

"Consider"

Can you consider for a moment the possibility that someone has told you something that's false? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're considering how some have believed a lie. So stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We value the truth of God's Word! And we want to measure all that we believe and practice by the standard of the scriptures. God's living Word is imperishable and will remain forever. Oh thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus lived among people who were heavily burdened by the human traditions of the Pharisees. These traditions had numerous rules that you couldn't read in Scripture. The Pharisees claimed that these traditions came from Moses himself, and were part of an oral law that passed down. Sadly, the people believed what they were told, even though the Lord, Himself, never taught these things. It was simply a tradition of men. People can repeat an appalling lie for so long that a populace will believe it. People can pass down ideas from one generation to the next until people never imagine that men produced it rather than God.

Jesus told these Jews who were caught up in human traditions, "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" John 8 and verse 44. Now we all can fall to the temptation of believing things that may not be true. This is why we must study the Word of God! 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15 says, "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." That's what we strive to do each week! We want to hear what God teaches, we want to believe it, and practice it.

If you want to study more about these matters, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 7 verses 13 to 20, and we'll consider the importance of knowing the truth.

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus in the sermon on the mount. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 verses 13 to 29. "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

That's a reading from the lips of Jesus. Let's pray together. Father we're grateful that You have taught us the things that You most want us to know. Help us heavenly Father to take every word You speak seriously. Because we know that we need Your words just as we need food. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

The crafty, old serpent, Satan, loves to plant doubts. He did it with Eve in the garden when he asked her the question, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil". That's from Genesis 3 verses 1 to 5. Now with stealth and evil, Satan turned doubt into a lie. The woman believed the lie and ate of the fruit and even urged Adam to eat. Adam knew the truth but gave way to the pressure of his wife.

1 Kings 13 tells of a man of God who spoke out against Jeroboam and Israel. And God told him that he was to neither eat bread nor drink water on his trip and that he was to return by a different way. Well there was an old prophet who deceived this man of God, telling him that God had spoken to him and he was to come to his house to eat and drink; but the old prophet lied to him. Well when the man of God listened to the lying prophet, he disobeyed God and was punished for it. We must be careful about what we hear. 1 Thessalonians 5: 21 to 22 says, "but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." You see what God says matters.

Jeremiah 23 tells of false prophets who claim to speak for God. Jeremiah 23:16 says, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD." Then Jeremiah explains in verses 21 and following, he says "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds."

Does truth really matter? Yes! Jeremiah 23 verse 32 says, "Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I didn't send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD." Believing a lie will not be of any value to you. Oh it may soothe your conscience today but it may condemn you tomorrow. You cannot bury the truth deep enough that it will not surface again!

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 4 and verse 4, that "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" We need God's Word to live spiritually; we need to hear it, to believe it, to love it, to memorize it, and to practice it. Nothing else will assure us that we are truly right with God. Feelings will fade, human traditions will wilt, false gospels will fail, and false promises will fall short. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 15 verse 13, that "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up." Now that's God speaking, not my opinion.

The New Testament lists several prophecies of men falling away from the truth and believing a lie. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 verses 15 to 16, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits." Now He explains in verses 21 to 23, that "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works and we did that in your name?' And then Jesus says, 'I'll declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" Now lawlessness takes place when people go

outside the word of God and follow their own ways and their own desires. You cannot ignore the will of God and please Him at the same time.

The apostle Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20 verses 28 to 32, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. He goes on to say, I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." One of the strategies of the devil is to twist the truth just enough to deceive people. Of course when people follow the devil, they leave the ways of God.

Paul also warned the young man Timothy about false teachers. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4 verses 1 to 3, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, men who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." Some people have no conscience; they will deceive the unsuspecting and they'll lead them into practices that God never commanded nor wanted.

Paul was concerned that the truth endure through the generations. And so he challenged Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 verses 1 to 4, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." I'm amazed at how some have bought into religious and secular myths that have no foundation in Scripture.

Where in Scripture does it teach someone other than Jesus is head of the church? Where is sprinkling taught for baptism? Where is infant baptism ever mentioned? Where are the instruments of music in Christian worship? Where is evolution? Where is purgatory? Where do you read of lent? Where is Ash Wednesday? Where are women preachers or women bishops? Where are the prophecies of modern prophets? Where do you find salvation by faith alone or once saved, always saved? And there are many other things just like this. If they are not in Scripture, they are humanly produced, and destined to be uprooted.

The apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 2 verses 1 to 3, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words." He says, "Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep."

Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote in Jude 3 and verse 4, "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For" he says, "certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the

grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." God gave us the faith only once, and He did it in the first century. He wants us to contend for our faith and this is to show why what we believe is true and why what is false is wrong.

When Paul faced some Jewish Christians who were trying to bind the Law of Moses and circumcision on Gentile Christians, he said in Galatians 1 verses 6 to 9: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one that we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." Now, the truth matters! When people preach something other than what God teaches, they put their souls at peril.

The inspired apostle John faced opposition as well. He wrote in 2 John 7 to 11, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works." Now, abiding in God's word, staying in the word, keeps us right with God; but when we go beyond the word, beyond the bible—whether it's this specific teaching, about Jesus coming in the flesh, or some other essential doctrine, we cease to have a relationship with God. Don't support something that's false.

No one likes to think he or she has been deceived, but the devil has been a deceiver and a pretender for a very long time. Paul faced some pretend apostles in his day, and there are pretenders today as well! He wrote in 2 Corinthians 11 verses 13 to 15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness." He says, "Their end will correspond to their deeds." And they'll be lost. If you wish to keep from being deceived my friend, study, study, study the Scriptures study thoroughly! The Scriptures are a light to our path, to keep us from straying into error and falling for a counterfeit religion.

Why does this matter? Well when people stray from the truth, they want everyone to agree with them and then they try to justify themselves. They'll teach others who teach others. As time passes, later generations never even consider the possibility that they've followed someone into error. Lies that are passed down through the ages can be the most dangerous, because by this time the deceived will swear that they believe the truth. Well the devil laughs, because he's fooled them. He's hidden the truth and stolen their souls. And when that happens, the Lord weeps. The Lord wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be diligent students of Your word that we may know the things that are true and the things that are right. And to avoid the things that are wrong. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding." We want nothing less and nothing more. We must hold to the truth found in God's word. We need to be like the Bereans! Acts 17 verse 11 says, "Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these

things were so.” Have you checked what the Word of God says? Have you examined what you believe and practice? Have you compared those things to God’s word? You might be surprised at how different you are to the faith once delivered to the saints. Can you consider for a moment the possibility that you believe something false?

The Lord Jesus promised in John 8:31 and 32, that “If you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Don’t settle for anything less or more than the truth. Don’t ignore what God says and don’t add to what God says. Simply believe and obey the Word of God.

Now to become a Christian you must believe and confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You must leave sinful ways and embrace the Lord’s way. There is no salvation apart from repentance. When out of love you have repented and confessed, obey the Lord by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Peter told the guilt-stricken people at Pentecost, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2 and verse 38. Now when you’re baptized, God washes away your sins by the blood of Jesus Christ and He adds you to the church.

Well we hope that today’s study has stirred you to consider your soul. Think about what God says and compare it to your life. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can also watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just go to and subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry,” on YouTube. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don’t worry, we’re not here to get your money. We’re here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. Well we’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching God’s Word, search it diligently with us and tell a friend about the program. Let them know that your watching. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.