

#63 “Every Word Counts”

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If the Word of God is food, which the Bible says it is (Deuteronomy 8:3), then the church must feast upon it in order to be healthy. But in order to feast upon the Word, the church must first believe the Word. If the church fails to believe the Word, then they won't choose to eat it, they won't understand it, and they won't live and apply it. Thus, when the church begins to pick and choose what parts of the Bible it wants to accept, it will inevitably become malnourished, weak, defeated, and deceived. It makes no sense for us to cut out fruits and vegetables from our diets because we don't like them or because we don't like how they taste. Our feelings and experiences don't mean that fruits and vegetables are truly bad for us; indeed, they are necessary to maintain good health. In the same way, we have no right before God to tell Him which parts of His “meal” we are willing to accept and which parts we are not. None of us are allergic to God's Word, so we have no excuse but to read and accept all of it. God has not served us a bad meal, but it is a meal that He knows will be good for us, even if it tastes bitter going down as it reveals truths about our hearts that we might not like. Truth must trump feelings, the Word must overrule experiences, and God's Word must not be merely tolerated but that which makes us tremble as we are humbled and submit to it (Isaiah 66:2).

The Bible is not something that we are to bend to our own agendas or treat as a smorgasbord where we choose a part here that makes us feel good while we ignore the rest. It is interesting that people tend not to discount verses that pose little threat, but they have difficulty accepting the ones that fly in the face of what they prefer or which contradict the way in which they have chosen to live. All of a sudden, they have trouble accepting a certain passage. As they stubbornly reject portions of Scripture that they deem unnecessary or erroneous, they essentially instruct God to rewrite His letter to man, a very arrogant thing to do because it lifts our minds up as being smarter and wiser than God's. How dare we tell God that His Word is not up to our standards or that it doesn't fit in with our priorities!

It is important that we note that God is extremely dogmatic about His Word being true through and through. *First, He says that His Word is tested.* Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.” God's Word is fool-proof, meaning that those who reject it prove themselves to be fools. *Second, He says that man needs every Word that God has spoken in order to live.* Jesus responds to the devil's temptation in Matthew 4:4 by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, saying, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’” Man is a spiritual being as well as a physical being, and the soul needs food even as the body needs food, and even more importantly so. To ignore some words and to not eat every word is to become famished and spiritually weak. Every word counts because every word is food and from God.

Thirdly, God takes His revelation to man very seriously such that He warns those who tamper with God's Word that they could prove themselves to be unsaved and thus miss out on eternal life. Revelation 22:18-19 says,

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

This might seem harsh, but it is what God says because God knows that the church is built upon truth and called to communicate truth (1 Timothy 3:15). If truth is cut or compromised, the whole pillar falls and the way for evil is opened wide. Paul affirmed the seriousness of accepting God's Word and not altering its meaning when he says in Galatians 1:8-9,

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”

The meaning of “accursed” is to be devoted to destruction with no hope of redemption. Indeed, it is serious business to alter the meaning of God's Word, to change the gospel to be more palatable, and to redefine sound doctrine. What God has given must be preserved, guarded, kept, and preached without altering the text and without compromising the entirety and integrity of the Scripture.

Man may teach God's Word incorrectly and incur judgment, *but man cannot ever change it.* Matthew 5:18 says, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” And as Peter says in 1 Peter 1:25, “‘BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.” God's Word will never fail, and God will preserve it. Its eternal truths are always true, no matter what man might try to say about them. Man does not stand in judgment over God's Word, though he might think he does and even try to do so, but God's Word will always stand in judgment over him. As Psalm 119:160 says, “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.” Our calling before God is to be faithful to believe every Word of Scripture. If we don't receive it all, we will miss out on much that God wants to teach us, and we will fail to be able to be used as God would prefer to use us. Let us take in God's Word cover to cover, and let us value God's Word as highly and as seriously as God does.