

Looking into the *Mirror of Truth*

There are times in life when our self will is directly confronted with God's truth. How do we react when confronted with truth? We must condition our heart to be ready to conform to His will – even if it is difficult to do so. There is a clear fact presented throughout the New Testament informing us that God desires and demands repentance. That He demands it is seen in passages such as 2 Peter 3:9: *God does not wish for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.* Repentance requires a positive change with our heart. While we know it is expected of us, God desires we serve Him because we want to. Our attitude will go very far in determining our eternal destiny.

There are several accounts within the Acts which demonstrate the power of the human heart in determining whether one will submit to God. In chapter 5 Peter finds himself before the Council after having been given *strict orders* not to continue preaching Jesus. (5:28) Instead of obeying their order Peter tells them he will obey God rather than men and then boldly indicts the Council of being guilty of putting Jesus to death. Luke says after hearing this, they were *cut to the quick and intended to kill them.* (5:33) The phrase *cut to the quick*, is used again in Acts 7:54 where the crowd reacted angrily to Stephan's preaching. In both cases, this phrase comes from a Greek word which means "to cut with a saw." When this phrase is applied to the heart it means the heart is violently agitated with rage. Thayer defines it as being *torn with vexation; to be sawn through mentally.* Peter and Stephan related truth clearly and concisely. Unfortunately, the hearts of the individuals in their audiences were unwilling to accept it. Their irritation would only go away with the death of God's messenger(s). It is hard to imagine a heart being so hardened against God's will that one would be motivated to take another life. But if left unchecked, the deceitfulness of sin, pride, and stubborn self will move a person in this direction. (Heb. 3:12-13)

Someone moving to *kill the messenger* may sound extreme. And it is. But the problem we seek to identify here can be very subtle. Bible teaching can help us learn the truth about self. James likened it to looking in a mirror. (James 1:22-25) What do we see when we look into the *mirror of truth*? What is our reaction? Denial? Rationalization? God's kind of Christian will move with acceptance and a quiet resolve to bring his life into compliance with God's will. The Psalmist speaks of the correct attitude when he writes: *Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.* (Psa. 19:12-14) Do we pray for help in seeing self as God sees us? Let us pray for help in accepting even the most painful truths so we can change our ways! See 2 Cor. 13:5.

In Acts 2 we read another group's reaction to truth. Verse 37 says, *they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"* Our word "pierced" is translated from a Greek word used nowhere else in the New Testament. It means the people on Pentecost were suddenly and deeply affected with anguish and alarm at what Peter preached. One word that would go along with this is "compunction," or a *strong uneasiness caused by a sense of guilt or remorse.* Compunction was definitely lacking with those mentioned in Acts 5 and 7! Compunction results only from a humble heart! Note what the humble heart wants to do: immediately obey God! There is no hesitation and no excuses. After Peter's instructions those who received his words were *baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.* (Acts 2:41) This involved repentance as seen in 2:38. Their hearts were open to truth!

Remember: God knows us perfectly! Heb. 4:12-13 says *the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.* Do we genuinely love His truth?

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