

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
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The Sermon: MY SPIRIT IS TRUTH

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants, Section 83, Paragraph 7.

The word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world: and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit; and everyone that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit, cometh unto God, even the Father. The whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me; for whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin.....

My voice is Spirit, my Spirit is truth: truth abideth
and hath no end; and if it be in you ye shall abound.

There is in every man, and in every living thing, some spark of intelligence. If life is to continue, that life must always conform to its environment, to things as they are, to truth, to God. Intelligence is the light of truth -- the capacity or faculty which enables men to see and know and apprehend truth. It is not created or made, but partakes of the nature of God himself; for the glory of God is intelligence. As an omniscient, omnipotent being, there is no division, no disunity, no lack of harmony in him. He is in perfect adjustment with things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. Intelligence is a manifestation of the Spirit of God -- of his light and power -- which fill the immensity of space and hold together every atom of matter. God's Spirit of light and truth and intelligence enlightens every man who comes into the world, at some time, in some way, and to some degree.

This intelligence, which is the light, truth, and power of God, is what enables men to apprehend truth, to judge correctly between truth and error. When truth is preached by the power and Spirit of God, the listeners receive truth and know it to be truth by the operation of that same Spirit. Truth embraceth truth. Truth is reality - the final and absolute reality. It is a knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come.

Right or moral action is adjustment, obedience, or conformity to reality. The ultimate reality is God. His Spirit is truth, light, intelligence, power, under-

standing. No man can live in God's world or God's universe and ignore or defy him. Sooner or later he will have to face God's reality.

If God's Spirit of truth enlightens every man, fills all space, and controls each atom of matter, then why do not all men see truth alike? For two reasons. First, because some forms of truth are only partly apprehended. We lack capacity to know and skill to understand, to comprehend. We know the truth, but not the full truth; therefore we do not see clearly or understand fully. A fourth or fifth grade scholar has not the background or preparation to study chemistry or physics or higher mathematics.

The second reason has to do with man's agency -- his right of free choice. He may choose to obey God or to disobey. He may choose to be humble and teachable, or haughty or overbearing and sure that he knows all the answers. It is difficult -- sometimes to the point of impossibility -- for a man filled with the spirit of error to say "I am wrong." It is almost as difficult for him to admit ignorance -- to say "I don't know," or "I don't understand." When we do not have the Spirit of truth, we want to appear to be more wise or more learned or more sophisticated than we are. Therefore we often reject new truth -- because it would force us to admit that we have been wrong in the past -- because it would force us to admit that we are still ignorant, immature babes before the vast body of truth waiting to be discovered, understood, and applied.

One of the twelve men nearest Jesus during his three years of earthly ministry proved to be a traitor. To the others with all their opportunities to learn, Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John 16:12,13) The same promise in somewhat different language is contained in John 14:15,16,17: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth..." Notice that the prerequisite for receiving this Spirit of truth as an abiding Comforter, is obedience to that portion of light already received -- "keeping his commandments." There would be no point and no sense in giving more truth to a man who would not follow what he already had.

If we are willing to follow the Spirit of truth, life will be a constant revelation of more truth. "He shall teach you all things...." "He shall guide you into all truth." "The day will come when you shall comprehend even God (the ultimate and absolute truth); being quickened in him, and by him." "But wo be unto him that saith, We have received, and we need no more. And in fine, wo unto all who tremble and are angry because of the truth of God, For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth, lest he should fall." (Book of Mormon, II Nephi, 12:32-34) The man who is following the Spirit of truth is sure of his foundation. He can receive any amount of new truth and build it into his life and character. The man whose life is a rejection of the Spirit of truth is built on a sandy foundation. He fears to hear any new truth, lest its weight should crumble his foundations, and he should fall. "My voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth: truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you it shall abound. And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you, and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things." (Doctrine and Covenants 85:17,18)

The Spirit of truth leads us to reject evil, sin, and error -- to adjust to reality, which is to obey the laws and commandments of God. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," Jesus said to Pilate (John 18:37) "He that is of God heareth God's words." (John 8:47) "Light and truth forsaketh that evil one." But men whose deeds and whose hearts are

evil will not come to the light of truth lest their deeds be made manifest. Because God has given man his agency, his right to free moral will and free choice, no man is compelled to follow truth. He may rebel, deny, reject, disdain truth and the Spirit of truth. But if he does, he is ignoring reality; he is fighting a losing battle, and eventually he will have to admit defeat.

Much learning is not necessarily a guarantee that a man is following the Spirit of truth, Many years ago I learned a little calendar motto which said, "It's better not to know so much than to know so many things that ain't so." Paul's second letter to Timothy mentions certain men who were "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," and characterized them as "men of corrupt minds" who "resist the truth." When a man deliberately rejects truth, and turns his back on God, he begins to lose his capacity to apprehend truth and to know God. When he is in that condition or that frame of mind, he may learn truth from now till doomsday, and it will only make him a bigger liar. When the light that is in him becomes darkness, how great is that darkness!

Evil always rebels against truth. Speaking of the devil, Jesus said "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." (John 8:44-45) When a man rejects truth, he is following the spirit of the devil who was a liar from the beginning. When a man says that he has all the truth he needs, he has lost the Spirit of truth whose purpose it is to teach all things and guide into all truth. Especially when one is guilty of sin does he need to give humble heed to the Spirit of truth? The Book of Mormon says: "The guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth him to the very center."

Are you following the Spirit of truth, or the spirit of lies and error? Is your light increasing each day as the Spirit leads you into all truth? When you carelessly or inadvertently fall into error or sin, do you humbly heed the Spirit of truth which corrects and chastens, or do you rebel against it and justify yourself in sin? When you learn, do you "come to a knowledge of the truth?" "My voice is Spirit, my Spirit is truth," says Jesus. "Truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you ye shall abound."