond righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees is more of the righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees. You'll hear people say, "*Jesus is meaner than Moses.*"

He gets after your thoughts and feelings.

What is beyond is not more righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees.

It is a different kind of righteousness - a righteousness of the heart.

* Jesus' Illustrations - "*The old law...*" [27:10]

v. 21 - "Thou shall not kill."

The level of what you do and don't do. That's the level of performance.

Contempt - "Raca" when you clear your throat to spit.

Language of contempt - "Fool" - Now "anger" is the focus.

"Beyond the righteousness of Scribes & Pharisees" is...

I didn't kill you but also I was not angry with you.

Anger is not a sin. It is a sign something needs to be dealt with. Still you're better off without anger. Everything you can do with anger you can do better with out it. A lot of folks don't believe that. Many people think if you're not angry about injustice, there is something wrong with you. Now we have a nation that is sick with anger over injustice. You can't do justice to justice with justice. The issues of justice to be resolved require love. The people who are hungry for justice are never satisfied when they just get justice, although that is better than no justice. They want love. Only love does justice to justice. You can't love without justice. Loving your neighbor means you work for justice for them, you do justice to them. Justice does not solve the problem. Love solves the problem because it deals with anger and contempt.

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[30:30] If you don't want to kill someone, start with anger and you won't have a problem. But if you don't start with anger, you're still going to have a problem with murder because people will find themselves in circumstances where their anger leads them to murder. Contempt will make anger much easier. It is much easier to be angry with someone when you're contemptuous of them. You can rarely be angry with people without contempt breaking out. Listen to a **family fight** and you'll see that's true. People today don't think there is much wrong with filthy language but filthy language is always the expression of contempt. Watch people in a fight and watch how quickly people move to filthy language.

[31:30] Jesus is teaching us life in the Kingdom of God is given to those who moved beyond performance to personal transformation. He is teaching us that we don't have to have contempt or anger to live.

He moves on from that. *"If you are presenting your offering...brother has something against you...leave your offering and go."*

That was contrary to religious ritual. You can only stop the ritual for another ritual matter, not stop the ritual because of a moral matter. Jesus in the prophetic way is countering the human tendency to try to substitute ritual correctness for genuine holiness, for moral righteousness. That's the area you move into whenever you step into the Kingdom of God.

[31:10] *"Make friends with someone taking you to court."*

"If he needs your cloak, give it to him...if he needs it." If he doesn't need it, don't force it on him. That's legalism. That's why people get in trouble with Jesus' teachings.

"Take your load two miles if they need only one mile." That's legalism.

Loving and helping a Roman soldier. Carry 1 mile but suppose he needs to go two miles and you say, "I'll help you." That's Kingdom beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees.

That's the power of holiness in the Kingdom of God!

Many think Jesus is saying don't go to court. He is not.

* A business man - *I do not do business with Christians because I can't sue them.*

That's grinding legalism. Makes Jesus look like a monkey. Satan works overtime to make legalism out of Jesus' teaching.

Jesus is not there. He is talking about spiritual formation of the inner person. He is not saying don't do that but how to do that. Go to court in love

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with a willingness to work things out. Not with an aim of beating people to pieces and getting your way.

How can you do that? You live in the kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, anger lifts. Why? Anger is a will thing. You get mad when someone crosses your will. Anger is the will crossed and anger comes out because something needs to change, something needs to be taken care of.

Jesus says, "You live in the Kingdom of God, you can stand for what is good and right without being angry and you can do much better in achieving what is good and right."

You have to re-train everyone around you because they are use to you getting mad. There is a lot of re- training that goes on here. The inner shaping of the heart is what God is after.

This is the work of Spiritual Formation.

More Sermon on the Mount teachings

[36:50]

"Love your enemies. Don't take vengeance. Use language which Yes is Yes and No that is No."

* Spin Doctors - Turning a Yes into a No and a No into a Yes. That's a part of the human engineering that runs while we are trying to have our own kingdom.

We step beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees when we move into the area of the transformed heart, the mind, the will, the emotions, the body is ready to behave differently. The social relationships are different. They are not areas where there is rejection and desire to victimize. There is blessing and sustenance in social relations.

Why? Because you are in the Kingdom of God. You can't do that on your own but we were never meant to live on our own. We were meant to live by grace. If we never sinned, we would still need grace. It's not the sinner who uses a lot of grace, it's the saint. The saint does everything they do interactively with God. They burn grace like a 747 burns fuel on take off. It's the holy life that is the life of grace because of everything is done there.

"Adultery" - I didn't do it!

[38:30]

* It depends on what the meaning of "is" is.

One of the greatest public exhibitions of legalism in recent history.

Jesus brings us along. The Sermon on the Mount is not list of laws. It is a list of pictures of the life of someone who is living in the Kingdom of God. These are people who have stepped beyond performance. Now the issue they know is personal transformation. That's love. That's I Corinthians 13. The teachings about the progression of the soul in II Peter 1, Colossians 3,

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Romans 8. It's an open secret. This is the level of the Fruit of the Spirit not the works of the flesh.

This is why they are not all stated the same way.

Luke 6 does not read like Matthew 5-7.

Colossians 3 is not exactly like Ephesians 4 & 5.

Why not? **It's not law, it's life!**

If you are doing law, you better say it the same way the second way you say it. That's the nature of law. Life won't fit into law. Life is bigger than that. We are operating now as we move into the Kingdom of God through confidence in Jesus we are living interactively with Him and we are learning how to do all the things he said. We're living at the level of the life from above. And we are taking on more and more of that at every dimension of being.

* "Whole Person" diagram on p. 38, *Renovation of the Heart*

Until holiness hits our body, we're really aren't getting there. We want to do the right and the good thing because it is in our body.

"What we talked about this morning - when we are cursed, we don't whoosh cursing, we whoosh blessing." [41:30]

[\["Good News that Makes Disciples" Q & A @ 52:00\]](#)

Why? That's what we're full of because we're full of blessing. Someone hits me on the cheek, I don't hit back because I'm full of blessing. I remain vulnerable. The legalists says, "I'll turn the other cheek, then I'll knock your head off." That's not beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees.

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as a whole is a picture of what happens when people have moved into the Kingdom of God at the heart level, the mind level, the body level.

That's what we need to teach as we do Discipleship. We want to bring the Great Commission where we are practicing that among disciples. We make disciples, we bring them into the Trinitarian presence and teach them to do everything Jesus said.

Everything He said you can do. That's why He said do it. He was not telling you to do things you can not do. There isn't anything He said you can do on your own. You don't have to do it on your own. The provisions are there. We step into the provisions.

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We have to go through a process of deciding if we want to be without anger, cultivating lust. Do they really want to be without it? You have to decide if you can live without it. Could I keep breathing if I gave up anger? Would life be good if I didn't slap back? Could life be good if I actually forgave people. We have to have it settled, "Yes it is" before we make the decision, "I am going to do that."

Cultivate lusting is a pox on our society - addiction to pornography. You have to decide you can live without it, that your life would be good if you didn't indulge those desires. Many people don't think their life would be good. That's why so many are addicted.

Addiction means you have turned your will over to your desires.

You have signed off.

[45:15]

You have to be able to see the goodness of not being filled with **anger** before you decide, "I'm going to get rid of anger." The Bible is full of teaching about anger. You have to decide, "I am going to live without it."

Contempt - I'm going to learn not to have contempt for anyone.

What disappears? All **Tribalism**. Tribalism (def.) is cultivated, institutionally established contempt for other people. [46:15]

If you have enough contempt, you may decide it's perfectly alright to eat them. What are they good for. That's the story of the world.

Tribalism is the curse of the earth today in the United States of America.

* Tootsies and Hutus - Christians for three generations and they had not discovered the other group was not a group to have contempt for.

When you have contempt and then a little something happens, all hell breaks loose because of the pre-existing condition. That's true of nearly every evil in human life. It occurs because of a pre-existing condition.

When we come to the Word of God that Jesus brings He is showing us how to remove the pre-existing conditions of evil behavior. That's the key.

As disciples, we are moving away from that.

Conclusion

[47:10]

There is a body of Christian **knowledge**. It is primarily what Jesus taught. We need to teach it to the world and to ourselves as **knowledge of reality, knowledge of what is good, knowledge of who is good and knowledge how to be good.** No secular institutions can teach it. None!

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We are in the process of an interesting experiment in the U.S. of discovering that. We have rejected the teachings of Jesus as a body of knowledge and we are in the experiment of finding out there isn't anything that comes remotely close to replacing it. I hope that's an intelligible statement and I wish you'd take it with you with the Great Commission.

"All power is given unto me on Heaven and Earth...as you go, make disciples...in the Trinitarian reality...teach them to do everything I said."

Now you know where to focus. You don't tell them, "You better do this!" and wack them or reject them or form a condemnation society. That doesn't help. You show them how they can be changed in fellowship with Jesus so when the time goes down to do something wrong, they are already doing something right.

"Teach them to do everything I said.

Look, I am with you until the job is done."

May the Lord bless these words to you and help you understand them and find joy in them and not more trouble. This is the way out!

~ ~ ~ End of Session Teaching ~ ~ ~ [49:25]

Q & A next page

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Q & A

Q - Confused by goodness. If God is the only good, how do we be good?

A - *"Be followers of God as dear children."*

How do you follow God? Follow Jesus. You are not going to get all the way there for a while.

* Bumper Sticker - *"Christians are not perfect, just forgiven."*

There is a long way between only forgiven and perfect. To say "I'm not perfect" is not a reason for saying, "I will only be forgiven."

You're on the path. And you're going to make it. It'll probably be a while but Jesus is going to see to it. You're never make it in legalistic terms. That's where perfectionism has always gone wrong. They try to find it legalistically. They fake it. That's the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees. "There is none good but God" but God is so good he's not going to leave you where you are.

Q - Making a request in His name and dealing with existing evil.

A - Dealing with evil in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is the key to action with the Kingdom's power. **Acts 8:12** - the gospel that was being preached in the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. They go together because the name of Jesus is access to the kingdom of God and the power of God. It does not mean saying, "the name of Jesus". This is not a ritual. It's how you your acting with God. You ask for something in the name of Jesus which is asking for something on the basis of His provision and what He is interested in.

* Power of Attorney - authorizes them to act on your behalf with your resources.

"In the name of Jesus" = We are acting on his behalf with His resources. You have to learn that. A lot of people hurt themselves in prayer. *"If I say his name..."* I get what I want. They are still thinking of prayer to get a little help from God with my projects. I can pray in Jesus' name but not just to add a little God to my projects.

Praying is one of the most important things for us to learn as disciples of Jesus. There are a lot of folks who turn themselves off who try to pray and it doesn't work so they don't say, "I'm going to have to learn how to do this" and devote themselves to do it to learn how to pray.

Q - [54:40] Your writing on ???

A - It is not accessible. I lecture on it a great deal. It is very important for us to understand there is a concerted effort to suppress Biblical teaching.

Interpretation - The way mankind goes at the Word of God is to say, "I have to interpret it." Watch interpretations like in Jesus' day - what he was calling the "Law and the Prophets" was a false interpretation that had been

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engineered by the people who were in control. That's why he went after them so strongly and they went after him so strongly. He was saying their interpretation was in their self interest. *"You won't go in the Kingdom of Heaven and you won't let others go it. You make him two fold more a child of hell than you are..."*

In order to be free of the claims of Jesus, our whole culture has the project of interpreting Him away and interpreting the past language that was used to introduce the Christian teaching into society - to interpret that away.

Separation of Church & State

[56:35]

One of the biggest moves - Separation of church & state - is predicated on the notion that the church had nothing to say. Do you think that if people believed for a moment that they church had something vital to say, they would be talking about separating church & state? No! It is because they assume there is no knowledge there, just tradition and this tradition wants to force itself on other people who don't agree with it and that's why they want to talk about separation of church & state. There is a legitimate sense of church & state but that's not the one we have in mind. The one we have in mind is more like separating mind from reality.

* Islam - separation of church in state doesn't make any sense...because they assume Islam teachings are knowledge about life. That has been taken away from the Christian teaching in our culture.

Secular University

[58:00]

That's why I've been ramping back and forth on this issue of what goes on in the universities is because they are the ones supposedly in charge of knowledge. It isn't just that that Universities have knowledge, they get to define what knowledge is. That's why this issue of being a secular university is such an important, questionable thing. [58:30]

[\[See "Truth to Life" Session 2 @ 57:00\]](#)

No talk about that any more than the separation of Chemistry & State. The assumption is what you believe is just your little thing, not knowledge.

If you have knowledge, you have the right to...

...Act, Direct others, Set policy & Supervise Policy and Teach.

That's the difference between knowledge and belief. If all you have is "belief" you don't have any of those. You can believe and it can be false. You can believe with no reason whatsoever. There is no guaranty in belief. No matter how passionate, you can still be wrong. You don't want a passionate brain

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surgeon. You don't take your car to a place that says, "We are lucky in auto repair." [See Willard "Worldview" @ UCLA at 0:12:15]

This is why this is such an important issue. That's why the Bible speaks constantly about knowledge.

"That I might know Him..."

*"Great and precious promises of the knowledge of God.
...Add to your virtue, knowledge." **II Peter 1:5***

*"That you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD." **Exodus 10:2; 14:2,18***

The church basically signed off on knowledge one hundred years ago and turned over knowledge to the Universities because they thought they were going to be nice. At the time they were. Over time it turned against the church and they became the authority on knowledge and left the church over in the corner singing hymns.

That's why I have been saying Jesus brings knowledge and particularly he brings knowledge on those questions. The University has no answers to the four questions. They don't even try. They fell heir to those questions because they took over Christian teachings. If you go back 125 years, all of the colleges and universities answered those questions and they gave the answers of Christ. It's a matter of history.

[Powerful section on the church giving over knowledge to the Universities and the Universities not having answers to the four questions that Jesus answers]

Q - [1:01:40] So many voices today. Your thoughts on **II Peter 1:20**

"No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."

A - Now all there is to scripture on many accounts is interpretation.

Today there is theory of reading called "Reader Response" - the only meaning is what the reader takes it to mean. That is seriously taught in some quarters.

The interpretation of the individual is going to be under the control of the individual's will. The problem is an old one. Medieval Theologians said,

** If a Jackass looks into the mirror, he will not see an apostle looking out.*

What they meant, if you look into the Bible, the real danger is that you just see yourself. You have to have an understanding that the teaching of the scripture is above the individual. Peter is locating the interpretation of scripture in the community of the believers - where there is inquiry,

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leadership of the Spirit, submission, humility, a willingness to learn and to receive.

We will never capture then whole teaching of the Bible. It is a wild book. Anyone who claims, "We are biblical" better be careful, if for no other reason there may be another group claiming the same.

Use of the Bible gaining supremacy over others is something we should never do. We should certainly say what we believe and prayerfully and thoughtfully give the best reading we can. In the community of believers through the ages their is the emergence of a solid body of teaching.

The lowest common denominator is what CS Lewis called,
CS Lewis *Mere Christianity*.

[1:05:00]

* Old Preacher - *Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives & Women Preachers*

We get bugged. We need to listen to people who are not exactly the same kind of people we are. We need to learn what comes out of the earnest life and devotion of those who are other than we. The real ecumenical point of Christianity is obedience to Christ. Take what He says and learn how to do it. All the problems that groups have with one another will be solved. If you love your enemies, you can love those who disagree with you.

The real center is - **Obedience is what discipleship is about.** If we haven't raised the level of discipleship to learning to do what Jesus said, we have set it too low. We will wind up doing things like teaching religious practices. Spiritual formation in great danger of saying, "Now we really mean it!" We have to change and change is in the direction of obedience.

Interpretation will always come along. We can't do without interpretation. We need to listen to others. We need to be prayerful. We need to be humble before the Bible. Come before it as the living Word of God and believe our approach is one of humility and repentance and the willingness to find out "I have been wrong."

Benediction: God bless your time together richly as you go on from this place!

~ ~ ~ **End of Session at 1:07:53** ~ ~ ~

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