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Exhortation

"The God of my life"

2. A God of truth

Geoff Cave

TRUTH IS NOT, to many, an important factor if the aim is short term; therefore the leaders of this world find truth low in their priorities. If, however, the aim is long term, truth becomes more important. When the purpose is eternal, truth is imperative.

When Moses addressed the nation of Israel he stated: ". . . because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deut. 32:3,4). And the psalmist in Psalm 33 declared: "For the word of the LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth" (v. 4). The Lord God of Israel is a God of truth, and He is therefore totally dependable. "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (132:11).

The fact that the truth of God's Word is totally and utterly dependable means that faith in His promises is based on a sure and impregnable foundation. There cannot be the slightest shadow of a doubt that His promises will be fulfilled. It is written that the father of the faithful was "fully persuaded that, what He [God] had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21).

Sadly, human nature is far less dependable, and cannot live according to truth. We therefore rely on other attributes of the Divine nature: longsuffering, forgiveness and mercy. Truth may appear to be far removed from these characteristics; it is related to perfection, whereas longsuffering and mercy are required when sinners are involved. The Scriptures, however, show that both aspects are necessary: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil" (Prov. 16:6); and again: "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. 100:5).

The principle emerges that the great and mighty God of Israel will show mercy to those who uphold His truth: "And Solomon said, Thou

hast shewed unto Thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before Thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with Thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day" (1 Kgs. 3:6).

Although David was a sinner, he walked in truth and always acknowledged truth in his life: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear [pure] when Thou judgest . . . Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. 51:3-6). Any attempt on the part of David to justify his actions would have been to pronounce God 'untruthful', and would have resulted in the mercy being withdrawn.

We too must acknowledge the truth of God in our lives. We must assent to, and fully believe, the teaching of Scripture as truth. We epitomise these doctrines in a Statement of Faith, believing that these are the doctrines that will lead us to salvation, as Paul said to Timothy: "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Having believed these doctrines as saving truth we must then put them into action in our living: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (Jas. 1:23,24). We must then do all that we can to help others do the same. The greatest service we can do for our fellows is to help them in humility on the road to salvation: "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:25).