

"Say Uncle!"

When I was a child I was usually big for my age...Hard to believe but I was tall and thin...my problem? I hung around with kids a lot older than me.

Do you remember what it meant to "Cry Uncle?" **PHOTO 1** Often I would find myself pinned to ground..knees on my shoulders...and a bigger kid asking me if I surrender...Do you give up? I hated to surrender.

So I would cry uncle...and as soon as they let me up...I would go right back to annoying them. I would run around taunting them...laughing at them for letting me get up...they would have to chase me again...but invariably, it didn't take long but I would get pinned the second time....now things were different.

That Second surrender took longer than the first. No matter how much I cried uncle....they kept me pinned until they were sure I had surrendered. I had stopped the fight...they knew it...and I knew it...I had truly surrendered to their authority.

The same thing happens when you go fishing...I have caught a few fish in my day.

When a fish is hooked...it takes off with all its strength...it fights..turns..twists...struggles...tries to throw the hook...cut the line..dive under rocks...and then there is a moment...you can feel it...the fish gets worn out..it surrenders.

The struggle seems to end and you reel them in. But then next to the boat something happens....they make a second run. The first surrender is the beginning....but it is the second surrender where you know you really have them.

Our walk with Jesus is like that. We struggle and fight with all that we have to maintain our independence, our opinions, our sins, our version of what is really true....But then God has us truly hooked and we surrender...we decide to stop fighting....in faith we surrender to Jesus.

That first surrender is sweet. It is wonderful..we no longer have to fight with God...We surrender to Him and He pulls us toward the boat. We have been saved by Jesus and He is drawing us to Him.

That is where, for many of us, our struggle starts again. As we get close to Jesus we begin to learn what it means to truly follow Him....we learn that He requires a second surrender....and like the fish that finds new energy for a second fight...we do the same.

The first fight makes Him our Savior...the second fight makes Him our Lord.

For many believers this second fight lasts a lifetime. But for others, there is a second surrender...a moment in your life...where you know..you know deep down...that you are truly His.

It is that second surrender that Peter will explore with us today through the Holy Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:20–21 (ESV) 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The morning star, Jesus rises in your heart, and you know first of all...above all else...that Scripture never came from a human.

This is a critical point for Peter and thus he places it first. Peter is transitioning here from who he is to the origin of truth. He has validated his experience...He was on the mountain with Jesus...He saw Him transfigured...but Peter says...even though I have eyewitness testimony of Jesus...it doesn't trump the origin and truth of Scripture.

This is a point that is lost on many in his day and in ours. The origination of Scripture. Peter is concerned about false teachers...Gnostics...who will come into the church and teach things that are contrary to the Scriptures. We have them everywhere in the churches today.

But this is what Peter wants to stir up in our memory...People are going to come into the church and they are going to teach that they have new information, a new revelation, a new word from God, a new way of looking at the Scriptures...and these new interpretations are going to contradict the truth in Scripture. These lies, they will claim, are special knowledge. Shown to them and revealed through them.

Peter is concerned that if you think Scripture originated from him...from a human source...then you might incorrectly think this argument is between Peter's version of Truth and the Gnostics opinion of truth.

This is so prevalent in our churches today that we have become numb to it. Our churches are full of people who have opinions on what truth should be and what God should have said in Scriptures. They teach their opinions as gospel instead of God's truth as Gospel.

Peter wants to make sure that when we give our opinion as if it carries more weight than scripture...we are not challenging him...we are challenging God.

Peter told them and us that we have the prophetic word...the truth of God spoken through the prophets and fulfilled by Jesus...we have that word...that truth. Not just the Old Testament prophets but the entire Old Testament. The fully revealed truth of God from God Himself.

The prophetic word (Scripture) is more complete, more permanent, and more authoritative than the experience of anyone. More specifically, the Word of God is a more reliable verification of the teachings about the person, atonement, and second coming of Christ than even the genuine first hand experiences of the apostles themselves.

Peter wants to make sure that we are crystal clear in our understanding. He uses words that they would fully understand...He uses images of Sailing.

The Holy Scriptures...every one of them...every word...did not originate from man. That is why they are HOLY SCRIPTURES. Peter says they were written by man...in that man put the pen to paper...but they were scribes of God Himself.

He spoke and they wrote. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit just as a ship is propelled by the wind. The Holy Spirit guided, directed and inspired each and every word...and they were carried along as they wrote.

Often writing words that made no sense to them...prophetic words of times to come...words that were non sense to them...but they wrote them down anyway. Why? Because these were not their words or their ideas about God. This is God's Truth...God revelation of Himself to us...Not everything we may wish to know..but everything we need to know.

And in a few chapters....even Peter said we will surrender to it even if we don't understand it. Speaking of the writings of Paul....

2 Peter 3:16 (ESV) 16 As he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Instead of surrendering to Gods' truth...the ignorant twist them...put their opinion on them...spin them...to their own destruction.

Peter in his first book told us that the prophets...that we now understand are carried along by the Holy Spirit...wrote things that they did not understand....they knew that they were writing for future generations.....

1 Peter 1:12 (ESV) 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Notice...it was revealed to them...The Holy Spirit revealed to them that they were serving not themselves. The writings were for others yet to come. They knew....they knew that what they were writing made no sense to them but made sense to God.

John clearly wrote of end times events that He did not fully understand but he as faithful to write exactly what he was directed to write and actually was instructed to leave out some things.

Daniel often did not understand what He was writing.

Daniel 12:8-9 (ESV) 8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

Why is this so important? Because if the origin of Scripture was man....they never would have written down things that made no sense to them. They had ideas, opinions and thoughts, but those never became part of God's Truth. Every word of this book is straight from God Himself...It is His truth...revealed through man...to man.

People often ask me to give my opinion on something. My opinion on everything from tithing...to abortion...to what a sin is...to heaven...to hell...to creation...to evolution...to sexual orientation...to war...to gender roles....you name it...they ask.

And I always answer the same. This is so critical for believers to not only understand but to embrace and act upon. I don't have an opinion on any of those things. When I surrendered to Jesus I surrendered in faith. But the second surrender was almost harder. After we surrender in faith to Jesus Christ for our salvation, true believers must then surrender to His truth. This is a very hard thing to do.

We are so full of our own knowledge...our own opinions...our own view...particularly in the West...we want the salvation that Jesus offers....but we want to keep our version of what truth should be. That is an option that Jesus never gave to His followers. You surrender to me as your Savior and then you must surrender to me as Lord of your life.

When you make Jesus Lord of your life....you no longer have opinions on His truth....His truth is true. After I gave my life to Christ it took me years before I allowed Him to actually be my Lord. I gave up my opinions and surrendered to His truth. God has clearly spoken and as a slave of Jesus Christ the truth that guides my life is not of human origin or opinion. So when people ask my opinion about things God has already settled...I tell them my opinions don't matter I made Jesus my Lord. That is what I tell them....God's truth.

And then they say..."Yeah but..what do you think?" And I tell them "I don't" I just obey.
I shared with you guys a few weeks ago about the impact that a documentary of Billy Graham had on me.

At the beginning of his ministry, Billy Graham was confident that the Bible was the true Word of God. But then he read some authors who did not believe the Bible was the Word of God. And now his good friend Chuck Templeton was telling him that not everything in the Bible was true. So this raised troubling questions for Billy Graham — questions he knew he needed to answer. So what did he do?

Both he and his friend Chuck Templeton were scheduled to speak at a conference in the mountains east of Los Angeles. As they talked between meetings, Chuck openly mocked Billy — "Billy, you're fifty years out of date. People no longer accept the Bible as being inspired the way you do. Your faith is too simple. Your language is out of date. You're going to have to learn the new jargon if you're going to be successful in ministry." Chuck's comments were not only painful, they also shook Billy's confidence in the Bible.

So one evening he went to his room to study God's Word alone. He saw how Jesus taught that the Old Testament was completely true. He studied how Jesus said the stories of Noah and Jonah actually happened as described in the Old Testament. He read all the verses he could find about the Bible's truth and authority. He saw again that the Bible did claim to be the perfectly true Word of God. But he could tell the issue was not yet settled in his heart.

So he left his room and walked out into the forest. It was a warm August night. It was late. The moon was out. He came to a tree stump, where he knelt down, with his Bible on the stump in front of him. And he prayed something like this — "O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution ... I can't answer some of the questions Chuck and others are raising."

But even though he was praying sincerely, he could tell something was still unresolved. And then he said the Holy Spirit finally enabled him to pray — "Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word — by faith! I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word."

Here is what Billy Graham said in his book, *Just as I Am*, "When I got up from my knees at Forest Home that August night, my eyes stung with tears. I sensed the presence and power of God as I had not sensed it in months. Not all my questions were answered, but a major bridge had been crossed. In my heart and mind, I knew a spiritual battle in my soul had been fought and won."

Peter is teaching and Billy Graham experienced what I believe is the second great surrender of every believers life.

Our first surrender is to trust Jesus to become the Lord and Savior of our lives. We accept in faith what Jesus did on the cross. We die to ourselves...to our plans to save ourselves...our plans to excuse our sins...and we trust Jesus in faith. We don't know everything but we trust what Jesus revealed to us about Himself. Our faith in Jesus for our salvation is our first great surrender in the Faith.

But there is a second surrender that sadly many believers never experience. They trust Jesus as their Savior but not as the Lord of their life. They cried uncle for their salvation but they are running around taunting God when it comes to truth. They get close to Jesus after their baptism...but as they realize what is required to truly follow Him...they make a second and stronger run to get away from His truth.

The process that we call Spiritual maturity...that 7 step process we studied a few weeks ago...is really about a growth process of dying to your ideas, opinions and hopes of how things should be...and instead embrace the truth of how God says things are.

You see we want Jesus as our Savior but we don't want Him as our Lord. Because what He says as our Lord trumps anything we think. Once He is truly Lord of your life...you no longer really have opinions in the areas where He has spoken.

My struggle with the authority and truth of Scripture was a battle for many years in my walk with Jesus. I just couldn't accept the idea that after trusting Jesus with my salvation that I was just to turn off my mind...ignore my very enlightened and honestly impressive opinions (joke)...and just believe something because God says it is true.

Did you hear what I just said? Why should I believe something just because God says it is true? Pause here for a moment and let the stupidity of that statement sink in.

On the day that I finally surrendered to allow Jesus to be Lord of my life and to allow His truth to be the undisputed truth of my life...it was like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. Like Billy not all of my questions were answered...but many of my questions no longer needed answers.

To the Western Mind this seems ridiculous. You came to Jesus and turned off your mind. Just became a non-thinking zombie robotically saying "Yes, Master."

Actually...well...yes. In the areas of life where God has clearly spoken...I just accept His truth without thinking and move on. Sounds crazy right? But it sure is freeing. I don't have to waste time trying to make excuses for God. I don't have to waste time trying to add my spin on topics like creation, abortion, tithing, the study of Scripture, praying, homosexuality, gender identity sins, the Sabbath and hundred of others.

I don't get into arguments...I state God's Truth in love...and move on. I don't care what people think about me. Jesus is my Lord...and I actually know it.

He said that if you make me Lord of your life...the world will hate you. They will turn against you. He goes on to say that it is ok because they did the same thing to Him.

So one day, I finally decided to surrender to God's Truth and let Jesus' words become the only truth that I know.

Did Jonah really stay in the large fish for three days? Jesus said so.

Did all the animals really fit on the Ark and did God really literally flood the earth? Jesus said so.

Did God really rain down hail and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said so.

Jesus not only said these things He lived them as an example to us.

Look at how Jesus responds when Satan entices Him to give His opinion and to act on His desires rather than the Fathers...

Luke 4:4 (ESV) 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' "

Luke 4:8 (ESV) 8 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, " 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.' "

Luke 4:12 (ESV) 12 And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Three examples are given to us and each time...When Satan asked Jesus to weigh in with His opinion on what God had said....Jesus began each answer the same...."IT IS WRITTEN"

He didn't say..."well this is how I read it"...or "I used to think this but I have changed my mind and now I think it means this"...Jesus said three of the most powerful words on the planet....IT IS WRITTEN.

Oh if Christians around the globe could only embrace this lesson from Jesus. Even Satan knows the Scriptures can't be argued. Every time Jesus spoke God's truth in Scripture Satan was silenced. Look back at a sin in your life...most likely it started the moment you said to yourself "I know what is written, but I think God would be ok if I...."

We are given three examples, but I believe (this is just my opinion) that Jesus quoted almost the entire bible to Satan during those days. Satan threw EVERY temptation at Jesus...not just these three...and I believe each time Jesus quoted the Holy Truth.

Luke 4:13 (ESV) 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Compare Jesus' response to Satan to that of man. Satan always tries to entice us to add our opinion to the Truth God has already spoken.

Genesis 3:1–3 (ESV) 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

First problem...Eve tries...she attempts to quote God's truth..but it has no power over Satan. Why? Because she misquoted His truth. She says that if she even touches it she will die. God never says that. She has added her opinion...her interpretation...to God's truth. It may have been with good intention, but her words took away the power of God's words. That was the moment Satan knew he had her...and the moment he knows he has us. If she had quoted God's Truth exactly...it would have carried power and Satan would have been forced to back down.

If we change God's truth by adding anything to it...it is no longer God's truth. It is God's truth with our take on it. Once we add or take away anything from Scripture the power is gone.

God's truth is the sword...the only offensive weapon that we are given to fight Spiritual battles. Yet most of us are not holding God's sword..we are holding our own...and our opinions, thoughts, and beliefs have no power in the Spiritual realm.

Satan destroys people who go into battle with their sword instead of God's

Genesis 3:4–5 (ESV) 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Once Eve steps out from under the umbrella of God's truth she is about to get drenched in deception. Watch as she moves from God's truth to her opinion.

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

In that moment, Satan turns from our encourager to our accuser.

Genesis 3:7 (ESV) 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And every time...a believer in Jesus opens their mouth on tempting topics where God has already spoken...Satan knows he has us too.

So...I gave up my opinion on such matters. I still have opinions...strong ones at times..but now they are in the proper place in my life...I keep them to myself...because I now understand what they really are...ramblings of a fool who knows nothing about the things of God.

Creation? It is written.....Abortion? It is written....Assisted suicide? It is written...Tithing? It is written....Paying Taxes? It is written...Obeying the Sabbath? It is written...Homosexuality? It is written....Salvation? It is written....Sin? It is written....Heaven? It is written..Hell? It is written...Second coming? It is written.....Eternity? It is written...

The very words of Jesus still echo from the desert through history in to our hearts today....IT IS WRITTEN. PERIOD. FULL STOP.

There is absolutely nothing left to say.

Communion

Peter has taught us to stir up our memory...To remind us...To reflect..and to remember. Jesus told us to share communion in order to remember all that He has done for us. Communion is a moment to stop and think about what we truly believe and why we believe it. It is a moment where we stop and reflect...we examine ourselves...we surrender once again...fully and completely to Jesus as our Savior....and as our Lord.

Only those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior are to share in communion. Only those who have made Him Lord of your life by surrendering to His truth should take communion. I want you to reflect on that today.

Have you surrendered to Jesus as your Savior...AND as your Lord? If you are putting your spin on His truth...you are in sin...and until you say uncle to His Lordship in your life....communion is not for you. I encourage you to spend this time asking for forgiveness before you come to the table. Remember...it is not truth that sets you free...It is God's truth that sets you free. Let's Pray