



Dr. Mark L. Bailey

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The Truths That Never Change

I believe the message by Tommy Nelson in this issue of *Veritas* brings us a needed reminder as we begin a new year. In a culture of postmodernism and multiculturalism, Dallas Seminary is not ashamed to say that we want to obey the Scriptures, to teach and preach the truth of God as it has been once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

In other words, there *are* absolute truths; there are verities of our faith. Thus the unashamed proclamation of God's Word is the best tool we have to minister in this culture. One of our students recently said in another chapel service, "Thanks to the heritage at Dallas Seminary and the training I am receiving here, I never have to worry about what I am going to say when I get into the pulpit. It will be the Bible!"

One problem in our culture today is that we have almost overdone the uncertainty aspect of truth. What I mean is this: It's true that we don't know everything with absolute finality and complete fullness. And it is always fitting to approach things in a spirit of humility.

But at the same time, there are some absolutes that we can know with certainty—the truths clearly declared in Scripture. Therefore, as believers, there are things you and I do know and should know and should teach as truth!

We may not understand all things perfectly, but God has revealed Himself sufficiently that we can know Him with certainty and confidence. It is these truths, these verities, of the faith that Tommy Nelson has called us to teach and live out.

And it is these truths that Dallas Seminary remains committed to teach and defend with every resource God gives us. Our culture may operate on a "your truth—my truth" basis, but we have a sure word from God to share with a world that is lost in uncertainty and skepticism. Prayers and financial support make it possible to do the work of the gospel. Thank you for partnering with us to prepare leaders who will follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Dr. Mark L. Bailey
President
Dallas Theological Seminary

VERITAS

Equipping Christians to live by truth—veritas—from God.

"CLASSIC" CHRISTIANITY

*Teaching and Living the
Unchanging Truth of God's Word*

by Pastor Tommy Nelson

DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



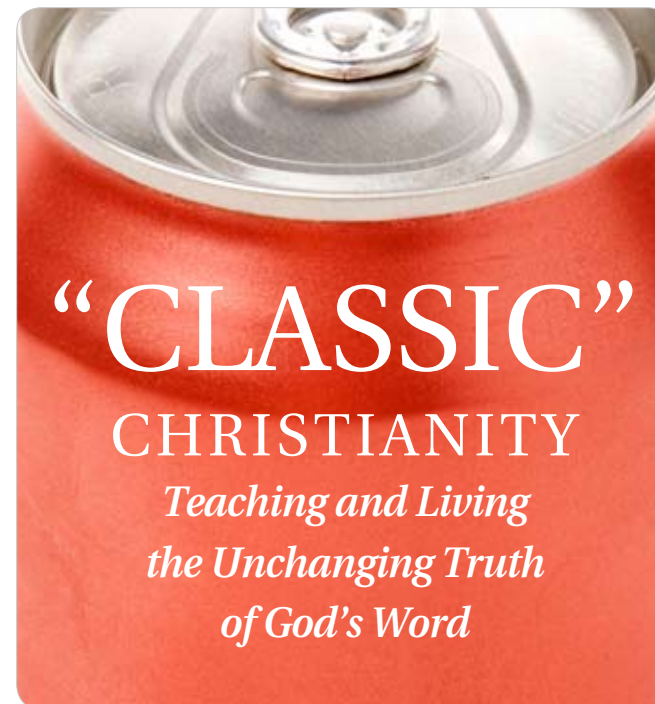
Pastor Tommy Nelson is a graduate of the University of North Texas, where he was quarterback on the football team. He attended Dallas Theological Seminary from 1977 to 1982 while serving as an associate pastor of Denton Bible Church. He has been ministering at Denton Bible Church for 27 years and is presently the senior pastor. He also serves on the Seminary's Board of Incorporate Members.

Tommy Nelson has written *The Big Picture*, *The Book of Romance*, and *The Problem of Life with God: A Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes*. His fourth book, *Better Love Now*, is being released this month. He is also the teacher for three video series, and his taped messages travel throughout the world.

He married his best friend, Teresa Newman, in August 1974. The Nelsons have two sons: Benjamin, who works for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and John Clark, who is playing professional baseball.

Pastor Tommy Nelson presented this message in a recent chapel service at Dallas Seminary recognizing our Board of Incorporate Members.

Many Veritas readers will remember one of the most infamous blunders in U.S. marketing history: the attempt by the Coca-Cola® company to discard its classic formula and introduce a product known as the "New Coke." In this powerful message, Pastor Tommy Nelson uses this incident to illustrate our need to hold to "classic" Christianity. —Editor



by Pastor Tommy Nelson

For several generations leading up to the 1960s, *Coca-Cola®* was clearly the dominant soft drink in America. So in the 60s, rival soft drink Pepsi made a crucial marketing decision. The company decided that if the older generation was loyal to Coke, that was fine; they would target the younger generation, which gave rise to the "Pepsi Generation" advertising campaign.

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When you have a classic, you don't change it just because of the pressure of a new generation.

To counter this move and recapture the youthful cola market, Coke decided to come out with something new of its own and announced the “New Coke,” a reformulation of its classic drink that America had been enjoying for decades. If you remember the arrival of the New Coke, you’ll also remember that it was arguably the greatest business marketing blunder of all time.

Loyal Coke drinkers protested vociferously. What was Coke thinking, messing around with a winning formula? The negative outcry was overwhelming. We’re told that the day Coke introduced its new product, the Pepsi company gave its entire corporation the day off. They partied, figuring Pepsi had won the cola war. They had forced Coke to compromise and change, and now Pepsi could take over the market.

But then Coke made what was called the greatest stroke of marketing genius in history. They apologized nationally, saying they realized that Coke was an American institution. They pulled New Coke off the shelves and brought back the original formula under the name of Classic Coke. That name was not only a signal to the soft drink market that the familiar Coke had come back, but it was also a recognition of the fact that when you have a classic, you don’t change it just because of the pressure of a new generation.

We Must Stand on the Truth

This is the basic message the author of Hebrews wanted to deliver to his readers, who were going to become the next generation of Christians following the generation of the apostles and prophets. In Hebrews 13, the author gave some practical admonitions in verses 1–6, and then in verses 7–16

he turned to the importance of their standing on the truth of the message that had been delivered to them by the apostles.

Verse 7 reads, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” The author of Hebrews wanted his readers to mimic the faith of their leaders.

Paul said the Church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). It was to the apostles that Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom so they could bind what heaven has bound and loose what heaven has loosed. It was to the apostles that the truth of our faith was once for all delivered (Jude 3). We Christians have a body of truth that is complete.

And so the author of Hebrews told the new generation of believers to remember and mimic the faith of their leaders. In other words, don’t depart from the ancient message that has been brought to you about Jesus Christ from His Word.

The Truth of Christ Never Changes

Some things don’t change, as the next verse of Hebrews 13 affirms: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (v. 8). Jesus was the same when the apostles and apostolic delegates brought the message of Scripture to the early believers, He is the same today in our experience, and He will be the same forever. Perfection doesn’t change. The Word of God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8). We may change our style of dress in the church, we may change our architecture, and we



may change our approach to ministry and our organization.

But the core message of the inerrancy of the Bible that sets forth our Lord Jesus Christ in His deity, His perfect humanity, His substitutionary death to propitiate the Father and redeem us, His bodily resurrection, His sending forth of the Holy Spirit, His present session in heaven, His headship in the Church, and His gathering of His elect—these things don't change!

Dr. Mark Bailey said that one of the men who mentored him in Bible college used to say, "If it's new, it's not true. And if it's true, it's not new." That's what the author of Hebrews said in 13:9: "Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings." Don't put your finger up to the wind to

False Ideas Will Always Be Around

In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul wrote, "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons." Jesus said it is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come. Later, Paul said, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:3–4).

Is doctrinal error going to come? Yes! The New Testament has no illusions that the Church will establish a utopia down here. That's why the book of Hebrews tells us not to be carried away by strange and varied teachings. As Christians, we are a people of dogma; we are a people of revelation; we are a people of truth. False doctrines and new ideas are coming, and they're already here. But the Word of God stays true.

The best verse I have ever heard on preaching is 2 Corinthians 2:15: "For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing." We who preach the Word of God do our preaching unto Him. And the thing that God loves most is the aroma of His Son's sacrifice for sin in obedience to His Father for us. God loves it, and we are an aroma of that victory to Him.

Paul went on to say that to those who are perishing, "we are the smell of death" (v. 16). The message of Christ is not a popular message to deliver to a world that is enamored with new ideas and strange teachings that depart from the truths



tell which way the wind of popular opinion is blowing. Don't trim your sails to the spirit of your age. There is an old saying that if the Church weds itself to the spirit of the age, it's going to be a widow within one generation, because the world is always changing.



of classic Christianity. How people respond to our message and our witness as believers is not our business. Our job is to preach and teach the truth.

The famed author William F. Buckley once talked about the lack of truth in our day. He said the only way in our day we could get America to quit being immoral is to convince people that “fornication is fattening.” In a world like this, our calling is to speak the message of God with what Paul called “sincerity” (2 Corinthians 2:17). This is a Greek word that means “sun tested,” and the imagery here is very interesting and instructive.

In the days of Paul, the way to tell if a piece of pottery was of the best quality was to hold it up to the sun. If a piece of pottery was one of quality, if it was “sincere,” then it could stand up to the test of

which our English word “sincerity” comes (*sine*, meaning “without,” and *cereus*, meaning “wax”). Being sincere means that you don’t have any wax in the cracks of your life. It means you are the real item. That’s what classic Christianity is, the real item. It’s the faith delivered without error from Christ to His Church through the apostles and prophets.



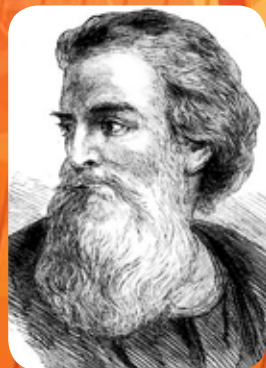
A Heritage of Faithfulness to the Truth of Christ

Whenever I leave my study at our church in Denton to walk out into the pulpit, I pass under a little frame hanging above my study door. It’s a pamphlet from the 1930s containing the doctrinal statement of Dallas Theological Seminary. I prize that pamphlet over everything else in my study because I was proud in the good sense of the word to be part of this school. One of the greatest delights in my life is to sit with the men and women who serve with me on the Seminary’s Board of Incorporate Members.

I am proud of Dallas Seminary. When people tell me they are looking for a good seminary and ask me if I have any ideas, I say, “As a matter of fact, I do.” I am happy to recommend Dallas Seminary to them.

And when I walk out of my study and pass underneath that pamphlet over my door containing the Seminary’s statement of classic Christian doctrine, I feel as if I am representing the leaders who have gone before me in this place—those who stood for the truth of Scripture beginning in the 1920s when the major denominations were going south as they embraced liberalism and evolution and

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being examined in the sun because it had no cracks. But a potter who was just trying to produce a piece as quickly as possible without regard to quality would fill the cracks with paraffin wax to try and hide them. But when an inferior piece of pottery was held up to the sun, the person could see the wax filling the cracks.

This test was the basis of the Latin word from

existentialism and the like. But our leaders stood firm, and it is up to us to imitate their faith.

We May Have to Suffer for the Truth

The writer of Hebrews continued in chapter 13 to say that following Christ and imitating our leaders' faith may involve suffering (vv. 11–12). Jesus had to suffer outside the city of Jerusalem just as the priests of Israel took their sin offerings outside the city to burn them. They didn't want Jesus inside their city, and we may not always be wanted in our cities. I've been a pastor for a long time in my city, and a lot of people still look at me kind of crazy because our church is a Bible church where we preach and study and believe the Word.

But that's OK, because it doesn't matter what people think. We are called to "go to [Jesus] outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore" (Hebrews 13:13). If we have to be outside of the camp of religion and of error to be identified with Christ, then so be it.

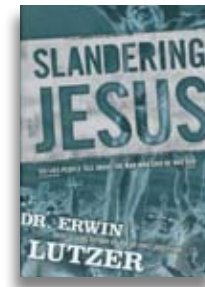
But there's more to our calling than suffering. Notice the reference to worship and singing in Hebrews 13:15 and to service in verses 16–17. Classic Christianity is not a stuffy business. We are to continually use our lips to praise and give thanks to the Lord. Have you ever seen Plato's hymnal? No, because there isn't one! We as Christians are the ones who have a song to sing. Our churches should be full of worship, and we should not neglect to do good and share with others.

The Church's greatest commodity is the classic truths of our faith. People don't want a show or a novelty. They don't want "New Coke," if you will. They want the classic; they want the truth. And that is our greatest commodity.

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Here's a Book That Will Help You Answer the False Claims of Modern Skeptics Who Slander God and His Word



You've heard the so-called news reports that have been flashed across the worldwide media over the past few years. Many of these claims are made by admitted skeptics who boast that they have found new evidence that contradicts the teaching of Scripture.

The claims made by these "experts" often sound so convincing that even sincere Christians can have their faith shaken, causing them to ask: Is it true that Jesus wanted and needed Judas to betray Him? Can it be that Jesus escaped the crucifixion? Is it possible that Jesus' family tomb has been discovered?

Dr. Erwin Lutzer, senior pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago and a graduate of Dallas Seminary, provides a clue to the answers in the very title of his new book: *Slandering Jesus: Six Lies People Tell About the Man Who Said He Was God*. In this important volume, Dr. Lutzer draws on rigorous biblical research to set the record straight. Send for your copy today, and learn how to counter lies and defend the truth about Christ!

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