

# **FIVE TRUSTWORTHY STATEMENTS**

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**These words form a striking formula which is found-with slight variations-only in the Pastoral Epistles, in 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8.**

**Paul's faithful sayings are five in number, and were no doubt rehearsed constantly in the early churches, till they became well-known watchwords in the various assemblies scattered over the Mediterranean-washed provinces of the Roman empire. They speak to some of the most essential elements of the Christian life and should be spread among the family of faith today.**

## STATEMENT ONE

1 Tim 1:15- Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

The first of the trustworthy sayings speaks of the pre-existence of Christ, of His coming into the world, and the purpose why He came is distinctly stated-to save the lost, irrespective of race or nationality. When Paul wrote the word "faithful or trustworthy," it means assuredly true. This is a truth which you can depend on, or have true conviction about. The term "full acceptance" tells us that the truth we have been told should be embraced and believed by every person. Why should we accept it? Because, as we learn from this text:

- 1) All are sinners and need a Savior and therefore ought to welcome a truth which shows them how they may be saved.
- 2) Because Christ died for all. If He had died for only some people on the planet, and could save only a part, we would have no reason to believe it at all. If medicine had been provided for only a part of the patients in a hospital, it could not be said that the announcement of such a fact was worthy of the attention of all.
- 3) Salvation provides for the complete pardon of sin and the restoration of the soul to God. This is done in a way that is honorable to God-maintaining his law and his justice; and, at the same time, it is in a way that is honorable to man because man is treated afterward as a friend of God and an heir of life.

A great and unique thing we are shown in this first trustworthy statement is that **Christ Jesus came into the world.** This tells us several things:

- 1) He had to exist before He could come into the world- this speaks to the fact He is God.
- 2) The fact that He came means He had a plan, an object in mind, a wish and desire in His heart.
- 3) He came when He was under no necessity of coming; He came to save, not to destroy; to reveal mercy, not to judge; to save sinners-the poor, the lost, the wandering, not to condemn them; he came to restore them to the favor of God, to raise them up from their degradation, and to bring them to heaven. No wonder all should accept this!

The fact that Paul concludes this powerful statement with the very personal revelation of his own feeling of being the worst sinner of all teaches us something in and of itself:

- (1) A true Christian will always be ready to admit that his past life has been evil.
- (2) This truth will become the abiding and steady conviction of the soul.
- (3) To admit that we are sinners is not inconsistent with the fact we are saved and made holy by Jesus' blood. Strong Christians are humble, always carrying a sense of the deepest sense of the depravity of their own heart and of the evil of their past life.

## STATEMENT TWO

1 Tim 3:1- Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

Our second saying requires an explanation of one term before discussion. The term “overseer” in this Scripture is also translated “bishop”, but comes from a Greek word meaning “to look diligently after” or “to take oversight of”, and here speaks of those who desire to care after the eternal souls of others.

This saying therefore refers to the work of being a minister of the gospel, a work then and now full of danger and always full of difficulty. The office in question is honorable and Christ-like, and, in those early days, it meant stern and ceaseless work, grave and constant danger. It is awesome, then, to think that the Word tells us all that it is a noble thing to be a minister! From this saying we get some great truths:

- 1) Ministry is a task, meaning it is **work!** It is not an **easy thing!**
- 2) Overseeing others’ souls is an office of **divine appointment**, and not of human invention. You may set your heart on ministry, but God must call you. **Ambition** is never good. **Obedience** is the great value of the Bible. Ambition desires the **glory of position**. However, to desire to become usable by God in a position that proclaims the gospel and helps people grow in Christ is awesome and not to be looked down on.
- 3) The office of a minister is a work which requires **diligence and application** and is not something for great honor and advantage. Ministers should always look more to their work than to the **honor and advantage** of their office.
- 4) Ministry is serious because it means overseeing the **eternity** of others. This is so serious that the verses that follow contain no less than **15 attributes** that are necessary to do this work. Among the necessary character attributes: one must be above any reproach, **self-controlled**, respectable, **hospitable**, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money- among others!
- 5) This saying implies that there should be no less than a total heart felt, eager desire for ministry. If we want to be ministers, we cannot be lukewarm about it! We should be **passionate** about ministry because it affords the opportunity to bring greater glory to God, and of doing the greatest good to the souls of men.

With all this in mind, perhaps we should include Paul’s comment in 2 Corinthians 2:16- “Who is equal to such a task?” What piety, what discretion, what zeal, what courage, what faithfulness, what watchfulness over ourselves and our lusts, appetites, and passions, and over those under our charge we need to have! Again we say what **holy watchfulness** is necessary in this work! But if we would answer the call, let us remember Jesus’ words: “Lo, I am with you always”, and “You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be a witness”, and “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men”!

### STATEMENT THREE

1 Tim 4:7-10- 7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of **godliness**; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness** is profitable for **all things**, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

I have used the NASU version of the Bible here because the trustworthy saying refers to verses 7-8, not to verse 10 as some other versions imply.

What this saying deals with is **godliness**. This word is a comprehensive word for **obedience to the Gospel** in **all areas of life**. It implies a basis of sound doctrine in one's beliefs, meaning that one's beliefs determine their actions and correct beliefs regarding the Gospel **will lead** to godliness.

In essence, what we learn is that godliness has an influence that is world-wide; it consists, not merely in holiness and in that fellowship and communion with God which is the very life of the soul; it is also an active force which springs from "the love of Christ constraining us," and manifests itself in **love** toward all our fellow-men, for they are God's creatures. Godliness transfigures every rank and condition of life. It has the promise of the life **that now is**: to those who seek the kingdom of God first, all other things will be added. And it has the promise of the life that is **to come**, the rich prospect of eternal blessedness with Christ. Compare with this saying the remarkable words in Titus 1:2, "in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal." Godliness gives all gladness here and future glory too. This really is a trustworthy saying!

Godliness is talked down in our culture to such an extent as to have influenced believers in this generation to not even consider it, claiming all references to **holiness** as being **legalistic**. This trustworthy saying says something so profound to us today that I want to emphasize this to you: There is not an interest of life which godliness does not **promote**. It is **favorable** to **health** of body, by promoting self-control and hard work; to clearness and vigor of **intellect**, by giving just views of truth, and of the relative value of objects; to peace of **conscience**; to prosperity in business, by making you sober, honest, prudent, and industrious; to a **good name**, by leading you to pursue an honorable course of life; and to **comfort in trial**, calmness in death, and immortal peace beyond the grave. Love for Jesus injures no one! It does not destroy health, it does not weaken the intellect, it does not disturb the conscience, it does not feed raging and consuming passions, it does not diminish the honor of a good name and it does not make you feel bitter remorse on your deathbed. It doesn't make you poorer; it doesn't lead you to crime, and doesn't give you a disease. If a person really wants happiness, he will be **a Christian**- and the true and consistent (i.e., godly) Christian is the most happy of people! And yet people seek everything else rather than Jesus, and in the pursuit of what the world offers, which confers no happiness, they defer

knowing Jesus-the only certain source of happiness at any time-to the last period of life, or reject it altogether.

#### STATEMENT FOUR

2 Tim 2:11-13- Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we **disown him**, he will also **disown us**; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

The fourth of the trustworthy sayings speaks of the Christian's **union** with Christ, of the **blessedness** of that union, and the **awful effects** of breaking that union.

We get so much from this saying:

1) "If we died with Him, we will also live with Him" speaks of Jesus' death and resurrection and its **effect** on the lives of those who **put their trust** in Him. "Dying with Christ" means we completely decide to live our every moment in light of the fact that Jesus died not only to forgive us, but to **set us free** from having to walk in sin. If we choose daily to say to temptation, "Be gone! I don't have to sin because sin no longer has control over me because I belong to Jesus," then we will "live with Him"- meaning, we will have His **abundant, spiritual life** in our lives here on earth as well as we will live eternally with Him in heaven.

2) "If we endure, we will also reign with Him", speaks of the fact that as Jesus was treated, so will His followers be, but if they **will endure** what He endured, the affliction, **persecution**, **insults**, and even death, and thus show that we are united with Him, He will do what he promised in Revelation 3:21, "**To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.**"

3) "If we disown Him, He will disown us" is a direct reference to Jesus' words in Matthew 10:32, 33: "**Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.**" We must acknowledge Jesus for salvation and our belonging to Him **in every way and in every thing**. This means in church, in conversation, and in conduct-we must manifest our Christianity in every circumstance of life and before **all people**. It is not merely in one act that we must do it, but in **every act**. We must not **be ashamed** of the person, the character, the teachings, nor the requirements of Christ. If we are; if we deny Him in these things before people; if we are unwilling to express our attachment to Him in every way possible, then it is right that He should **disown** all connection with us (i.e., deny us before God) and He **WILL do it**.

4) "If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself." The meaning here is that if we are **unbelieving and unfaithful**, Christ will remain true to His word, and we **cannot hope** to be saved, because He said already He would deny those who denied Him. This cannot mean that, if we live in sin, He will certainly save us, as if He had made any promise to save us no matter what our conduct might be. There is **no such promise** in the Bible! In fact, when we are

told that He remains faithful because He cannot disown Himself, we are being told that it would be a denial of **His very nature** to save those who are **unfaithful**. He is holy; how can He save one who is not?

#### STATEMENT FIVE

Titus 3:3-8- At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been **justified** by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

The fifth and last of the trustworthy speaks of our former unconverted state, "for we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived... But the kindness and love of God appeared, not by works...but according to his mercy He saved us."

Blessedness is now the Christian's lot, and this is the result not of our works: we owe it all to the **tender love of God**, to His Divine **pity**, to His redeeming grace. Yes, this is a faithful saying!

The truths presented in this portion of Scripture are so many, but here is the essence of what we can have true conviction about and depend on as true:

- 1) Mankind is **ruined and lost**, both in soul and body, because of sin.
- 2) It was the infinite goodness of God and **not our works** or righteousness that caused Him to make a way for us to be saved.
- 3) The manifestation of God's goodness was the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- 4) We receive justification only through the **blood of Jesus**. Justification is God's declaration that the demands of His Law have been fulfilled in the righteousness of His Son. The basis for this justification is the **death of Christ**. When we say that God justifies, He charges the **sin of man** to Christ and **credits** the righteousness of Christ to the **believer**. Though the Lord Jesus has paid the price for our justification, it is through **our faith** that He is received and His righteousness is experienced and enjoyed.
- 5) One mission of the Holy Spirit is the purification of the heart by His influence.
- 6) We have a hope of the resurrection of the body, and the final glorification of both it and the soul through all eternity.
- 7) There is a necessity of **obedience** to the will of God, and of **walking worthy** of the life to which we have been called.
- 8) We should **continually** impress these truths on the minds of believers; and to keep them **constantly in view**, that all good comes from God's infinite kindness, by and through Christ Jesus.

We might well conclude this entire study with the final emphasis in our last saying:

The doctrines of the gospel are fit to lead people to **holy living**; these things are **good and profitable** for us. That is, these sayings we have discussed are not mere matters of thought, but they are integral to promote **human happiness**, and they should be constantly taught!