

## "The Message Preached"

What do you think about the Bible and its message? Do you know of its treasures? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to examine the treasures found in God's word! Stay tuned!

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Now you might think the Bible is old, or boring, or confusing, or even irrelevant; but have you taken the time to read it for yourself? The Bible actually contains some treasures that you need. It may be old, but it's stood the test of time. You might think it boring, but a closer reading and a knowledge of its background will show you how exciting and interesting it can be. You might think it confusing, but you know there are helpful books that are available to explain what troubles you. I know this: of all the books you'll ever read, none are as relevant as God's word. Your circumstances of life are not so unique that the Scriptures cannot guide you and help you through your struggle. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Some people look at the Bible and look at preaching negatively. They regard the Bible and preaching as something that makes them feel badly about themselves. Some act as if preaching were something dreadful and punishing. But the message preached is actually your greatest treasure and hope. Nothing will bless your life more than the knowledge of the gospel found in your Bible. The Bible is your treasure!

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 1 and 2, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain." The message preached and welcomed was the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is good news, because it gives us the information that we need to have the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.

If you want to study more, we offer this lesson 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have our materials on line at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 1: 21 to 25, and we'll consider the message preached.

Our reading today comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Chapter 1 verses 21 to 25.

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

God is wise and strong. We need to listen to Him. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful all the treasures found in Your word. And that we have a message that can help us to know You and to be saved. Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Whether we realize it or not, sin makes people feel badly about themselves. Nothing will make you feel small and worthless in your own eyes more than sinful behavior. God made us with a conscience, that moral voice that's inside of us that constantly evaluates what we do. Now even people who know

little of Scripture have a moral sense of right and wrong. Paul described people who didn't know much about God in Romans 2 verses 14 to 16, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."

Now our conscience works everyday telling us about what we did or we didn't do. It accuses and rebukes us when we do something wrong and excuses us when we do something right. The conscience makes us like the judge, the defendant, and the witness all in one. The witness always knows the truth about what we did or didn't do. And when it condemns us, we know that we're guilty. We can hide the truth from other people, but our conscience knows what we did. Now that guilt causes us to be ashamed of ourselves. Our behavior determines our guilt, but shame comes from our disappointment with ourselves. Now a person who's never forgiven himself feels shame in his heart every day.

We must all live with the nagging reality of our sins, and the Scriptures teach us what is right and wrong. We may reject the Scriptures, ignore the Scriptures, or deny what the Scriptures teach; but that doesn't change what they say or relieve our consciences. Inside, we know the truth about ourselves. Again, nothing will make you feel small and worthless in your own eyes more than sinful behavior. And nothing will make you feel better about yourself than doing the right thing!

After committing adultery with Bathsheba and arranging for the death of her husband Uriah, David cried out to God, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Psalm 51 verses 1 through 3. David accepted responsibility for his sins and asked God's forgiveness.

He said later in that same psalm, Psalm 51:7 to 12, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." David understood that he would never feel good about himself until he restored a right relationship with God. Neither will we.

Unlike David, some people seek to find every way possible to justify their sins rather than face them and deal with them. Some run off to a far country like the prodigal son. Some hide in the bushes like Adam and Eve. Some blame others for their faults. Some blame culture, or their parents, or the media, or the internet, or a teacher, or they blame their DNA, or some other thing for their own choices in life. Many think that if they reject God and the Scriptures that they all of a sudden are free thinkers, but they're only fooling themselves. When someone rejects God and rejects His morality because he wants to continue his sinful behavior, what he does is he enslaves himself to sin. The answer to the problem of sin is not more sin. You can't drink or drug your way out of a guilty conscience. You can't destroy God's word or vote God out of ruling the universe. You can't change God's rules in the word. Remember: God has the last say at judgment. Psalm 119 verse 160 says that, "The sum of your word," speaking of God's word, "is truth, and every one of God's righteous rules endures forever."

The book of Hebrews warns people not to drift away from God or the Scripture. Hebrews 2 verses 1 to 3 says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away

from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" God didn't give you the Scriptures to suppress you, or manipulate you, or discourage you, or to enslave you. God gave you the Scriptures to keep you from injuring yourself with sin and teach you a better way of life. God wants the best for you! He's your friend, so, so listen to Him please!

Many Christians have wandered away from the wisdom of God and have ended up with hardened hearts. Hebrews 3 verses 12 to 13 warns, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Don't let your sins deceive you into thinking that you don't need God. When you reject God, you lose everything that you hold dear.

We need God's love, God's grace, and God's wisdom to live abundant and prosperous lives. The Bible itself is a treasure far beyond anything this world can provide. It contains for us great wisdom. Proverbs 3:13 to 18 says, "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her," God's wisdom, "is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed." David calls the Scriptures "sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb" Psalm 19 and verse 10.

God's way is the way of hope, of forgiveness, and of starting over. You might look at yourself and because of your guilt despise what you see, but there's hope for you. There's a way to overcome the past and start fresh. You can be born again! 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." Rather than looking at Christ and the Scriptures as putting you down, see them as the way to a better life, free from guilt and shame.

You can change your life and your relationship with God. You don't have to be stuck in sin, stuck in guilt, or stuck in being ashamed of yourself. God can help you rise above your past to something far better and nobler. You can start looking at yourself not as a sinner but as a child of God. Please don't fall for the devil's lie that you cannot change your life. Don't fall for the lie that God will accept you whether you repent or not. He won't. God expects us to forsake our sins and to live in righteousness. Galatians 6 verses 7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Now many fail to realize that they have sinned or what the consequences of their sins mean. A large number of Americans fail to read their Bible and they fail to go to church. Recently I learned of a couple who was simply living together without marriage. They didn't realize that they were doing, that what they were doing was wrong. I also recently learned of a person who supported herself by prostitution, yes. And she didn't know what she was doing was wrong; you see no one had ever taught her better. Nearly 40 percent of Americans have grown up without any spiritual training at all. My friend when you break one of God's laws, you not only sin against God you endanger your own soul. You sin against yourself.

Isaiah 59 verse 2 says that, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." I tell you sin breaks your

relationship with God and leaves you without promise. Paul described what sin does in Ephesians 2 verses 1 to 3, he says there "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience," and he says, "among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." What a terrible condition!

The Lord Jesus came to deliver us from the evil in our world and to transform our lives into godly people. Titus 2 verses 11 to 14 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people," well that includes you and me, "training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

Friend we can be born again, we can leave the old man of sin behind and we can start a new life. As we notice 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." And you can have a new life, if you are willing to believe in Jesus Christ, and turn from sin, and obey the truth in baptism. Romans 6 and verse 4 says that, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." The apostle wrote in 1 Peter 1:22 to 23, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." When we obey the word of God, the bible, God purifies our souls and causes us to be born again through an imperishable seed. Oh we must listen to the word of God and obey it.

Wouldn't you like to have hope, to start each day knowing that you have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus? God is not against you. He wants you to start over by being born again to a newness of life, a life better than you've ever known. God wants to bless you; He wants to free you from sin and give you eternal life, hope, peace of mind, and joy. And if you ignore or reject Him, just think about what you're missing. You only have one life. Don't waste your opportunity to be right with God. Let's pray together. Oh Father may we love You with all our heart and may we have a heart that wants to listen to Your word and to obey it. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Our time on earth is brief, so don't waste your life. Don't imagine that you'll get right with God one day. Remember the foolish virgins who failed to have oil for their lamps in Matthew 25. Well when the bridegroom arrived with the wedding party, they had gone in to town to buy oil and they missed the homecoming. And so he closed the door and rejected them. The foolish virgins had good intentions but didn't prepare for His coming. To suggest that the Lord will forgive us anyway, even if we're not prepared is also foolish.

The Scriptures show people were so excited and ready to obey the Lord in repentance and baptism they didn't delay their obedience in the least. You'll remember that 3,000 gladly received Peter's message, they repented, and were baptized on the day of Pentecost according to Acts 2:38 to 41; they didn't wait! Acts 8:12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." They didn't wait! When the Eunuch saw water in Acts 8, he asked what prevented him from being baptized.

He didn't wait! Paul baptized the Philippian jailer at midnight! He and his family didn't wait! You remember that Ananias urged Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16 not to delay but to rise and be baptized and wash away his sins.

Well why did they all do this? They didn't want to spend even one day without the grace of God. They acted with urgency, because getting right with God is an urgent matter! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and confess Him as the Son of God, repent of your sins and decide you're going to follow Jesus, and be baptized into Christ, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you do God's will God will cleanse you with the blood of Jesus and add you to His family. And you won't regret doing the right thing!

Well we that hope today's study about God's message has stirred you to think about your soul. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, 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](mailto: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](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube now! Why not subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs on our website [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) and a map with the location of churches in your area. We offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not here to exploit you or get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

So get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.