

Buy Truth

#0175

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 7, 1978

We have a special message from that Savior that's coming, addressed to the last church in Revelation 3:18; He has some counsel for us. What is His counsel? Will you read with me the first two lines?

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." Revelation 3:18.

That's enough, there's more but we'll chew on that a while. It pays to take a piece of bread in pieces when you really want to enjoy it, doesn't it? So let's look at this for a little.

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." Revelation 3:18.

It may seem strange to think of Jesus as a salesman, a door-to-door salesman, but this is the way He pictures Himself here. We usually think of salvation, the Gospel, as being free, and it is. But it's also for sale, as we shall see; in fact, we've already seen it, He says it here. It pays to listen to what Jesus says and not try to begin to say, "Well, He doesn't mean what He says." He means *exactly* what he says. We may not always understand what He's saying, but He means exactly what He says. And He says:

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." Revelation 3:18.

Now with this, let's look at Proverbs 23:23. We're told by inspiration that in the Revelation, all the books of the Bible meet and end. This expression "buy" that we find in Revelation 3:18 we see also, way back 1,000 years before, in Proverbs 23:23:

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" Proverbs 23:23.

Buy what? The truth. So truth is gold tried in the fire. "Well," somebody said, "I thought that it was faith."

Well, what do you have faith in; it's the *truth*, isn't it? Faith is God's gift which enables us to accept the truth. If we don't believe the truth, we don't have faith—we have unbelief, don't we? So tonight, I want to study this gold of truth. The gold of truth. "Buy the truth and sell it not." I wonder why He says "and sell it not"?

Many commodities in the world today, people make their living today by buying and selling. But there are some things so important, so precious that once you get them, you should never part with them. That's the way it is with this gold of truth.

Jesus told the story about a man seeking goodly pearls, and finally he found one pearl of great price. In order to get it, he had to do what? Sell all the rest he had. But he was glad to do it to get that one pearl. What do you suppose he did with that pearl? Well, he kept it. "Buy the truth and sell it not."

Why should anybody sell the truth anyway? What does it mean to *buy* and to *sell*? Certainly not money; as God says through Job,

"Neither shall silver be weighed, for the price thereof.
...for the price of wisdom is above rubies" Job 28:15, 18.

I think of this statement of young John Andrews; we think of him as one of the pioneers of this movement. The first time he heard the Sabbath truth, as just a very young man, he accepted it with this statement: "I would gladly exchange a thousand errors for one truth."

And this is the way we buy truth, dear friends. We surrender our erroneous ideas and accept the truth of God instead. It's in that sense that we buy it. Let me illustrate. Suppose it's dark here—midnight, there are no lights on, everything dark. Somebody says, "Would you like some light?" You'd say, "Yes, I sure would." But do you know there's one thing that you have to surrender if you're going to have light? Do you know what's going to happen to darkness? It's going to go. You can't hang onto the darkness and still take the light. And whenever you buy the truth, you surrender some error, some falsehood, some fiction, some unreality.

This is *why* it is so difficult to get people to accept the truth. If they could add the truth and still keep all they have of erroneous ideas and wrong practices, they might do it. But to give up some cherished idol of opinion; to change some habit in life, this is a difficult thing for many people, about many things.

All of us who sit here tonight have probably gone through that at one time or another, on one point or another, haven't we? I wonder if it's all over? I hope not. I trust we are continuing to *buy* truth from the Heavenly Merchant Man who is coming from door to door in Laodicea, knocking and saying, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou may be rich."

To state it in another way, we need our ideas and our ideals changed on many subjects, on many points. This is a gradual process. All the gold that Jesus wants to give us is not in one little package. No. He has more and more and more to give us.

Referring again to that illustration of *light*, He says:

"...the path of the [righteous] is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" Proverbs 4:18.

Would you like to have some more gold, some more truth, some more light? God grant that we shall have a *longing* to accept the invitation of the Heavenly Merchant Man.

Now, what does it mean, I ask again, to *sell* the truth? As *buying* the truth represents giving up our errors to receive some new point, some new ray of light, so to *sell* the truth means to *surrender* the light by welcoming the darkness. Why would people do that? What is the attraction of falsehood? Why would anybody love a lie rather than the truth? But nearly everybody in this world has pursued and is pursuing this path, and I have been trying to figure out, shall I say—of course there is no real explanation, for sin is an unreasonable, insane thing—but I've just been thinking about what are the Devil's sales points. Well, you'll think of some as you meditate with me on this.

One thing is that falsehood is something different. Suppose you've heard the truth on something over and over again. Here comes somebody with something new, something strange, something different. Does that have an appeal to the human mind? We'd just as well admit it *does*, friends.

It did even to Eve in Eden. She listened to that sales pitch over at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and she *bought* a lie. What did she give for it? She *sold* the truth. She came up to that tree believing what God said, and she went away disbelieving it and believing the serpent, didn't she? What a terrible sales transaction, friends. What an *awful* deception. What a terrible *cheat*. But millions have done it since.

Remember friends: just as the only way you can get light is for darkness to be gone, so it's equally true that if you choose darkness, the only way you can have it is for light to disappear. God has given you and me in a free choice the control. He has given us the power of decision to decide whether we want the way of life or the way of darkness, the way of truth or the way of fiction and falsehood and unreality.

Why, there are multitudes of people today that can't stand the idea of reality. Follow it long enough and that path leads into an utter break with reality. People live in an unreal world, but there are many steps on that road. "Buy the truth and sell it not" is the plea of the Heavenly Merchant Man. Once you have some point of truth, don't let go! And if something comes along different from truth, don't be so anxious to investigate it. Don't let your curious mind lead you to where Eve was led out to that tree. Don't be so fascinated as the serpent speaks. A serpent talking! Why who wouldn't want to stop and listen to him? It would have been better if Eve hadn't, wouldn't it, friends?

Not only is falsehood sometimes something different, it's something *exciting*, and Satan labors to make it exciting. How many gadgets, and gimmicks, and inventions there are today to get the *attention* of people? You go along the highway and all kinds of things—lights that go on and off, banners streaming, and this and that—what for? To get the eye, to get the attention. We know what an inroad that radio and TV are making into family life and devotional life today. It's all examples of this thing of something different, something exciting, something to catch the eye. But listen: if it isn't truth, it's dangerous; isn't it, friends? If it isn't truth, it's dangerous!

There's another reason that untruth has an appeal. It is often pleasing to the self-indulgent soul. We long to find out that which justifies us in our wrongdoing, which encourages us in rebellion, and which gives us a good excuse for what we want to do. This is one of the most dangerous attributes of Satan's program, one of the most insidious and subtle sales points that he makes.

"After all, wouldn't you *like* to do this instead of that?"

"Oh yes, I would, but I'm afraid it wouldn't be the thing to do."

"Well, if you'll just stop and listen to me, I'll show you that it's all right for you to do it that way."

And if it's the thing I *want* to do, pretty soon I have sold the truth for error. But "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Will you repeat those words with me? "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Again: "Buy the truth, and sell it not."

What do we exchange—that's what buying and selling are, it's exchange. What do we exchange for truth? Error—our own selfish way, our own ideas, human opinion. What is it we exchange, what is it we give up when we sell the truth? We give up God's way and take our own way and the Devil's way. What a pity that any have ever gone down that road.

Now, let's go to 2 Thessalonians the second chapter, and see one of the most earnest warnings in all the Bible on this matter of truth:

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"
2 Thessalonians 2:8–13.

What's the last word in these verses? Truth, that's what we're studying about. Let's look at that 13th verse first, and we'll go back and look at some of the others. Salvation comes through what? Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Error can never sanctify, my friends. It takes truth to do that. And truth cannot sanctify me unless I what? Believe it and accept it. So buy the truth and sell it not.

Now let's go back to those verses 8, 9 and 10. Before Jesus appears in the clouds of Heaven, there is to be a special season of activity on the part of Satan. He will work, this verse says, with all power and signs, miracles, and lying wonders.

Lying wonders you notice: they're wonders, but they're *lying* wonders. And those who receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved will be left to receive these strong delusions.

Oh, think of it, friends: Everybody in this chapel tonight is either going to love the truth enough to buy it and never sell it, or else he'll be taken in these delusions—mighty miracles worked by the Devil; even bringing fire down from Heaven on the earth, Revelation 13 says. The sick healed, other mighty signs performed, all for the purpose of deceiving, and people will sell the truth, give up the truth and accept the lie of the Devil because they receive not the love of the truth.

May I challenge you, friends? Is there any point of truth you know that you don't love? Is there any point of truth that looks difficult, burdensome, that you wish it weren't that way? Plead with God that He'll give you a love for it. Keep doing it even if it's hard. If it's what God has said, keep doing it, and it will eventually be sweet to your taste.

But listen: If instead of practicing it, or practicing it merely as a cross and a burden, and a bondage, the day will come when you'll find some easy way out. Some deception of Satan will be offered, and the appeal to your soul will be, "Oh, my. I wonder if it's really true? Do I really have to do this? Maybe what I thought was necessary, isn't necessary at all." You'll find a way out. Because"

"Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"
2 Thessalonians 2:10.

Now if I really believe a lie, that's all right, isn't it? Does believing a lie make it the truth? No, never. If a man is on the wrong road, believing that he's on the right road doesn't get him to his destination, does it? No.

You say, "Well, Brother Frazee, do you mean that the people have got to know everything that's truth or they'll be lost?"

They've got to accept every ray of light that God brings to them, friend. We'll be judged according to the amount of light we have or had the opportunity to have. What I'm talking about tonight is attitude. A little truth will save you if you accept it. An *immense* amount of truth will never save you *unless* you accept it. To love the truth, this is the point.

Now let's go to John 14:6. This Heavenly Merchant Man Who's knocking at the door as we have seen, has something to sell—the truth. But let us see what that truth is:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" John 14:6.

So we are dealing not with truth merely as an abstract quality; not merely as a mass of information. What does Jesus say about Himself? I am the truth. To

accept the truth as it is in Jesus, then, means to accept Christ Himself. There's no lie in Him; there is no falsity in Him; there is no pretense in Him; there is no acting in Him. Jesus is not an actor; He's the faithful and true Witness. There is no pretending about Jesus. Everything He says is so. He is the embodiment of truth. He not only speaks the truth, He *is* the truth.

Truth is truth because it is the character of God. It is not that God picks out the truth and tells it to us. The Bible says that God cannot lie. Do you know why He can't lie? Everything He says has in it the power to make it so. He *spoke* the world into existence. When this planet was shrouded in darkness, God commanded the light to shine out darkness. And when God said, "Let there be light," light *was* immediately. He did not have to set into motion some electric plant, some generator, some dynamo. No. The Word of God has in it the power to make so anything He says. And so Jesus says, "I am the truth." So let God be true and every man a liar.

Because Christ is the truth, His Word is truth (John 17:17). We read over in Thessalonians the statement that we're sanctified through believing the truth. We'll notice what this is:

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth"
John 17:17.

Yes. Since Jesus is true, His Word is true. From Genesis to Revelation is the truth of God. Aren't you thankful for that, friends? What a shame it is to turn from inspired truth and let the mind be misled, confused, infatuated, by doctrines of devils or by the speculations of well-meaning men who simply put their human construction upon the Word of God.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" John 17:17.

Turn now to Psalm 119:142. This is the longest chapter in the 66 books of the Bible, and it's a great eulogy of God's Word, His law, His commandments—what He says, in other words.

"Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth" Psalm 119:142.

What is the truth? Thy *law* is the truth. Is God's law the truth? Why, yes because He spoke it. He wrote it. He cannot lie. So His law is the truth. Praise His wonderful name.

Then if I have God's law in the Ten Commandments, and I have His Word from Genesis to Revelation which magnifies that law, I have what? I have the truth. I'm to buy the truth and do what? Sell it not.

Suppose somebody comes along then with an argument that I don't have to *keep* that law. My dear friends, if I love Jesus, and He's the truth, and I love His law, and that's the truth, and I love His Word, and that's the truth, I don't even want to listen to an argument that would persuade me that I don't need to follow Jesus and keep His Word and His law. Is that right? I'm satisfied with Christ. I'm not

interested in listening to a devil's argument that would lead me to believe that I can have salvation and still disobey God's law, break God's law. No, I don't want to do that.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"
Ephesians 4:14–15.

What are we to speak? Speak the truth in love. If we do this, it'll cause us to do what? Grow up so that we won't anymore be what? Children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Here, the Bible uses, as it sometimes does, the same illustration to teach more than one thing. You remember Jesus used leaven to represent sin, and He also used it to represent righteousness. So here the Scripture uses the attitude of children to accept anything that's told them. Christ used it as an example of faith and love in a little child that we're to emulate. But here Paul speaks of it as something that we're to outgrow. We're to reach the place where we are no more gullible.

It's surprising to me how some people will get something in the mail from somebody they never heard of, some mimeograph sheet, and it has some texts put together and some Spirit of Prophecy statements put together, and some human comments, and they'll get all excited about it. "Oh, maybe this is it!" Every wind of doctrine is blowing today, dear friends—all kinds of ideas. Paul says that we're to outgrow the tendency to be swept about by all these winds. Thank God you and I can be just as settled as this Lookout Mountain out here. No matter which way the wind is blowing, it's exactly where it was before the wind started blowing. The wind can blow first one way, and then another, and it doesn't affect it at all.

God wants you and me to be that way in our spiritual experience. He doesn't want us to be moved off our foundation by these winds of doctrine. And if we'll speak the truth in love, it'll cause us to grow up so we'll no more be children tossed about and listening to all these ideas.

1 Timothy 3:15. Paul loved Timothy, his son in the faith. He was writing to him and giving him instruction on how to carry on his work in God's church. I want you to notice what Paul called the church here in this verse:

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"
1 Timothy 3:14–15.

Now, what is God's house? The church of the living God. Paul calls it here with reference to the truth? The pillar and ground of the truth. The word translated

'ground' there is very interesting. It's also translated foundation, or base, or basis. It's also translated bulwark or fortress. The idea is something solid that protects and defends.

What is it that is the foundation of the true church? The truth. And God intends that in the true church nothing but truth shall be preached. That's why Paul said to Timothy to preach the Word. The pulpit is no place for political propaganda. The pulpit is no place for speculation regarding the Scriptures. The pulpit is no place for scientific theories that steal away faith in the verities of this movement.

Oh friends, if you don't know what I'm talking about, I was going to say put it in the deep freeze so that you can bring it out when you need it. Every one of you will be tested in these various ways. You'll have ideas brought to you that if you accept them, it will be to lose your simple childlike faith in the truth of God. It'll mean that because of your acceptance of these so-called scientific theories, or other exciting or strange or new or different ideas, you lose, I say, your simple faith in the Word of God and the *Testimonies* of His Spirit. Do you want to do that? Oh, no.

God intends as this Scripture says, that the church should be the pillar and ground of the truth. God intends that error shall be outside the fold. But Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, and Scripture warns us today, that there is danger that grievous wolves enter in not sparing the flock. Paul says:

"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" Acts 20:30.

So cling to the truth. Cling to the Word of God and the *Testimonies* of His Spirit. And thus, speaking the truth in love, we will grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ.

Not let us turn to John 8 and read one of the most wonderful promises in the Bible:

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"
John 8:31–32.

How do we know the truth? Continuing in what? In His Word. If God says it, it's true. If we know His Word, we know the truth, and the truth will make us what? Free. The truth doesn't bring us into bondage, it brings us *out* of bondage. The truth makes us free in Christ, and we find it by continuing in what? His Word.

Now turn back one chapter, John 7:17—another wonderful promise on how to know and be sure of the truth of God.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" John 7:17.

Another translation puts that: If any man willeth to do His will. That's the point. If we are willing to do His will, we'll know of the doctrine. There's a beautiful comment on this in the book *Desire of Ages*:

"The perception and appreciation of truth, He said, depends less upon the mind than upon the heart. Truth must be received into the soul; it claims the homage of the will. If truth could be submitted to the reason alone, pride would be no hindrance in the way of its reception. But it is to be received through the work of grace in the heart; and its reception depends upon the renunciation of every sin that the Spirit of God reveals" *The Desire of Ages*, page 455.

This brings us back to our opening text: "Buy the truth, and sell it not." As the light of truth shines into my soul, it reveals something that needs to be changed in my life. The point is, will I surrender it? The third angel's message is not merely to change the day we keep from the pagan Sunday to the God blessed seventh-day Sabbath. That seventh-day Sabbath is a sign of God's desire to sanctify us completely, wholly in body and mind and soul. That means that everything in our life that is unlike Jesus is to be changed, and His way of bringing us to these changes is by letting light shine into the soul and truth revealed to the mind.

With what earnestness, then, should we every day study the Bible that we may know what is truth? And how we should seek the Lord to give us willing minds, for if any man *wills* to do His will, if he's willing to do His will, he will know. Isn't that a wonderful promise, friend? Thank God, it's true.

Jesus is waiting to answer the question for every soul that He would have answered to Pilate, if Pilate had lingered. You remember that there in the judgment hall Christ, in bearing witness to Pilate, for the Lord was working with that Roman governor, said, I have come as a witness to the truth. Then do you remember the question Pilate asked? What is truth? Did he ever get the answer? No. You know why? He ran off to hear more from the mob, to their demands. Oh, that he had lingered and listened with a willing heart. He merely asked what is truth. It is not enough to ask, friends.

If any man wills to do His will, He shall know of the doctrine. And that same Savior that witnessed to Pilate is witnessing to our hearts tonight. I'm so glad that, as we come to Him, we find that He is the way, the truth, and the life. As we listen to Him, we know that His Word is true. As His Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts, as we hear the gentle knock of the Savior, we too can buy the gold tried in the fire. We too can receive His precious truth. We too can exchange, if need be, a thousand errors for one truth, and know the joy that truth brings to those who accept it with all their heart.

Now, if any of us would like to send our Lord the word tonight, that we want *Him*, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, may I see your hands? God bless everyone.

We're going to spend a few moments in witness tonight. So just bear your personal testimony in a sentence or two, and that way many can take part.

[Testimony service]

Dear Lord, we're united in these requests, and we know that Jesus, Thy dear Son, is praying for us, for each one of these seeking ones tonight. We know that His prayer is heard; that the incense of His righteousness, the blood of His atonement, is for them. And so, tonight we're thanking Thee for victory through Christ. We're thanking Thee for deliverance from sin, and we're thanking Thee for light on the pilgrim pathway. We're thankful for truth more precious than gold. Dismiss us now with Thy blessing, and bring us back to learn more of the good way of truth. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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