

THE GOOD DEPOSIT

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” —2 TIMOTHY 1:14

To Paul, truth was not a personal possession, but a revelation whose content must be guarded and distributed at all cost. Knowing his life was drawing to an end, he writes a second letter to Timothy and tells him, “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching” (2 Timothy 1:13).

In Paul’s view, the Gospel was not a matter of opinion to be held above other opinions, but a matter of objective truth which is non-negotiable. By definition, truth is timeless and unchanging. It may be forgotten, neglected, ignored, perverted, opposed, rejected, counterfeited or displaced, but it never changes. The truth Paul proclaims was not merely an emphasis he stresses or an option to be agreed upon or disputed, but by its very nature, is an imperative to which there has to be a response.

Paul’s message centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ, making it much more than a series of theological propositions or articles of creed. These may be helpful to our understanding and necessary for our good, but they do not in themselves constitute the truth. They simply point to it. The truth is the person and activity of Jesus Christ who said, “I am the truth...” (John 14:6). All that is theologically true is truth about Jesus, and to embrace the truth is to allow that which is true of Jesus to become true of us.

It is important to affirm that Scripture is true and without error in all it declares. It is God speaking to us and is to be completely trusted. However, the Scriptures themselves are not the truth. From Genesis to Revelation they bear witness to the truth, which is Jesus Himself. Paul, in his day, did not have a Bible to leave with his converts. He could only leave them Christ. In Philippians 1:4-6, he explains his follow up strategy. “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Who began the good work in them? Christ. Who will carry it on to completion? Christ.

Jesus Christ was not the patron of Paul’s Christianity, but the very substance of his Gospel. As Christians, we are entrusted with “the good deposit”, the message of the Gospel, which at all cost, we are to guard with our hearts, minds and souls. Our understanding of truth is not dependent on intellectual capacity, but on the Holy Spirit’s active participation as He works in us so that our lives may bear witness to the Truth.

PRAYER: Precious Lord, thank You for being the Truth Scripture reveals, because it is your life lived in me that brings me joy, peace, purpose and fulfillment.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I guarding the truth of Scripture within me and passing it on?