



“Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me!”
Psalm 43:3a

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN CHURCH

There is an old realtors’ joke, “What are the three most important things in real estate? Location. Location. Location.” It makes a point. Paint color, flooring, even kitchen cabinets can all be changed. They are secondary in importance, at best.



We often look at a church for its secondary things: Does it have a good nursery? Is there a counseling office? Is it actively engaging the community? Now, to be sure, none of those are wrong in and of themselves. But should they be the primary basis on which we evaluate a church?

Paul recognized that Timothy, as the solo pastor of a small church, had only so much time and energy,

and that he had to prioritize. So the Apostle was not joking when he said, “Devote yourself to the public

reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13 NIV). Paul told Timothy to “let God’s word speak for itself, declare God’s word with authority, and instruct people how to understand God’s word.” What were the three most important things in church? Scripture. Scripture. Scripture.

We may not offer all that our larger brethren do, but we encourage you to avail yourselves—to devote yourselves—to our scripture-saturated worship, our Bible-based Sunday school, and our mid-week Bible studies. Scripture. Scripture. Scripture.

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SHORE HARVEST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

EXISTS TO GLORIFY GOD BY EQUIPPING ALL PEOPLE TO KNOW HIM BETTER, LOVE HIM MORE, AND WORSHIP HIM ALWAYS.

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SOLA FIDE

FAITH ALONE

By Elder Conrad Judy

The anniversary of the Protestant Reformation is October 30th. The disagreement was not about whether faith was necessary for justification—Protestants and Roman Catholics agreed, and still do agree, that faith is required for justification. The debate centered around the cause of justification: Is faith alone the instrument of justification or are works included as well?

The reformed protestant church, in keeping with its commitment to the Bible as the authority in all matters of faith and life, emphasizes that justification is by faith alone. The Bible is clear that the faith by which we are justified is a gift of grace, from the Sovereign God (**Eph 2:8-9**, *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is*

The Bible is clear that the faith by which we are justified is a gift of grace, from the Sovereign God

the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.). Our best efforts can never be good enough to earn salvation, but God declares us righteous for Christ's sake. We receive that faith through grace alone. Faith alone, by grace alone.

Grace alone means that God loves, forgives, and saves us not because of who we are or what we do, but because of the work of Christ completed on the Cross and validated by His resurrection. We are not saved by obeying a list of do's and don'ts, but by grace through faith in Christ. Our salvation is secure and in God's hands. That's Good News: the Gospel.

The Scriptures point to these truths. The following are a succinct presentation of the need for a savior and Christ as the Savior as found in Romans.

Romans 3:23 *"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."*

Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still*

sinner, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Romans 8:1 *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ..."*

Romans 10:9 *"...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved..."*

These verses speak to believers as foundational truths for our salvation. Perhaps more importantly, they are useful tools for us to share the Good News with our family, friends and to others that the Lord arranges for us to witness. We are called to be prepared to do so: *always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and*

keep a good conscience (1 Peter 3:15b-16a)

So, here we stand, the basis of justification is faith alone. Any "good" that we do plays no part in our salvation (**Rom 3:28**, and **Eph 2:10**, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them*). Our good works are prepared for us by God, not by ourselves.

In conclusion, if we are to be true to Scripture, we must maintain that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by faith alone and that our right standing before God is the result of His declaration, not as a result from any righteousness we possess in ourselves. And we are called to reach an unsaved world to bring the Gospel to all. **Mark 16:15** *And He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

References: Ligonier Ministries – www.ligonier.org
The Gospel Coalition - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals - <https://www.alliancenet.org/>

MISSIONS update

Bert and Nancy Williams are Shore Harvest supported missionaries to Uganda. They work under the foreign missions arm of our denomination, Mission to the World (MTW). Bert works with Shalom Network—an organization seeking to strengthen and support churches across East Africa. His role is largely in the area of pastor teaching and training.



Nancy works with educators on the primary and secondary level, helping equip them to teach from a Biblical perspective—something allowed even in the state schools.

The Williams were with us Sunday, September 10, for a fellowship lunch and update. A main theme of their update was the desperate need for training and resource materials among the churches and Christian

schools in their area. Professing believers and confessional churches simply lack the knowledge and training to properly implement basic biblical principles of behavior and doctrine among their teachers, deacons, elders, and even pastors. As a result, gospel ministry often stalls.

On a personal note, the Williams have several more church visitations to make this fall and then they plan to return to Uganda at the New Year. Pray for their safe travels while stateside, for a smooth return to Uganda, and for the Lord to raise up supplies, teachers, and the other resources needed to equip the saints of East Africa for effective ministry.

P.S.—They invited us to visit them in Uganda. Hmmm...



shore harvest church

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

1ST & 3RD MONDAYS, 6:30 PM, PANERA BREAD*, EASTON

MATTHEW 24

31 "Consequently you yourselves, that you are murderers of the prophets,

32 "Put up then the me your fathers.

33 "You serpents, you b shall you escape the sm

34 "Therefore" behold, prophets and wise men a than you will kill and c

LUKE 12

now are men; and they have our hearts, and yet God has so much more valuable you are than

25 "And which of you by leaving a single "Probit to be "thing, why are you anxious about it?"

26 "Therefore, do not be anxious about the things of the life, but rather about the things of the soul, for the soul is more valuable than the life.

*We might change location. Stay tuned.



WHAT IS TRUE? HOW DO I KNOW?

by Rev. Scott Shaw

For several years now the public arena in America has been saturated with debates over “fake news,” “the big lie,” and all manner of similar disputes. Now there are claims and counterclaims about criminal activity at the highest levels of our nation. The whole sordid mess can leave our heads spinning and make us despair of ever knowing what is true. The Bible supplies more guidance for such confusing times than most of us realize.

First, the Bible advises wisdom and caution. Jesus warned, “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). God counseled Isaiah: “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread” (Isaiah 8:12). We can honor both admonitions with one simple action—silence. In our conversations



“On social media we can stop repeating every claim we encounter”

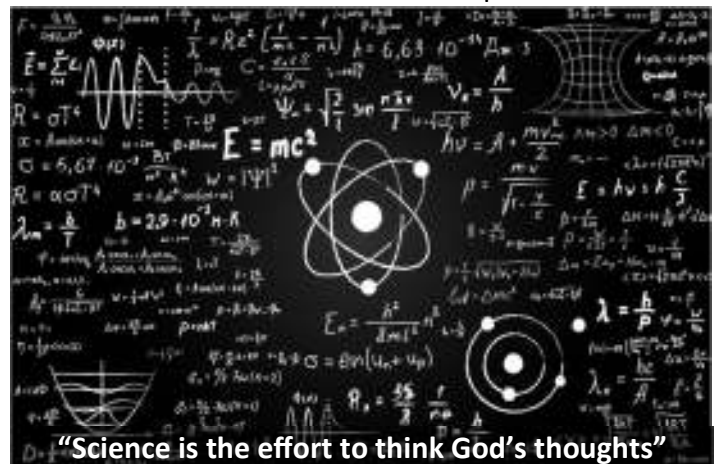
and on our social media we can stop repeating and retweeting (or is it re-Xing now?) every claim we encounter, not calling “conspiracy all that [our friends] call conspiracy.” In that simple act we will be “innocent as doves”—innocent of gossiping, of false accusations, etc. Simply by not liking, thumbing, clicking, or conversing about every titillating tidbit, we can avoid a fall into the pit of untruth.

But the Bible goes further, telling us not only how to avoid untruth, but also guiding us into truth. First and foremost, there is the Bible itself. It is truth. It is



the definitive, unfailing source of ultimate and transcendent truth. We must not waiver on the authority or inerrancy of Scripture. There can be no hope of an all-encompassing, wholistic view of truth without first grasping the essential nature of God’s Holy Word. It alone is perfect in all it says and all it directs. *Sola Scriptura*.

And as a consequence of the Bible’s teaching, science is a good and necessary pursuit of truth. Science is, after all, a methodology for uncovering truths hidden in nature and Psalm 19 tells us those are truths *about God*. How could we, then, ignore the handiwork of a loved one something to love? Should we not love God’s creation? And in exploring it, do we not learn about Him? It is no coincidence that the modern scientific method developed in Christian



“Science is the effort to think God’s thoughts”

society and was, for its first three centuries, largely dominated by Christians. Science is, to paraphrase the German astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler, “An effort to think God’s thoughts

*Does NOT mean we have to be scientists.

after Him.”

The Bible sets forth another way by which we might discover truth. No sooner had God emancipated His people than he set up *courts* among them. In fact, courts were introduced in Israel (Exodus 18) even before the law (Exodus 20)! And the initial purpose of civil courts in God’s view of corporate life was for the settling of disputes (Exodus 18:16). When disagreements arose over property



(“It’s my goat!”) or propriety (“She said what about me in public?”), the courts were the determiners of truth. Contemplate that for a moment: *God ordained courts as the determiners of truth*. Once the court ruled, “The goat in question belongs to Mrs. Smith,” it established the reality upon which the society was to operate. From that moment forward *the goat was Mrs. Smith’s*. The same is true today. A man is a murderer once the court says so. In God’s design for civil society, the rulings of the courts determine truth. It is not the inerrant truth of Scripture, nor is it the repeatable and verifiable truth of science, but it is still to be for God’s people the basis upon which they act, make decisions, understand reality, etc. Thus, for us,

as Christians, the answers to swirling questions are often more accessible than we realize: “Is he really a cheater?” *What have the courts said?* “Who is the rightful office holder?” *What have the courts said?* “What really happened on that day?” *What do the courts say?*

Accepting the position of the courts as settling these matters is not a popular position in American society on either side of the political spectrum. Our loyalty, however, should be to Providence, not party. Isaiah understood the challenge this presents. By “not call[ing] conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy” (8:12) Isaiah was going to run afoul of popular culture; he was going to be at odds with his friends, family, etc. He was, in effect, going to be the only one on his social media platform not participating in the conversation. He was going to be left out. And his silence might get him ostracized, even get him called a “RINO”—Righteous in Name Only. Isaiah was living a difficult proposition.

But it is not as if God did not know this. And so that Isaiah would not fret needlessly over inconsequential things, God told him what he really needed to worry about: “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. ¹³But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ¹⁴And he will become a sanctuary.” (Isaiah 8:12-14 ESV)

You and I need to fear God more than our political party, more than our Facebook followers, more than our friends, even more than our families (Luke 14:26). When we do, “[God] will become a sanctuary.”

PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE, “WHAT IF THEY’RE WRONG?” IS ON PAGE 7

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

TWO

MONDAY, 6:30 PM
SEPTEMBER 18

Led by Janet Siar

Blessed: Experiencing the Promise of the Book of Revelation

By Nancy Guthrie

Poehlman Fellowship Hall
Shore Harvest Church

MEETINGS

THURSDAY, 10:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 21

Led by Janet Siar

Blessed: Experiencing the Promise of the Book of Revelation

By Nancy Guthrie

Poehlman Fellowship Hall
Shore Harvest Church

ONE BODY

EVERY WOMAN WELCOME



October

October 3—Blythe Eggleston

October 5—Naomi Bair

October 19—Kathy Judy

October 24—Joy Pearl

October 28—Andrew Shaw

November

November 4—Wanda Mixon

November 20—Brad Sears

December

December 9—Julie Poehlman

December 11—Bill Webb

December 16—Nancy Sears



October

October 15—Tom & Julie Poehlman

October 19—Bill & Bette Webb

October 22—Wyatt & Christen Kessler

December

December 22—Martie & Dennis Callaghan

YOUR FAVORITE SUNDAY AFTERNOON!



Is just around the corner! **October 29, 2023**, we will have our picnic, bonfire, games, devotional, sing along, and all the other things that make this a great event. Mark your calendar now and watch for details in the bulletin.

BUT WHAT IF THEY'RE WRONG?

PART 1 OF THIS ARTICLE, "WHAT IS TRUE? HOW DO I KNOW?" IS ON PAGE 4

Okay, Pastor, science can reveal truth, and the courts are ordained by God to judge what is true (see "What Is True?" page 4), but neither is perfect. What if they get it wrong? For that matter, the Bible is inerrant, but our interpretation of the Bible is not. So how do we live?

The point is valid and needs a response. The answer is, "We do the best we can, with the knowledge we have, so long as we do not knowingly sin." Examples might help us.

For decades it seemed obvious that a high cholesterol diet must be a major contributor to high blood cholesterol. And so cutting back on the bacon and eggs was an appropriate application of the Sixth Commandment (see Westminster Larger Catechism, #135). Turns out, diet has very little impact on blood cholesterol. Science got that one wrong (for which I



thank God routinely). But to live as if there was no truth to science would be to condemn thousands to death because we doubt bacteria cause disease, or because it was merely a "coincidence" that Dr.

Edward Jenner's inoculations prevented smallpox.

On the other hand, the science (as yet, still very much debated) which argues for sexual orientation being inborn might be true—but we must not live according to society's wrong application of the science. As conservative, Bible-believing Christians we have known for centuries that sin is a natural part of the human condition. And that sin has corrupted every part of our being—biology included—is an essential

aspect of Reformed Theology (total depravity). Thus, for us, it ought not be surprising if one day it is shown that sexual orientation is genetic. But that doesn't make it okay! To live with that conclusion—that all natural things must be good—is sin.

And in civil society, courts can—and do—get things wrong, calling as true that which is not. But we have to live as if their rulings are true. Thus, when the courts decide a close presidential election, their decision determines the truth for our country. And so a Christian who voted for Al Gore in 2000 was not sinning by respecting and honoring George Bush as president. Quite the contrary, it would have been sin not to. Continuing to deny his legitimacy would have been a rejection of the court. And to reject the governance ordained by God is to rebel against God (Romans 13:2). Regardless of one's personal beliefs about that election, the right thing to do was honor Bush as president. The courts said he was.



It is not easy living under authority. A public health mandate might turn out to be based on flawed science. An office holder might be someone we believed lost the election. When we respect those rulings and live as if they are true, we do not sin. When we deny such decisions, deride them, disrespect the decision-makers, and live as if they are untrue, we are prideful, imaging our knowledge, wisdom, and insight to be superior to those ordained by God. And pride is sin. Even when the conduits of truth get it wrong, we are (usually) better off to live as if they got it right.

Meet Jerome



HIS LIFE

Jerome (*ca.* 345-420) was born and raised in Slovenia and appears to have converted to Christianity around age 20. He spent most of his adult life in study in the Holy Land. The output of his writings is second only to Augustine of Hippo among the early church fathers. His life of study was financed by a number of wealthy and connected women in Rome. He was, in fact, often criticized for the frequency with which he wrote to and about Christian women. For his part, he was fond of reminding his critics that Jesus was supported by several wealthy women!

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Jerome is best known for his Latin translation of the Scriptures, known as “The Vulgate.” It was notable for two main reasons: First, the existing Latin versions were archaic and he wanted the Bible in the common language. “Vulgate” means “common.” Second, the existing versions translated the Old Testament from Greek (the Septuagint) and so they were a translation of a translation. He used the original Hebrew. Sadly, later church leaders ignored his lead, turning his Vulgate into the basis for translations and keeping it as the standard Bible even after Latin was no longer spoken by ordinary people.

Jerome’s other contributions included advancing Christian ethics and morality in everyday life (particularly the lives of Christian women), calling out the increasingly secularized clergy in Rome, and writing commentaries on most of the Bible, notable for their less Western bias toward the Old Testament. The Lord used him in important and lasting ways.

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SHORE HARVEST NEWSLETTER