

Daily Devotional, June 18, 2020

“Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”, (2 Timothy 2:15, NKJV)

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

This is the duty of every steward of the gospel. It is the duty not just of ministers, but also the duty of every Christian. We are to “**be diligent.**” There ought to be no laziness in our approach to the Word of God, and no half-heartedness in our pursuit of the godly living it prescribes. Christian, “**present yourself approved to God**” by enjoying communion with your Creator through prayer. Be “**a worker.**” Be a doer and not a hearer only of the Word. If you know the truth, teach the truth, and live the truth, there is no cause for shame. Proclaim the Risen God and Savior Jesus Christ from the housetops! If you will not, who will? The world may try to shame you, even calling you narrow-minded, bigoted, or homophobic. But pay no mind to pleasing the worldly crowd. Live your life before an audience of One—Jesus Christ.

Christian friend, make sure you are “**rightly dividing the word of truth.**” Be like the early Christians at Berea, “**in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so**” (Acts 17:11). Lots of folks make a living out of twisting God’s Word. Don’t be deceived by false teachers, or folks with an agenda.

Be careful to understand the context of a verse or passage or book before pulling it out of context, or making it mean what you want to make a point, even a correct biblical point. Using the wrong text to make a right point calls integrity into question, when one’s misinterpretation is easily refuted. Even excellent Bible scholars can fall into this trap. I was concerned to see the following statement on racism signed on by eminent scholars, found at the website evangelicalstatement.com, which reads, “Scripture does not discriminate by color, and, on the most common understanding of Acts 8, the first Gentile convert may have been Black and from Africa.” It is absolutely true that God sees only one human race, “**one blood**”, in Acts 17:26. Racism has no place in Christianity. Christ died for all members of the human race (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2) and offers each one salvation regardless of distinctions (Galatians 3:26-29). But this Ethiopian eunuch “**had come to Jerusalem to worship**” and “**was reading Isaiah the prophet**” (Acts 8:27-28). So, he was a Gentile by birth but was also a proselyte (on some level) to Judaism. Same as those members of the one human race who were converted at Pentecost, whatever skin color they may have

had. In Acts 2:10, we read that “both Jews and proselytes” were present and, reading down through Acts 2:39, getting saved. So he was not the first Jewish proselyte of Gentile birth to be converted, by that line of reasoning. If he was a Gentile and not a Jewish proselyte (very, very, very unlikely given the text and context), then we would have to conclude that he was saved before the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the non-proselyte Gentiles, since that happened later on in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:44-45. I say all this not to split hairs, but to warn against imposing some meaning upon Scripture in order to be patronizing. The seminary doctors could have made exactly the same point by stating it with correct and indisputable Bible interpretation, and not by promoting a dubious interpretation of a text, in order to emphasize a particular point about a specific color of skin. When we use the Bible to speak out against racism and injustice, let’s make sure we do it accurately and clearly, in a way that honors God and His revealed Word to the utmost.

Let us all be found “rightly dividing the word of truth.” It is often strenuous work, and the world, the flesh, and the devil are always trying to distract us from the task. But it is rewarding in the end, because proper understanding of Scripture leads to proper living, and avoiding being ashamed and confounded. The diligent student of the Bible will not have to walk back half-truths, mis-truths, or mis-applications in our own Christian lives, and will be a powerful witness of the faith to others.