

Accurately Handling the Scriptures 04-18-21

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul gives Timothy (and us) an important command. We are to be diligent to present ourselves to God as workmen. Our work product is something we should not be ashamed to have inspected, as seen in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. How can we be such workmen? By accurately handling the Word of Truth, which is the Scriptures, the Word of God. How do we accurately handle the word of Truth?

There are many day to day tasks and efforts in which we use tools to accomplish. We cook with a stove; we drive with a car; we work with a computer. Each one of these tool requires an accurate handling in order to bring about the results we desire. As well, we also understand that by mishandling them, we can even imperil our lives and the lives of others. Accurately handling the Word is not too different than this. In fact, there are a number of metaphors in the Bible that relate the Word to tools we need. Looking at these images will help us to accurately handle the Truth.

First, we are told repeated that the Word of God is a sword (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). A sword is the offensive weapon of a soldier, and Christians are soldiers of Christ. A sword that is mishandled is dangerous to the user and his allies. Thus we must be trained to handle the word in such a way as to direct it to our adversary.

Second, the word is described as a building foundation in Luke 6:47. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus concluded with a wise man and a foolish man building their homes on a Rock (the Word of God) and on sand. It may be easier to build on the sand, but it will never stand. But those who build their hopes and future on the Word of God will not be destroyed in the day of trial.

Third, the Word of God is described often as food (1 Peter 2:2-4). When Jesus was being tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Satan sought for Jesus to turn stones to bread. Jesus declared “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Mat. 4:4). In John 6, Jesus described His words as the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 63). As we like the Israelites wander in the wilderness, we are sustained from the bread from heaven, the Manna that is the Word of God. This alone is how we live.

Fourth, the Word of God is described as a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Imagine walking through a dark cave; with a light you can safely navigate, but without you are likely to be severely injured or even die. We are constantly told that our world is in darkness (Rom. 2:19, 1 Peter 2:9, Eph. 5:8). The Word of God is the light that we use to walk; when we are walking in the light, we are in fellowship with Christ (1 John 1).

Fifth, the word of God is called a fire in Jeremiah 23:29. Fires are important if you are trying to survive in the wilderness. You need them for heat and for food. Yet we all know that they represent a great danger as well; mishandled we can be severely injured or even die. God told Jeremiah that the Word was a fire in the mouth of Jeremiah, and that the people were kindling that the Word would set on fire (Jer.5:14).

Sixth, the word of God is likened to a mirror in James 1:23-25. We all use mirrors to examine ourselves and to adjust our appearances. The Word of God is a mirror with which we adjust our spiritual behavior to come into conformance with God. James goes on to say we must be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Finally, the Word of God is often called a seed, as in the parable of the soils in Mark 4. Consider that a seed contains all of the information necessary for a seed to become a plant, a living thing. All that is added is soil (the heart) and water. When one is baptized, they are receiving the Word (James 1:21, Acts 2:41). So it is that we are born again by this seed (1 Peter 1:23).

Jesus said that the Word of God would judge all of us. This is like saying that our eternal judgment is an open book test, and the Word of God is that book. We must accurately handle it in order to be workmen who need not be ashamed in that day.