

GEMS OF TRUTH

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FROM THE EDITOR

When I was 14 years old and hungry for something deeper in my life I found Jesus as a loving Savior through reading the Bible and Christian literature that was available to me at the time. I began to experience something very wonderful going on in my spirit which is still unfolding more and more 60+ years later. I've ever sought to be available to share what I've found with others who have looked to me for help along the way. It seems more apparent to me all the time that "witnessing for Jesus" is to relate to everyone with as much kindness and love as I possibly can. I've found that very few are looking for "information" nearly as much as

they want someone who will listen to them and speak a word of encouragement without judging or having some agenda to convert them to some belief. In this issue of GEMS OF TRUTH I share with you just a few precious things from the gospels about the life, teachings, and ministry of Jesus. I'm including a series of five articles which I shared on Facebook during this past Easter season and have revised somewhat. May you be blessed and uplifted in your spiritual journey as you read and consider what I share from my heart. I may focus more on the teachings of Jesus in future issues. I would like input from readers so an email from you would be greatly appreciated. TD

If you wish to be on my email list to receive a notice when a new **GEMS OF TRUTH** is available or send some comments contact me as below:

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET WELL?

John 5:5-6 New Living Translation (NLT)

5 One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"



It may seem very puzzling at first as we think of Jesus' question, "Would you like to get well?" Why would any person with an illness, especially of thirty-eight years standing, not want to get well? Wellness in the New Testament generally should be thought of as "wholeness" which is why some translations use "be made whole" in place of "get well." The Savior asked the man if he really *wanted* to be healed. Was he at that point yet in his life journey? I don't think in any sense Jesus was laying a "guilt trip" on the man but rather wanting him to examine his intention for real healing. Was he really ready to take a totally new direction in his life?

In Romans 7:14-25 Paul elaborates at some length on the "cosmic conflict" that all humans experience. In doing this he refers to "indwelling sin" and I realize that this is interpreted by students from many perspectives. I would suggest that this "indwelling sin" could well include the negative and painful memories [or images] hidden away in the cells of our body that often seem to seek to sabotage our best good. Such memories both conscious and unconscious are not something that we chose to have in most cases but could have come to us even when we were babies or could have been inherited from many generations back. We have accepted a false identity as "sinners" and see ourselves as such instead of as spiritual beings made in God's image and likeness which is the "truth of being" as some spiritual writers have worded it. Our false sense of identity, without our even realizing it on a conscious level, could be telling us that we are victims of sickness and suffering. We have come to believe in a lie. Just this insight alone could be perhaps the biggest step towards wholeness.

In our Bible story of the man at the pool of Bethesda we have a loving Savior who appears at the crisis moment of someone who has reached the point of desperation. In the last part of Paul's discussion as referred to above he points out that when we reach a point of desperation and recognize that all else has failed we have a Savior (see Romans 7:24-25). I believe that this "Savior" appears to us often in some form of help and healing opening up just at a time when we need it most. This has been my experience again and again throughout my life but oftentimes I must have reached a point where I'm wanting to "get well" more than anything else and have given up depending upon my human efforts.

I realize that in this whole matter of healing that there are many puzzling questions for which absolute answers are not provided. I believe there are some cases in which a person has completed their learning process in this life and it is simply time to pass on to the next phase of their eternal journey. If we seek God for answers we will find those that apply to our individual situation and we should be very careful that we don't try to impose on others what seems clear for us. Our Savior is with us in the eternal now which never ends. I think the story from John 5 points to this above all else.



THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 16:19 Common English Bible (CEB)

19 "I'll give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Anything you fasten on earth will be fastened in heaven. Anything you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven."

Our words have power to build up or tear down. When we *speak truth*

statements we are affirming that which is true in the kingdom of heaven and which we want to accept and have more of in our lives. When we speak *error statements* we are choosing to experience darkness instead of light. We "fasten" to ourselves happiness or misery by our thoughts and words. Here are some examples of error statements and I use the term "error" because these are false beliefs about things that God didn't create but rather they were made by human belief. "I'm getting old and my body is giving out," "I can't remember names," "everyone is against me," "my luck is always bad," "I am bound by [some bad habit]," "you never know what might happen," "things in this world keep getting worse and worse," etc. The list is endless. In the Kingdom of Heaven all of these beliefs are lies. They only become true to those who choose to believe in them and thus "fasten" themselves to them.

Am I saying that we will never get old in terms of earth years, be sick, experience problems, or eventually pass from this life? No, but the more we affirm those things which God didn't create such as pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death the greater place they will have in our lives. All of these error seeds were sown by the enemy [however you choose to define that word]. The "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" are those things which are true, just, loving, pure, and of good report (see Philippians 4:8). The "keys" to fulfillment are those things which are true about God and which are eternal because they have a "God foundation." When we dwell on those things that have substance we "fasten" them to us and will experience happiness and freedom from bondage. This is an ongoing process. Moving from fear based error beliefs to the full experience of spiritual enlightenment is not based upon our understanding of time. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no time as we know it. Instead of dwelling on error we can affirm the truth, "I can do everything through Him who gives me

strength", "my life is in God," "in God I live, move, and have my being," etc. Instead of talking about getting old along with all the infirmities that we imagine go with it we can say, "By God's grace my spirit is renewed everyday and I'm growing in wisdom and getting better in every area of my life." When I use the term "truth statements" I'm talking about affirming that which is *true* in the kingdom of heaven rather than something based upon human belief. The Bible is literally full of such statements and promises of God and it is our privilege to believe and claim them. Let's not fasten ourselves in the chains of error but rather rejoice in the truth of God.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Matthew 5:21-22 New Living Translation

(NLT)

21 "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.



Throughout the Sermon on the Mount we have examples of Jesus contrasting what had been revealed to God's people through Moses with a new interpretation which not only built upon the foundation of the old but totally transformed it. The Kingdom of God was being revealed in a way that superseded the revelations of Moses (see John 1:17). Thus is revealed the principle of "progressive revelation" which means that the ways God revealed Himself through the ages was to meet the needs of people where they were at that time. As human consciousness has kept evolving towards the discovery of its true humanity in God's image and likeness the older revelations have often become obsolete and God's will has been more clearly revealed as people were able to bear it (see John 16:12-13).

Most seers, spiritual leaders, mystics, prophets, and messengers of God were evolved spiritually far ahead of their times. Therefore they were frequently misunderstood, persecuted, and sometimes put to death because they seriously challenged the behaviors and thinking of their current times. Often years later their contributions were

recognized and they were given an honored place in the annals of history. The danger here is *the failure to recognize that the revelation of truth is progressive*. Deeper and fresh revelations are continually dawning which may question old ways of thinking and doing. Today there are many churches and other groups which tenaciously cling to the teachings of their founders and refuse to go forward with advancing light and so lose much of their effectiveness. The apostle John addresses this in his messages to some of the churches of his time (see Revelation 2:4, 3:1-2, 15-17).

The scientific world faces the same problem. Many paradigms that were once considered as absolutely true have now been proven untrue. Quantum Physics has opened up a whole universe that was previously undreamed of. Spirituality and physical science are coming ever closer instead of being in opposition. Things that were thought to be "paranormal" are now found to be "normal." Let's all search our hearts and ask, "Am I going to hold on to what was once useful to me when perhaps it should be set aside? Are my old ways of thinking still valid or should I be willing to question them and find out if God's truth would challenge me to move forward with increasing light?"

Over the past 60 years there have been many resources that have helped me during a certain phase of my spiritual growth but later on seemed no longer useful. So I've given away many books to those who would appreciate them. Some folks have been unhappy with me during some of these times of transition but I must move forward as the Holy Spirit indicates. I've always tried to do this in peace and with goodwill towards those who may not understand.



LOVE WITHOUT EXPECTING A RETURN

Luke 6:35-36 The Message (MSG)

35-36"I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind.

Sometimes it may challenge us to keep on loving unconditionally. I think loving unconditionally means that we love without any hidden agenda such as the thought of getting something back from the other person or somehow thinking that we must

achieve needed changes that meet our expectations of what we think that person should be. We simply go forward in faith and *keep loving* and thus experience the possibility of finding a fountain of love opening within us in a greater way and that will bring healing and change wherever it is needed. The focus is never on changing the other person but always on changing ourselves and the way we perceive others. We must be willing to get over the idea that it is our job to correct in others what we perceive to be wrong. *Just love unconditionally for the sake of love, without any expectations.* Our task is to be willing vessels through which God's love can flow and then leave the results in His hands.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Mark 11:7-10 New Living Translation (NLT)

7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.

8 Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

10

Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!

Praise God in highest heaven!"



The same multitudes that cheered Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem were the ones that cried "crucify him" a few days later. Thus is the fickleness of human nature revealed. The crowds believed that Jesus would put down the Romans and vindicate them. So we often hope that our human ego will have its way and be exalted above all and when this hope brings suffering instead and is dashed to pieces we are ready to join with the multitudes around us and crucify our Lord. We surely need to "watch and pray" as Jesus admonished His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.



AN EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

John 13:3-5 Common English Bible (CEB)

3 Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. 4 So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the

disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing.

At the last supper Jesus, the Son of God, chose to perform a lowly custom of that time, washing the feet of guests. This set a powerful example of servanthood. His disciples were astonished that their Master would volunteer to do this as they still had hopes that He would be exalted as king, subvert the Romans, and thus vindicate them personally and possibly open up positions of power for them. Jesus set an example of humility to the very last days of His time on this earth. As I've reflected upon the greed, power struggles, and wars that have dominated so much human history, I've been reminded again and again of how important it is to study anew the gospels and to really take seriously the life and teachings of Jesus. I find it best not to spend much time dwelling on the *appearance* of insanity among human beings for I find this to be disheartening but when I reflect upon Jesus and the records of His life and teachings as found in the Bible I am encouraged to be His follower in every area of my life. If I allow the abuses and mistakes of others to take away my peace then I'm breaking the first commandment by having other "gods" in my life and have lost it all. Will you join me in a renewed commitment to walk ever closer to our Savior?

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Mark 15:24-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

24 And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. 25 And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

Galatians 2:20 New Living Translation (NLT)

20 My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

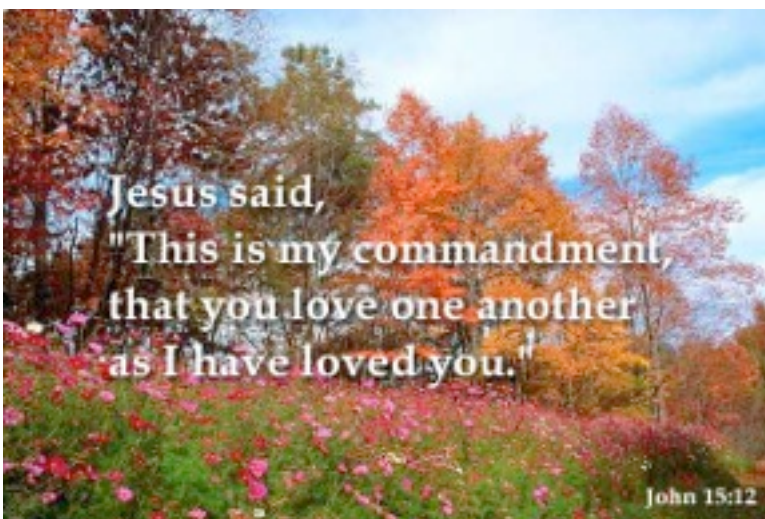
Many books have been written on the atoning work of Jesus and where some see contradictory viewpoints I see the topic as having many aspects like the many facets of a diamond which can be examined separately but still constitute one diamond when it is looked at as a whole. I doubt that the subject of the atonement could ever be exhausted. The part of it that I've thought about possibly more than any other over the past several decades are the words of Paul "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20 NKJV). I think the New Living Translation as quoted above makes the meaning even clearer, "My old self has been crucified with Christ."

When I was very new in my faith journey, around 1952 I attended a camp meeting in which the speaker preached on this verse everyday for the entire week. These Spirit-filled messages left a deep impression on me at a very critical point as a mere teenage boy just beginning my Christian walk. I sat in the front row of the tent with my Bible eagerly listening to every word.

I like to personalize "I" to mean that my old ego based ways of thinking and acting were fully overcome and put to death in Christ. I no longer need to be in bondage to the self-centered way of living but instead can choose each day to live "by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20 NKJV). When a temptation arises to exalt myself, to be angry, to be judgmental or controlling of others or think that I must prove I'm right about something, I can say by the power of God's



grace which continually strengthens me, "I would rather have Christ than that." After all, if our faith journey doesn't lead us to victory over our everyday ego issues then something isn't working as it should. Living "*by faith in the Son of God*" means that every moment I need to depend upon Him and receive His strength. Jesus is an *ever present* Savior who is beside me every moment of the day. I would like to share my joy that we have a Savior who gave Himself for all of us. No one is left out of the circle of His love and grace. When others disappoint us we may think of the words of an old song that some of us sang many years ago, "Heaven and earth will pass away but Jesus never fails." Would you join with me in giving thanks for such a wonderful Savior?



AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

John 13:34-35 New King James Version (NKJV)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Before He departed from this world to return to His Father Jesus gave His disciples some final teachings and these words "love one another" take on special meaning in this context. The command to "love one another" had been given by Moses so it was familiar to the disciples but Jesus gave it a totally new meaning and freshness when He said "*as I have loved you . . . also love one another.*" In the birth, life, teachings, ministry, sacrifice, resurrection and ascension of Jesus we have God's unspeakable love revealed in such a way as had never been imagined before in human history. This revelation of love revealed "the Kingdom of God" in a way that was beyond any written code such as came through Moses but was *the Living Word* present in the earth--a pulsating presence that healed and transformed all who came in contact with it. That same Presence is "God with us" individually as we open our hearts to receive it. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." The special sign of the true followers of Jesus is not a belief in a certain doctrine, a special "sign gift," or the observance of some sacrament, but is the unconditional love that they have for one another--the kind of love that is generally not seen. I believe that this kind

of love, put into practice, is what will really make a difference in a world that *seems* filled with so much hostility and war. People should look at the followers of Jesus and say, "Wow! These people really *do* love one another. I would also like to follow their Jesus if it makes such loving people." Let's take up the challenge today and really love not only those in our spiritual community but let that love spread forth to the entire world. Jesus commanded that we all are to be a light shining in the world--a praise and glory to God among all nations.

THE POWER OF RESURRECTION

Matthew 28:6-7 New King James Version (NKJV)

**6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."**

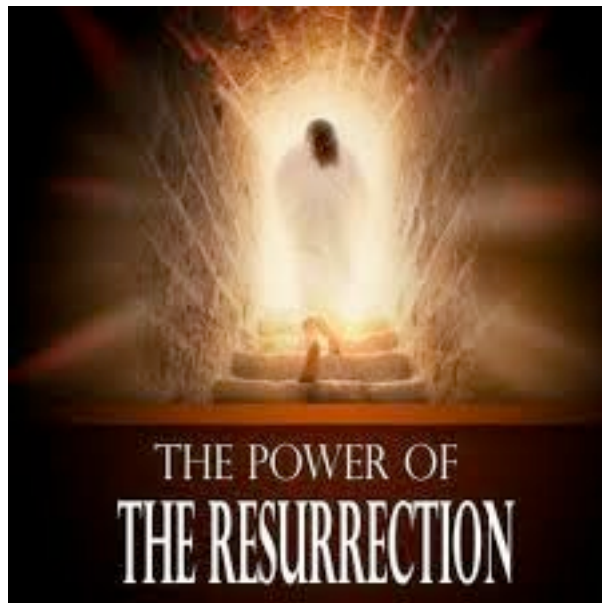
Ephesians 1:3 New King James Version (NKJV)

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ.

Ephesians 2:6 New King James Version (NKJV)

6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.

We must consider the entire redemptive work of Christ Jesus and not focus solely upon His death. We were not only crucified with Him but we were also raised from spiritual death and seated with Him in heavenly places in His resurrection and ascension. The wonderful good news is that everything we will ever need for time and eternity has already been provided for us. On the cross He cried, "It is finished!" We can't add anything to something that is already done. As we spend time in communion with God we actually *partake* of the power of resurrection which transforms and enables us to face the issues of our everyday life. Those who reject or simply *neglect* this heavenly



communion choose to dwell in darkness. Communion with God is experienced in many forms and I don't wish to expound on that right now but when there is a desire for God above all else each person will be guided by the Holy Spirit as to just what is the best way to commune with God and receive the much needed resurrection power. If we face life depending upon mere human will power we shall be disappointed at every turn. The power of resurrection will affect every area of our life and bring love, joy, and peace both to ourselves and to others that we relate to, even if it is just a casual contact. Who could ask for more?

GOD'S LOVE TRANSFORMS

“Never underestimate the power of God's love - it transforms! It reaches the spark of good in the other person and the person is disarmed.”--Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Works in Her Own Words - Pg. 32



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