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Knowing with Certainty

by Heath Rogers

Luke explains to Theophilus the reason he is writing an account of the Lord's life - "that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed" (Luke 1:4). The word for "certainty" is also used in Acts 5:23 to describe a prison door as being shut securely. Believers like Theophilus needed to be grounded in the truths regarding Jesus' life and teachings. These truths needed to be securely locked up in their hearts.

While there are deep and meaty aspects of God's word, there are foundational elements that we can know with certainty. These truths must be the bedrock of our faith. We know God exists. We know the Bible is His inspired word. We know Jesus is the Son of God. We know He died, was buried, and rose again. We know water baptism is essential for salvation. We know there is a right way to worship God. We know there are eternal rewards and punishments. We know there is only one true church of the Lord.

Open-mindedness may be seen as a virtue in this world, but disciples are to be established in the doctrine of Christ. Unbelievers and skeptics will assault our faith with well-polished arguments. Sincere truth-seekers will challenge us with good questions. Times of personal suffering can cause us to doubt.

These challenges are not a time for us to demolish our faith and rebuild from scratch. We stand on what we know. Paul said the purpose of spiritual growth was "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15).

We continue to learn and grow, but do so while standing confidently on what we know!

Coming to Terms with Loose Ends

Bill Robinson

How many times growing up did we hear, "Don't put more on your plate than you can eat" or "Don't start something you don't plan on finishing"? And now, folks go around talking about their bucket lists—things they want to do or see before they kick the bucket. But let's be honest: no matter how hard we try, none of us ever gets it all done. That's just part of life. The trick, especially when it comes to our walk with the Lord, is learning how to come to terms with those loose ends. So, how do we do that? Well, let me share three simple thoughts.

First, Reduce Unfinished Business. Do the necessary thing. In other words—prioritize. We're pulled in a thousand directions, but we can't do it all. Remember Mary and Martha? Martha ran around worrying about the housework, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet. The Lord told her, "One thing is necessary" (Luke 10:41-42). We've got to focus on what matters most—our relationship with Him.

Second, Be Resolute in Working Always Toward Your Goals. Look, we might not hit every goal we set—and that's okay. The journey's where we find the blessings. You ever try digging a hole to China as a kid? You didn't get there, did you? But I bet you found some neat things along the way. Paul said it best: "I press on toward the goal" (Philippians 3:12-14). Just keep pressing. That's what matters.

Third, Rejoice Always. Because in the end, it's not your neighbor or some critic who judges your life—it's God. And He's promised that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6). Our job? Stay faithful. Trust Him. Let Him do His work in us. Here's the bottom line, friend: We'll never hit our spiritual goals, enjoy the journey, or truly rejoice in the Lord if we don't start pressing toward that heavenly home in Christ Jesus. So, let's reduce the distractions, stay resolute, and rejoice in the One who'll see us through.

~via Upper West Manhattan Church; New York, New York.

The Power of Influence

- by David Padfield

Webster defines the word influence as "the power of persons or things to affect others, seen only in its effects." Though the word influence is only found one time in the King James Version, its meaning is on every page.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his disciples that they are the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13-16). There are many interesting things you can say about this figure of speech. Salt is totally worthless while sitting on a shelf, it has to be applied. Salt can also lose its "saltiness." When it loses its power to flavor, it is good for nothing and must be discarded.

Paul told the brethren at Corinth they were an "epistle of Christ known and read by all men" (2 Cor. 3:1-3). Whether we like it or not, every Christian is an advertisement for Christ. It is rather scary to think the honor of Christ is in the hands of his disciples. Men of the world will judge Christ by the character of his followers.

Have you ever considered what type of an advertisement you are? One of our songs suggests that "We are the only Bible the careless world will read, We are the sinners gospel, we are the scoffers creed, We are the Lord's last message, given in deed and word, What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?"

The majority of worldly people will pay very little attention to what we say, but our actions will always be scrutinized. When they think of our character and reputation, our actions will speak louder than our words.

"God's Prophets"

By Joe R. Price

The Bible's teaching about prophets is understandable. It remains relevant because many people look to someone they believe is a prophet sent by God to guide their lives. Here is a summary of some of the Bible's pertinent points about God's prophets.

A prophet was a spokesman for another. God told Moses in Exodus 7:1 that "Aaron, your brother, shall be your prophet." Exodus 4:15-16 shows that Aaron "shall be your spokesman to the people," since Moses would "speak to him (Aaron) and put the words in his mouth." Aaron would be a mouthpiece (a prophet) for Moses. Similarly, God's prophet was God's mouthpiece, speaking God's word to others (Heb. 1:1).

God's prophets were called by God and given His words to speak. For example, in Jeremiah 1:4-10, God called and commissioned Jeremiah to be His prophet (v. 5). Jeremiah was told to speak "whatsoever I (God) command you" (v. 7). Thus, God put His words into Jeremiah's mouth (v. 9). God's prophet did not speak his own will; he spoke the will and words of God. See Deuteronomy 18:15-19 for more on the call, work, and test of a true prophet.

The Holy Spirit put God's words into the prophet's mouth. As Peter noted, "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). God's prophet was not moved to speak by the will and dictates of men. The Spirit of God directed him to speak words from God (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). God's prophet did not change his message to fit the will of the people (Ezekiel 3:10-11).

The work of God's prophets has been accomplished. Through them, God revealed to the world His full, complete, and final revelation (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3).

Although the world no longer has living prophets, their words remain as a living word that gives "edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Meek Street 8/16/26