

Dealing With The Truth

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Sometimes we don't WANT to know the truth, because we don't want to DEAL with the truth! (Maybe if I ignore the facts long enough, they will no longer be the facts. Maybe if I can just focus on what I believe to be reality, it will become reality.) That is not a rational response to life – we know that approach never leads anywhere good. But we all still want to live with the illusion that “things are fine” and I know all I need to know.

Just as it is never productive to ignore the truth in other areas of life, it is never productive to ignore the truth about God and your spiritual life. We each have a mental picture of what we want God to be, so we rationalize away the Bible verses or sermons we are uncomfortable with.

GOD ACCORDING TO ME:

- He won't let anything bad happen to my family because physical protection is his number one concern
- He won't let anything bad happen to me financially, because I've given at least 10% for years – I'm one of His best investors!
- He is especially interested in the outcome of church hockey games ☺ (“Shh! Tell the UN that I'm watching the game!”).
- He has bigger concerns in the world than my little sins.
- He has some kind of loophole that gets people out of going to Hell – except for a certain category of people I think should go there.

I don't want to believe that anything else is true; I am comfortable with my distorted reality. **But with every distortion about God comes a corresponding consequence:**

- If you believe that every time something bad happens God is punishing you, you will never trust your Heavenly Father.
- If you believe that your little religious routine pacifies God and keeps Him at bay, you'll never have a personal relationship with Him.
- If you believe that you have to have answers to everything you don't understand before you can believe God, you will never find faith.
- If you believe that God is obligated to fix every problem and heal every sickness, you will live with a deep sense of disappointment.
- If you believe you can get to Heaven based on your own merit or because you live “better” than others, you will be eternally lost.
- If you believe that you have done so many bad things that you can never be forgiven, you will never experience God's forgiveness.

Arnold Glasgow: “The trouble with ignorance is that it picks up confidence as it goes along.”

So many people try to have a relationship with God based on WHO THEY WANT HIM TO BE instead of WHO HE REALLY IS.

That is exactly the kind of world Jesus came to!

- If you were rich you were blessed by God; if poor you were cursed.
- If you were sick, you or your parents had sinned.
- If you were a Jew then God loved you (God was a racist!).
- God was so removed from people that you couldn't even mention His name, let alone have a relationship with Him.

That's why God didn't SEND someone to us, but came HIMSELF.

John 14:8-9 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Mark 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Even though Jesus' teaching was UNCOMFORTABLE, people embraced it because it TRANSFORMED lives around them.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the **LIGHT** of the world: he that **FOLLOWETH** me shall not walk in darkness, but **SHALL** have the light of life.

John 8:31-32 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **IF YE CONTINUE** in my word, **THEN** are ye my disciples indeed; **AND** ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Experiencing truth is like walking out of a dark room into the light. You can't see at first and you squint – and the easiest thing to do would be to retreat to the darkness where your eyes are already adjusted and you can “see” everything.

But if you **CONTINUE** to stay in the light, your eyes will finally adjust and you will see things that you never saw in the dark!

As “offensive” or “impractical” as Jesus' commands seem to you, and as much as you want to “retreat” to the darkness ... **IF YOU WILL REMAIN IN THE LIGHT ... THEN ... YOU SHALL KNOW (UNDERSTAND) THE TRUTH ... AND THEN ... THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE!**

What is the typical human reaction to the truth of God's Word? You don't have to go any further than the Pharisees ...

John 8:33-34 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

"We've never been slaves to anyone!" Have you ever heard of Egypt? Babylon? Medo-Persian? Greece? Rome? You've been slaves since the very beginning ... and you're slaves right now!

There are just some truths that I don't want to deal with. I've grown very accustomed to living comfortably in the darkness. Don't mess me up!

But look at the lives of the people who ran TOWARD the light instead of AWAY FROM it ... Zacchaeus ... woman caught in adultery ... thief on the cross ... "you are absolutely guilty, but unconditionally forgiven" ...

STAY IN THE LIGHT! WALK IN THE LIGHT! LIVE IN THE LIGHT!

God's promise is that if you CONTINUE in the light you WILL be set free!

John 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Will you stay in the light, even if it is uncomfortable?! Look at the transformed lives around you, and listen to their testimonies ...

John 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: **one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.**

OPTIONAL CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Acts 22:11-15 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. ¹² And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, ¹³ Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. ¹⁴ And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. ¹⁵ For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.