

Article 1: Encountering the Truth

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THE PARABLE OF THE THREE MOUNTAINEERS

The helicopter settled down in a lush meadow. The most challenging, treacherous climb of a lifetime stood before the three passengers. The men ducked under the spinning blades as the chopper lifted off once again and revealed a towering mountain that loomed in the distance.

The three mountaineers shouldered their packs, nodded silently to each other, and set off for the snowy peak in the clouds. Each was hoping to reach the top, and each wanted to be the first.

The first man picked up his pace and ran ahead, believing that He could win the race by tackling the mountain right away. The other two walked into a nearby village.

The community was abuzz with the working of trades, but the sight of the two foreigners brought the tinkering to a hush. The villagers stared intently at the strangers who darkened their camp.

Pointing to the ominous mountain, the men tried to find someone who could help them on their journey. The men stood in the middle of the village and one called out, "Does anyone here speak English? We need help getting up the mountain!"

A woodworker stepped forth from his abode. "I do. And I've been to the top of that mountain. It's dangerous. You'll need a guide. But I can't leave until I finish building the frame for this new village-meeting hut. If you can give me your time, I'll give you mine."

The second man was antsy. "Forget this," he whispered, and he started walking briskly through the camp. Before long, he was signaled over to a crude hut. There an honest-looking man sat amidst stacks of leather parchments. He thumbed through the pile and handed the climber a faded map. In gratitude, the climber gave the man some trail mix and ran off on his way.

The third man spent the rest of that day helping the woodworker in the village and getting to be good friends. They finished their project before sundown, but the woodworker told him, "We won't want to leave until tomorrow morning. It is going to rain tonight."

Trusting the woodworker, the man stayed there. The townspeople fed him; made him a nice, soft bed; and allowed him to sleep in the best hut they had. That night, it poured!

Early the next morning—after a good breakfast—the two finally set off for the mountain. As they climbed, the man's guide led him down unassuming paths. He knew where every mudslide and slippery rock would be found.

Halfway up the mountain, they found the body of the first hiker in a ravine. He had tried to climb the mountain without any help and failed miserably. And

due to the slick terrain, the men could not get down to his lifeless body and give him a proper burial.

Not long after, they found the second man's body lying lifeless and cold—half buried in a large mudslide.

The third man became greatly discouraged. He and his friends had set out on this journey rather lighthearted, but they had no idea how serious the ordeal would become. What looked like recreation had become a life-and-death issue.

"If only we had done this together," he thought. "If only we had all followed the guide..." How could he go on if his friends didn't make it?

The newly befriended woodworker put his arm around the man and said, "There are many bodies buried in the mudslides of this mountain. At various points on the mountain are signs that warn people to come to the village and find me, but few ever do. Most people are too prideful and believe they can do it on their own. But don't be discouraged—the climb is well worth it. We should go on."

The man, trusting his guide, followed him further. In several exhausting hours, they reached the snowy peak only to see that it was not covered in snow at all, but rather in diamonds.

ONLY THE GUIDE CAN GET YOU THERE

There is a right way up the mountain of life, and only the Woodworker of Nazareth, Jesus Christ, knows the way. Actually, He *IS* the way. Running off on your own will only result in destruction. Even the map we have—the Bible—is not enough to guide us to our destination. Only a relationship with the One who went before us can get us to the treasure at the end of the journey.

So many people in this generation are looking for the "path to Truth." So they look at countless religions and develop their own mystical hodgepodge in hopes that they'll get some sense of meaning in their life. But it's all futile because they're either looking for a path instead of a Guide, or they're turning their eyes and ears to lying guides who have ulterior motives (I'm talking about demons, not people, by the way)!

All over the world, demons are masquerading as "spirit guides" in an effort to blind people from the Truth about our loving heavenly Father. It's a direct assault against the One who loves you most; so if you've ever been involved with such a being—no matter how "good" they appear—cut off that relationship in the name of Jesus because they will only lead you to destruction.

And for that matter, look not to the path! In the parable you just read, the man who ran off and sought the path wound up dead. You will too if all you want is the path. "The path" represents methods, rituals, mantras, and religion. But the Guide is Jesus Christ.

Consider, for instance, the oft-recited "Twenty-Third Psalm:"

***The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he restores my soul.***

He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You *prepare a table before me*
in the presence of my enemies.
You *anoint my head with oil;*
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever (NIV, emphasis added).

This whole psalm is about a relationship with our Guide—not a religion. Notice that it says “paths” of righteousness instead of “path.” A friend of mine pointed this out to me saying, “Your life is going to be different than mine. The issue is not the path we’re led in, but rather the fact that we’re both following the Guide!” As you can see, you might even be led through “the valley of the shadow of death,” but you can rest peacefully because the path is not the issue—only your trust in the Guide, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the way to abundant life. Our instinct won’t get us there. Our studies won’t get us there. False guides won’t get us there. The Bible itself won’t even get us there (consider, for instance, many theologians who have studied the Bible for decades but are no more alive than the next spiritual corpse). Only a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ will get us there!

Plain and simple: we need to accept the Truth about life. Jesus is that Truth. Whether we like it or not, there is an absolute Truth in the universe with which we must all come into harmony; and if we don’t, we’ll only find destruction.

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU *FREE!*

God’s Truth is transformational. In this world we often look at circumstances and believe they are “truth.” Yes, they are “true”—to deny that the circumstances in front of your face are real is just ridiculous. But there is an anchoring Truth for the Christian which exists far above our temporary circumstances. There is a far-superior eternal Truth that can influence and transform any situation.

In other words, imagine someone says you’ll never amount to anything. It is true that they insulted you—we can’t deny that. But God says you are His dearly-loved child—created in His image with a purpose and a destiny. The words of God are infinitely more valid than anyone else’s.

And what about circumstances? Suppose I have cancer. To deny that I have it would be foolish. But if God says, “You are healed,” then “reality” changes. Suddenly the cancer disappears.

God cannot lie. Why? Because His words are life, so anything He says happens! If God says, "Light!" when the whole universe is in darkness, you better believe light will come into existence! (This already happened, by the way.)

You see, God's words are Truth, and real Truth is alive. When God speaks, things happen. And if the reality in front of us is at odds with what God says, then it will change. It has to. God's Truth brings radical transformation.

THE TRUTH IS A PERSON

Why is God's Truth so active and alive? Because it is a person—or more accurately "THE Person!" Jesus said, "I am the way, and the TRUTH, and the life" (John 14:6). Did you catch that? Jesus Christ IS Truth.

When we understand this, all the other scriptures pertaining to "truth" take on a whole new meaning. Consider, for instance, Jesus' words in John 8:32—"You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

It is not our "knowledge of facts" that sets us free from our bondage to sin, self, and the world—it is our knowing of Christ! If you want to be truly free, get to know Jesus. Jesus is Truth; and when you personally know the Truth, He will set you free! God's Truth—Jesus Christ—is the most transformational force in the universe because all power and authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. Get to know the Truth, and He will set you free! Jesus is transformational!

DO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH?

It's time to look at your own life. Perhaps you're reading this book as part of your own personal quest for true purpose and destiny. My friend, Jesus is the answer. And without Him, nothing else in this book will be of any value to you. So now is the time to assess your own personal spiritual life.

Before you read any further in these articles, I want to offer you the opportunity to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. I can't promise that all your problems will suddenly vanish or that you'll instantly know the answers to all your questions about life; but I can guarantee that no matter your circumstance, He will be with you. Even when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He will be there. And as soon as you form that connection with your Creator through faith in Jesus Christ, your relationship with Him begins. He will begin to wisely guide you up the mountain of life in safety so that you can partake in the treasure at the peak.

This is not a decision to be taken lightly; but if you desire to have a life-changing relationship with the one true God who loves you and sacrificed His only Son for you, then now is the time to respond to His call.

Plain and simple, Jesus died on the cross two millennia ago so that you could put your old way of life to death with him right now. Offer to Him your old way of living, complete with your impure thoughts, habits, and actions. Even though your heart will continue to beat and you'll still be conscious, this is a form of death because the old you is being executed through identification with Christ. Consider the "old you" as being dead at the cross.

And here's the really exciting part: for those who put all their faith in Jesus Christ like this, there is no such thing as a "death" that is not followed by a resurrection. Jesus didn't just die, He also rose from the dead as witnessed by some 500 people within forty days of His resurrection—and many (if not all) of them were willing to be tortured and killed rather than deny the Truth of what they saw. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and His resurrection is just as valid and powerful today as it was 2000 years ago.

The Bible says that it was the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. So once you offer yourself as a living sacrifice—giving your old life up for death through prayer—ask the Holy Spirit to enter your life and make you a new creation. He will enable you to live according to your true identity.

You will find that since you were created in God's image, the new you will look a lot like Jesus. You'll find it easier to love and forgive. You'll discover a new excitement about the things of God. The Bible will come to life as you read because the Holy Spirit is there to teach you what God is saying. You'll begin to perceive and discern God's voice and act accordingly.

Through simple prayer, you will be entering a new life where your spirit is awakened and your body and soul experience the benefits. You shall know the Truth, Jesus Christ, and the Truth shall make you free!

You can pray any way you like, but if finding the right words is a block for you right now, here's a simple prayer to help you out:

Jesus, I realize that I have not been living in relationship with You. I have not been allowing You to guide me. I can see that my life is not in line with Truth. But I want to know God, and I want to be who I was created to be. Thank you for dying on the cross. I now consider my old life as dead with you at the cross, and I ask You to send Your Holy Spirit to raise me up in new life just like He raised You to life. I receive You into my life, and I ask that you would begin to change me more and more every day. Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer or anything like it, all of heaven is rejoicing! You are now my brother or sister in Christ. We're a family. And for the rest of these articles, I'm going to talk to you like the sibling you are—with love and respect—as we both pursue more of God.

But get ready, because the more you experience God, the more your life will change. God's Truth—Jesus Christ—is transformational!

[NEXT ARTICLE: The Transformational Power of Truth](#)