

The Pathway of Increasing Light

by Zac Poonen

God's will for His children is to walk on a pathway of increasing light, respecting His Word and eliminating unscriptural traditions.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Psalm 138:2, Proverbs 4:12, Matthew 17:4, Mark 7:6, Acts 17:11, Romans 1:25, Romans 3:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:10

Topics: "Biblical Authority", "Spiritual Discernment"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of walking in increasing light on the path of God's will, which is illuminated by His Word. He warns against elevating human traditions to the same level as God's Word, as seen in the rebuke Jesus gave to those who invalidated Scripture with their traditions. The Bereans are commended for their noble-mindedness in comparing teachings with Scripture, setting an example for believers to avoid being swayed by every doctrine and to always test teachings against the Word of God. Poonen highlights the need for humility and integrity in acknowledging and correcting mistaken beliefs, even if they come from respected individuals, as God values truth and honesty above all else.

Transcript

The will of God is that the path that His children walk on should be one of increasing light(Prov 4:12). For this purpose, He has given us His Word as a light for our pathway(Paslms 119:105). God has exalted His Word according to all His Name(Psalms 138:2). This implies that just as we respect the Name of the Lord and don't equate any other name with it, even so we must respect the Word of God. The Jews in Jesus' day gave equal importance to the "traditions of the elders" as they did to God's Word. Jesus blasted this attitude with strong words in Mark 7:6-13 saying that thereby they had invalidated the Word of God. These things are written for our instruction. We too must be careful to eliminate unscriptural traditions from our midst. God's Word opposes sin as well as human traditions, for both these belong to the darkness. We must hate both and avoid both.

When Paul came to the Bereans, it is recorded that they compared Paul's teaching with the Scriptures before accepting what he said. Therefore he Holy Spirit calls them 'more noble-minded' than other believers (Acts 17:11). This was such a habit with them, that as a result, they were never tossed about with 'every wind of doctrine' from the various preachers that came their way. Therefore Paul never had to write an epistle to the Bereans correting false doctrine in their midst. The example of the Bereans is a good one for all of us to follow. No man must ever become so great for us(even if he be an Apostle like

Paul) that we accept what he teaches, without searching the Scriptures to see whether his teaching is based on God's Word. A man can be very God-fearing and still be mistaken in some matter. David, for example, was 'a man after God's own heart'. Yet he permitted the Israelites to workshop the bronze serpent. It was Hezekiah, a lesser man, who recognised this as an evil practice and abolished it. (2 Kings 18:4)

Christian history likewise gives us the examples of great men of God who were mistaken on certain matters. These men were far more godly than most of us. Yet because of their 'blind spots', they taught things that were not found in the New Testament; and their followers today carry on proclaiming the 'blind spots' of their dead leaders! This is the result of 'worshipping the creature more than the Creator' (Romans 1:25) and of accepting the creature's word more than the Creator's Word.

When Peter equated Moses and Elijah (godly men) with Jesus, a cloud came between the Lord and him and God rebuked him (Math 17:4,5). No man's name must be made equal to the name of Jesus and no man's word must be made equal to God's Word. "Let God be found true, though every man (however great or saintly he may be) be found a liar (if he is preaching what is not found in Scripture)[Rom 3:4]. No man is infallible. Therefore whoever comes to us preaching the Word, we must be bold to challenge him to show us Scriptural authority for his teaching.

When you discover that something you have always believed in, has no foundation in God's Word, and this is confirmed in your spirit and mind, after careful study of the Word and after consultation with others who know the scriptures better than you, then remains only one course of action open to you, if you want to retain your integrity; that is to be honest with God and men and to change your view immediately, no matter what the consequences. This is where our love for the truth is often tested. Our desire for honour before others who hold the faulty view can hinder us from being honest. God may speak to us again to see whether we will be honest with the truth with which He has confronted us. If He sees us that we lack integrity, either because we lack the humility to acknowledge that we were mistaken at first or because we lack the courage to stand against others whose opinion we value, then He will allow us to remain with our 'blind spot' and to believe what is false. (2 Thes 2:10,11). If, on the other hand, we choose the pathway of honesty, God will lead us on to greater light from His Word.

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