

Every Text a Sacred Trust: Privileged Stewards of the Mysteries of God

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Introduction

- We are “amazingly graced” to have the Word.
- The Word is a conduit of grace for us personally in our walk with God.
- The Word as the source of grace for believers is a “sacred trust” for us as men of the Word.
- Let’s begin simply by letting the Word speak to us about itself.

I. A DIVINE PERSPECTIVE ON OUR SACRED TRUST—VALUE BEYOND IMAGINATION.

➤ See Psalm 119:97.

A. What biblical theology teaches us about our Sacred Trust.

1. Similes/metaphors in Scripture that teach about our Sacred Trust.

- The Word is of greater value than refined gold.

➤ See Psalm 19:10a.

- The Word is more satisfying to the soul than the sweetest honey to our taste.
 - See Psalm 19:10b.
- The Word provides guidance in life like a lamp bringing light in darkness.
 - See Psalm 119:105.
 - See Proverbs 6:23.
- The Word protects the believer from spiritual harm like a shield does in battle.
 - See Psalm 119:114.
- The Word gives and sustains spiritual life like water sustains plant life.
 - See Isaiah 55:10-11.
- The Word destroys and purifies from evil like fire destroys material substance.
 - See Jeremiah 23:29a.
- The Word shatters falsehood and spiritual pretense like a hammer does a rock.
 - See Jeremiah 23:29b.

- The Word provides nourishment for the soul like bread for the body.
 - See Matthew 4:4.

- The Word defends and allows believers to win the victory in spiritual battle, like a sword does in military conflict.
 - See Ephesians 6:17.
 - See Hebrews 4:12.
 - See Revelation 1:16.

- The Word reveals the truth about us and about God, like a mirror that reflects the face before it.
 - See II Corinthians 3:18.
 - See James 1:23-25.

- The Word is a spiritual force illustrated by the power and sound of many waters.
 - See Revelation 1:15.

2. Statements that teach about our Sacred Trust as a panacea for all spiritual ills and provision for all spiritual needs.

- Our Sacred Trust brings prosperity.
 - See Deuteronomy 6:3, see also vv. 1-2.
 - See Joshua 1:8-9.
 - See Psalm 1:2-3.
- Our Sacred Trust restores the soul.
 - See Psalm 19:7a.
- Our Sacred Trust gives wisdom.
 - See Psalm 19:7b.
- Our Sacred Trust causes joy through righteousness.
 - See Psalm 19:8a.
- Our Sacred Trust increases zeal.
 - See Psalm 19:8b.
- Our Sacred Trust develops the fear of the Lord which preserves life as it should be.
 - See Psalm 19:9a.

- Our Sacred Trust gives discernment.
 - See Psalm 19:9b.
- Our Sacred Trust warns against evil and sin.
 - See Psalm 19:11a.
- Our Sacred Trust rewards through obedience.
 - See Psalm 19:11b.
- Our Sacred Trust revives the soul.
 - See Psalm 119:28.
- Our Sacred Trust provides spiritual life and strength.
 - See John 6:63.
- Our Sacred Trust makes the believer holy.
 - See John 17:17.
- Our Sacred Trust imparts grace.
 - See Acts 20:32.
- Our Sacred Trust engenders saving faith.
 - See Romans 10:17.

- Our Sacred Trust provides endurance and hope.
 - See Romans 15:4.
- Our Sacred Trust provides case studies in order to avoid sinful living.
 - See I Corinthians 10:11-12.
- Our Sacred Trust provides everything a servant of God needs for service.
 - See II Timothy 3:16-17.
- Our Sacred Trust provides compelling examples of faith in God.
 - See Hebrews 11:1-2, 6.
- Our Sacred Trust causes the new birth.
 - See I Peter 1:23-25.
- Our Sacred Trust transforms a Christian's character into Christ-likeness.
 - See II Peter 1:4.

B. What the *primary text* about our Sacred Trust teaches us—I Cor. 4:1-5.

- 1. What is *personal* about it (v. 1, “Let a man say of us....”).**
- 2. What is *foundational* for it (v. 1, “As servants of Christ....”).**
 - “ὡς ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ”
- 3. What is *central* to it (vv. 1b-2, “as stewards of the mysteries of God...faithful”).**
 - The role: “οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ”
 - The quality: “ἵνα πιστός τις εὑρεθῇ”
- 4. What is *peripheral-trivial* with reference to it (vv. 3-4).**
- 5. What is *eternal* about it (v. 5).**

II. BEST PRACTICES FOR EXECUTING OUR SACRED TRUST.

A. Owning the text—I Corinthians 2:9-16.

- 1. Working for in-depth penetration of the truth through aggressive anticipation of the inheritance that awaits (v.9).**
 - A Christian epistemology – beyond the senses and reason.

2. *Expecting supernatural illumination of the truth by faith in the Spirit's operation (vv. 10-13).*

- “τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ”

3. *Meditating for spiritual application as the goal of truth understood (vv. 14-16).*

- “ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει [τὰ] πάντα”

B. Responding to the text—Acts 24:16.

1. *With constant diligence.*

- “ἐν τούτῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ”

2. *With a carefully listening ear to the voice of conscience.*

- “συνείδησιν”

3. *With an impossibly high standard, on purpose.*

- “ἀπρόσκοπον...πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους”

C. Proclaiming the text—II Timothy 4:1-5.

1. *As for an audience of One (v. 1).*

2. *As the central act of your ministry life validated by other acts (vv. 3-5).*

3. As Word-based (v. 2, “Preach the word”).

- “κήρυξον τὸν λόγον”

4. As an urgent obligation (v. 2, five aorist imperatives).

5. As always thoroughly prepared (v. 2, “be instant in season and out of season”).

- “ἐπίστηθι εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως”

6. As balanced in applicatory content (v. 2, “reprove, rebuke, exhort”).

- “ἔλεγξον, ἐπιτίμησον, παρακάλεσον”

7. As filled with compassion (v. 2, “with all longsuffering and doctrine”).

- “ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμίᾳ καὶ διδαχῇ”

III. CRITICAL PRIORITIES IN THE EXERCISE OF OUR SACRED TRUST.

- See Jude 3-4.

A. A fixed body of truth is an essential quality of our Sacred Trust (v. 3, “The faith which was once delivered unto the saints”).

1. *Grasping the Apostolic tradition as a three-fold corpus of truth.*

- Orthodoxy
- Orthopraxy
- Orthopathy

2. *Truth is always truth, but it must be prioritized.*

- Some truth is weighty.
- Some truth is less weighty.
 - See Matthew 23:23.
 - See I Timothy 2:1.
 - See Matthew 22:36-40.
 - See Revelation 2:4-5.
- Some truth is absolutely clear and unequivocal for all.
 - See John 8:32.
 - See John 17:17.
 - See 1 John 1:3.

- Some truth is absolutely clear and unequivocal for the individual on the basis of conscience.
 - See Romans 14:5b.
 - See Romans 14:10b-12.

If you are prepared to die on every “hill of truth,” no matter what its size, you will die early in the battle for spiritual influence for the kingdom and for the glory of God. That spiritual strategy is not wise, and it is not biblical.

3. Any teaching that suggests there is a growing body of authoritative truth must be opposed vigorously.

- A case study in error: failure to distinguish between Scripture meaning and application, and grasping the authority of *both*.
 - See Philippians 1:9-10.
 - See Hebrews 5:13-14.
- A case study in error: continuationism—the dangerous door for *more revelation*.

“All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today, and are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced.”

Statement of Faith
Sovereign Grace Ministries
[Official website accessed,
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- See II Corinthians 12:12.
- See Hebrews 2:4.
- See Ephesians 2:20.
- The church (Ephesians 1:22)...his body (Ephesians 1:23)...the household of God (Ephesians 2:19)...an holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:21).

The key question: How often do you lay the foundation of a building?

B. Defense of whatever is under attack of God’s truth is the mark of true fidelity to our Sacred Trust.

- A perennial problem of a perversion of terms—a different grace.

“...there are grace killers on the loose....Legalism was my security, and making certain that others marched to my cadence was a major part of my daily agenda.”

Charles Swindoll
The Grace Awakening (Dallas: Word, 1990), xiv.

- See Jude 4
- A twisting of the central person—the imaginary Jesus.
 - See Jude 4.
- Another gospel—a New Testament narcissism.
 - See Galatians 1: 6, 9.

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ....” Martin Luther

**C. A willingness to struggle for the Faith:
a crucial *orthopathy* leading to an
essential *orthopraxy*.**

- “ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ...πίστει”
- A theology of antipathy.

➤ See Ephesians 5:10-11.

Conclusion

Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, captured the essence of where our hearts must be as we carry out our stewardship of the mysteries of God. We must hear him carefully, with a willingness to embrace the spirit he commends, especially as it concerns our Sacred Trust, the Word of God.

“There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right....”

“Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proven. If the soldier flinches at that one point, his steadiness on all other battlefields becomes mere flight and disgrace.”

As we glory and rejoice in our Sacred Trust, the Revelation of God, let us be faithful stewards, feeders of the people of God with the Truth. Let us fight on, defending the Truth at every point at which it may be attacked. The Omnipotent One, Who does not need our aid, has entrusted us with this elevating and demanding task.