

# Why Isn't It Simple?

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Few things frustrate me more than when people turn the simple into the complex. From the beginning of the Southside training program, Brother Bowman has warned of and bemoaned the tendency of mankind to take the simple truth of scripture and turn it into a labyrinth. The Gospel is simple and clear truth, so simple some call it foolishness,

*“For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (I Corinthians 1:18,21).*

The word of God is not a puzzle or riddle which may only be decoded by the most studied and brilliant theological minds. It is truth for mankind. The kind which any man can pick up, read, understand and apply, leading to the salvation of his soul (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Yet, if the Gospel is so clear, why do so many of us disagree? Why do the theologians disagree? Why did people literally burn each other at the stake arguing about the meaning of the text? If it is so simple, why isn't it simple?!

I've struggled with that question, struggled mightily the past few weeks. The death of Billy Graham brought it on. Indeed, many would consider the 99-year old a saint, a worker for the Lord, a preacher of righteousness and one who personally came closer to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ than most anyone else. But to me, he failed. He preached, but never preached baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It makes you wonder, how did he miss that? It should be clear (I Peter 3:21).

He is just one example. I've recently run across many others. I found a community church which produced a 12-hour presentation discussing how Christ feels about the LGBTQ community. To them, Christ's opinion of homosexuality is a tremendously complicated and multifaceted discussion. To me, it is simple (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Some churches convene conferences that spend months trying to decide where they stand on a particular issue. But I believe you can figure out what Christ wants sitting in your living room with an open Bible (Ephesians 3:4). A friend recently told me there are a multitude of different ways to read the Bible and that leads to different views concerning what is right. To me, I believe what Jesus said in John 8, “*if you continue in my word... you will know the truth.*” (Not truths).

Many believe discovering truth is complex. We can sum up that attitude with a quote, “...the questions which divide Christians from one another often involve points of high theology or even of ecclesiastical history. I should have been out of my depth in such waters.” C.S. Lewis wrote that. If discovering the truth in the word is so simple why does

C.S. Lewis believe it is “high” and complicated?

I think we've already read the answer. “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

The truth becomes complicated when I bring my own “wisdom” to the debate (Acts 17:32). The truth becomes complicated when I bring my personal biases to the discussion (Acts 15:5-10). The truth becomes complicated when I bring a creed book or a quote from a long dead theologian and put it on par with the word of God (Galatians 1:8). The truth becomes complicated when I start to think the Bible needs an update in order to sync with our current culture (I Peter 1:23-25). The truth becomes complicated when I let emotion have a voice louder than text (Acts 7:54-58). We make truth complicated by adulteration, by adding things to the discussion which do not belong. Truth is simple when my only question is, “What does the Bible say?”

I'll never master communication like Billy Graham. I'll never hold a candle to the insight and understanding of C.S. Lewis. I've got half of a minor in Philosophy. I'm no theologian, but it doesn't take a theologian to discover and apply the truth (I Corinthians 1:26-28). The truth is for the simple.

Remember who Jesus called one by one: Peter, Andrew, James and John. He did not call Caiaphas, Gamaliel, Pilate, nor did He call Agrippa, Felix or Herod. He called fishermen. He called nobodies. He called the working class on the poverty line with no formal education, and the only one called who possessed significant accolades said this, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” The truth is simple, let us not complicate what God made clear.