

## God and His Way

1Timothy 2:1-6

The Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 6, 2018

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

There is a recognition of the truth.

A recognition of the truth is more than simply a knowledge of the truth. I realize that the translation says a knowledge of the truth, but there is a word for knowledge and that word is not here. The word that is here is recognition of the truth. A person can know about the truth and yet not recognize the truth as the truth. A person may even be an expert on the truth and know more about the truth than anyone else and yet at the same time not recognize it to be true. On the other hand there are those people who know very little about the truth, but the little that they know they recognize to be true. Even though those people know very little about the truth they recognize it to be true.

An example of this is Bible scholars. There are Bible scholars who know more about the Bible than I do. They have studied the Bible more intensely and closely than I have. I have other pastoral duties to which I must pay attention. In my vocation I must pay attention not only to what God says in the Bible, but I must also pay attention to you, the congregation whom I serve. If I do not pay attention to both, I cannot be your servant and yet God has made me your servant in my vocation toward you. But there are Bible scholars who do not serve congregations. They have no other vocation, except their families, to distract them from their attention to the Bible. By virtue of this they know more about the Bible than I do. They know and remember more of its content than I do. They understand the grammar and literary forms of the Bible more than I do. They understand the original context more than I do. And yet in spite of the fact that they know more about the Bible than I do, they do not recognize it as the truth. So they have knowledge, but not recognition.

On the other hand, there are people who have relatively little understanding of the Bible. They have never read it in the original languages. They have little understanding of its original context. They cannot find things in the Bible that they would like to find in the Bible. They struggle to remember what the Bible says. And yet these same people who lack such knowledge of the Bible recognize that the Bible is true and they recognize that its central teachings are true. So these people who lack knowledge nevertheless have recognition. They have a recognition of the truth. They recognize the truth as true.

This is why recognition of the truth is a synonym for faith. Faith is not identical to knowledge. Faith involves knowledge, but faith is also beyond knowledge. An infant may have faith, but very little knowledge. An adult may have a lot of knowledge and not have any faith. In fact many times an adult's knowledge inhibits his faith because his knowledge comes from the evil one. This is why we baptize infants because we recognize that faith is more than knowledge. This is why we recognize the faith of people with mental handicaps and challenges. If knowledge were the same thing as faith, then the salvation of a lot of mentally handicapped people would be called into question. But knowledge is not the same thing as faith. Faith involves knowledge and affects knowledge, but faith is not the same thing as knowledge.

Therefore a recognition of the truth as true is the same thing as salvation. That is why in 1Timothy, chapter 2, God wants everyone to be saved and to enter into a recognition of the truth. Being saved and entering into a recognition of the truth is the same thing. Entering into a recognition of the truth and being saved is the same thing. If God has saved you, then He has brought you into a recognition of the truth. If God has brought you into a recognition of the truth, then God has saved you. One is not saved while at the same time not recognizing the truth as the truth.

And this is why God does not always get what He wants.

God has not always gotten what He wanted from the beginning.

Did God want His creatures, made in His image, to rebel against Him? Did God want us to sin? Does God want us to sin now? Does God want there to be sin in the world now? Does God want people to dishonor His name or abandon His Word? Does God want people to dishonor their parents or murder others? Does God want people to commit adultery or steal from each other? Does God want us to lie about each other or covet one another's things? But we do each and every one of those things. Therefore God does not always get His way. Therefore when God desires all people to be saved and to enter into a recognition of the truth you can guarantee that He is not always going to get His way. He will get His way with some people. Some people will enter into a recognition of the truth and be saved. But other people will not enter into a recognition of the truth and be saved. As our Lord has correctly taught us, "The light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil."

The recognition of the truth involves many things, but one of the things that it involves is recognizing sin as sin. To recognize the truth as true is to recognize sin as sin and that includes your own sin. And our Lord points out that men do not want to do this. They stay in the darkness hoping that they will not have to confess their sin as sin and thus they fail to recognize the truth of their sins and thus they fail to recognize the truth.

The one who recognizes the truth agrees with God on what sin is. Whatever God calls sin, is what the person who recognizes the truth will call sin. If the person in question does not recognize what God calls sin as sin, he does not recognize the truth and therefore is not saved. And God does not get His way.

When God gives people His Word and as a result of His Word they recognize that their sin is sin, then God has brought about the recognition of the truth in their hearts. When He does this they are saved.

And this is not just about sin. This is also about the mediator. The mediator between God and man is the man, Christ Jesus. The man, Christ Jesus, is the mediator between God and man because He is the one who gave Himself as a ransom on behalf of all.

Lost mankind had to be ransomed in order to be saved. Lost mankind had enslaved itself to sin. By enslaving itself into sin, mankind earned for itself the wrath of God. Mankind moved itself into the category of sins and by doing so moved itself into a category against which God was and is angry. It is a deadly thing to fall into the hands of the living God for our God is a consuming fire.

Therefore mankind had to be ransomed from the wrath of God. In order to ransom lost mankind from the wrath of God, Jesus had to pay the ransom. The ransom that had to be paid was enduring hell and death for all of the mankind. That is what Jesus did when He died upon the cross. When He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He gave testimony that He was enduring the very heart and depth of hell. He had lost communion with God His Father. Then He consummated His payment of ransom to the Father on our behalf when He died. So everything that we owed the Father because of our sins, Jesus paid for us when He died upon the cross. In this way Jesus has become a ransom for all. His death was for all so His ransom is for all. He ransomed everyone. In this way Jesus has become the only mediator between God and man because He is the only one who made ransom for lost mankind. This is the truth. Therefore the recognition of the truth involves recognizing not only one's sin, but also one's savior from sin, the mediator Christ Jesus.

I could go on and on, but as long as God has revealed it recognition of its truth as true is the same thing as being saved and being saved is the same thing as recognizing that Jesus is the One man who is

mediator between God and man. Does it involve knowledge? Sure it does. Is it limited to knowledge? No, it isn't. It is also beyond knowledge so that even the very simple can recognize that Jesus is the ransom for all mankind.

And God does not always get His way. I am not here and the Bible is not here to debate philosophical minutiae with you. It is simply a true thing to say that God does not always get His way. If He did we would not be sinners. If He did, then even among the sinners everyone would recognize the truth.

Would you like God to get His way?

It is tempting at this point in any discussion of the will of God to begin to philosophize about God and let the philosophers take over the conversation. The problem with philosophers taking over the conversation is that so many of them do not recognize the truth. If they do not recognize the truth, how can you trust them to talk about God? They will not speak about Him correctly. So let us lay aside all of the philosophical questions about God's omnipotence and man's supposed free will and all of that and let us just go with what the Bible actually says. We do recognize it as truth, do we not?

Well, then would you like God to get His way?

Would you like all men to be saved and to enter into a recognition of the truth? Do you want what God wants? If you do, then pray for kings and for every governing authority for this is pleasing to God.

What?

In order for people to recognize the truth they need the implanted Word. We talked about that last Sunday. I would have expected God to have said that we should pray for missionaries or that we should pray for pastors both of whom bring the implanted Word to people so that they may be turned away from filth and malice to the salvation of their souls! I would have expected God to have prayed that individual Christians according to their callings speak the implanted Word to their neighbors. Doesn't faith come from the report and the report from the Word of Christ? Doesn't that mean that a recognition of the truth comes from the report and the report from the Word of Christ? If God wants His implanted Word to bring a recognition of the truth and therefore salvation to all mankind, then why has He commanded us to pray for the government?

The reason is because He knows that you are in possession of the implanted Word. He knows that you have the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He knows that you have the report that will give all mankind a recognition of the truth and He wants you to lead quiet and peaceful lives because if you lead quiet and peaceful lives unpersecuted by the enemies of God, you will speak that Word in your vocations and it will cause men a recognition of the truth. But if society enters into mass chaos or if Christians are persecuted and made illegal and their message shunned then only with difficulty will the Church make known the Word of Christ so that men may recognize the truth and be saved.

So pray for kings and all those in authority. Pray for the President no matter what his political persuasion. When the President was elected my facebook feed was flooded with memes that said that hoping that the president failed was like hoping that the pilot of the plane we are all flying on would fail. I would point out to the Trump supporters in the congregation that that statement is just as true whether the man in office is named Trump or Obama. And in 1 Timothy, chapter 2, God commanded the people of Ephesus under Timothy's leadership to pray for the Roman state, one which did and would oppress the Christians and persecute their message. Pray for your legislators. Pray for your judges. Pray for your governor and all of their cabinets and aids. Pray for them that they may execute their office of punishing

those who do wrong and praising those who do right that society may operate and function in a way that grants you a quiet and peaceful life.

On days like this when the weather is good and you folks are scurrying to complete your vocations a quiet and peaceful life is the next thing to heaven and given that heaven is actually everlasting life in the new heaven and the new earth a quiet and peaceful life on a beautiful day is a foretaste of the life to come. And with that quiet and peaceful life the report of the Word of Christ is given and people come to a recognition of the truth.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.