

Before We Can Read to Our Soul's Profit

by J.C. Philpot

The only way to truly know and apply the truth of God is through a vital, experimental acquaintance with it through the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Proverbs 8:8, Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 7:7, 1 Corinthians 8:2, 1 Corinthians 13:1, 2 Corinthians 3:14, Hebrews 4:2, James 1:5

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

J.C. Philpot emphasizes the vital importance of experiencing the truth of God through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, rather than mere intellectual understanding. He warns that without the divine power of God revealing His truth to our hearts and us embracing it with living faith, we lack true knowledge and saving interest in it. Philpot illustrates that even the purest and clearest truths, if not applied by God's power, cannot save the soul, as seen in the parable of the Sower and the ancient infidels who heard but did not believe. He urges believers to seek divine wisdom and understanding through continuous prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit for true spiritual growth and transformation.

Transcript

Before we can read to our soul's profit

by J. C. Philpot

The only real knowledge which we can possess of the truth of God, or of any one branch of that truth, is from a vital, experimental, heartfelt acquaintance with it through the teaching of the Holy Spirit! Men, learned or unlearned, priest or people, may theorize and speculate, may think they see and understand, may reason and argue, preach and prate, talk and write, wisely and well upon this and that point of doctrine, or upon this or that portion of scripture; but unless the sacred truth of God is made known to our hearts by a divine power, and laid hold of by a living faith, we have no true knowledge of, as we have no saving interest in it. How true are those words of the apostle--"And if any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. 8:2.)

To think that we know a thing, and to know that we know a thing, are two very different things. We must have done with thinking and come to knowing; and this we never can do until the Blessed Spirit seals the truth of God home upon our heart and conscience. The Bible is plain enough. The way of salvation is written in its sacred pages as with a ray of light, and every truth that is for the soul's good, or the Lord's

glory, is so traced in the inspired volume, that he who runs may read. This the Lord himself declares--"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge." (Prov. 8:8, 9.)

But before we can read to our soul's profit these words of truth and righteousness, the veil of unbelief must be taken off our heart, (2 Cor. 3:14-16,) that we may see light in God's light. The truths of the Gospel, if not broken up by a divine hand, lie upon many an understanding as clods of marl upon a field which they encumber but do not fertilize; or, to use a more scriptural figure, as the seed, scattered by the hand of the sower, lies on the hard, beaten wayside, until trodden into dust by the foot of the traveler, or devoured by the hungry fowl of the air. What good will the purest, clearest, soundest doctrines, even if preached by an apostle, do us unless there be that living principle of divine faith in our hearts which mixes with the word, and so profits the soul? The lack of this was the ruin of those ancient infidels who ate of the manna and drank of the rock, but whose carcasses fell in the wilderness--"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them--but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Heb. 4:2.)

We hold in our hands the divine Gospel of John; we read with wonder and admiration, and sometimes with some little feeling and savor, the sixth chapter; and as we read we see grace and truth stamped upon every line of that sacred discourse where the Lord speaks with such solemn weight and power about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. But what effect did this sacred sermon--the perfection of spiritual and experimental truth, to us pervaded with such a spirit of holiness, to us so weighty and solemn that life or death seems to hang upon every word--what effect did these words of Him who cannot lie produce upon those who heard them drop from his gracious lips? Did it awaken, quicken, regenerate, save, or sanctify them? So far from that, the Lord not seeing good to apply it to their consciences by his Blessed Spirit, it only stirred up their rebellion and infidelity. Their only reply to its heavenly language was, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

We see, then, that it is not truth--the purest and clearest, even when uttered by the Redeemer's own lips, that can save the soul unless applied to the heart by the special power of God. This the Lord plainly showed by the parable of the Sower, where the seed being the same but the soil different, that only which fell into good ground brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Thus, whoever be the sower, it is only when the seed of divine truth enters into the broken soil of a good and honest heart, made so by grace, that it takes that firm and deep root downward which enables it to spring, and grow, and bear fruit upward, to the praise and glory of God.

But when the truth of God is made known to the heart by divine teaching and divine testimony, what a holy sweetness and heavenly savor are then tasted, felt, and realized in it! When thus favored to sit down under the shadow of its Beloved, and find his fruit sweet to its taste, the soul says, with Jeremiah, "Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jer. 15:16.) The ineffable mystery of a Triune Jehovah; the essential Deity and eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus; the sorrows and sufferings of his agonizing humanity in the days of his flesh; the unutterable glory of his divine Person as Immanuel God with us at the right hand of the Father; the efficacy of his atoning blood; the beauty and blessedness of his all-spotless righteousness; the sweetness of his dying love, that passes knowledge; the fullness of grace that dwells in him as the covenant head of the Church; the stability of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; the firmness of the promises; the holiness of the precepts; the force of Jesus' example; the support of his presence; the whispers of his voice; the sympathy and compassion of his tender heart--how can these blessed realities, in the

experimental realization of which the life and power of godliness mainly consist, enter into us, or we enter into them without the unction of the Holy Spirit resting on and bedewing them, and through them resting on and bedewing us?

It is not only utterly useless, but it is highly dangerous, to make ourselves or others wise in the letter of truth when the heart remains utterly destitute of its power. Lace and lawn round the face of a corpse will neither give life nor preserve from putrefaction. The soundest doctrines may be made into grave-clothes for the dead; but "Lazarus, come forth!" may never be spoken to it by the voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. Let us beware, then, of unsanctified knowledge, or unapplied truth; for such "knowledge puffs up;" and well may our ears tingle at the solemn warning of the apostle--"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13:1, 2.)

If we have any inward witness that we may fear God; if any faith in his dear Son; if any sense of our sinfulness and ignorance, our earnest, our unceasing desire should be to be led into the truth of God by God himself. "Open you mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law;" "Lead me into your truth and teach me; on you do I wait all the day;" "What I know not, teach you me;" "Give me understanding, and I shall live"--such and similar petitions should be continually rising up out of our hearts and lips, and ascending to the courts of heaven perfumed by the prevailing intercession of the great High Priest over the house of God. The word of promise encourages us to present those supplications unceasingly before the throne. "If any of you lack wisdom," it says for our encouragement, "let him ask of God, that gives to all liberally and upbraids not; and it shall be given him." And what can be more encouraging for the poor and needy petitioner, waiting at wisdom's door-posts, than the words of the Lord himself--"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-philpot/before-we-can-read-to-our-souls-profit/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net