

Tending Ancient Paths

The Paradigms, Posture, and Practices of Jesus

The Way, The Truth, The Life...

The Way, The Truth, The Life which leads to eternal life. Jesus said lots of things about 'eternal life' to His friends: anyone who believes in Me will have 'eternal life' (John 3:16) or, this is 'eternal life' that you may know the One True God (John 17:3). For many of us, our best imagination of eternal life is this idea of a disembodied spirit, a disembodied God, and Jesus all hanging out in a mystical place. But what does the word eternal mean? Roughly translated from the original language it means **'the age to come'**. The first century Jews were looking for just that, an age when the leadership of God would be known and experienced among men! Beloved, that is exactly what Jesus proclaims as He begins His ministry - repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand - it is among you! Do we have a hope of Heaven after this life - yes- but perhaps we should awaken to the idea that Jesus intended that this 'age to come' is now and is among us.

In John 14 Jesus begins by saying, 'In my Father's house are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you...for I go to prepare a place for you.' This passage is often read at funerals because we seem to have one image in our mind- 'Heaven'. I think Jesus had another! Jesus' friends just heard Him say 'I'm leaving and where I am going you cannot follow' (Jn 13:36). And He gives them directions, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me...if you have seen me you have seen the Father.' (Jn 14:6-7). Remember, Jesus is revealing the 'age to come' not just as a hope for heaven. So I submit that John 14:15-12 reveals what the way, the truth, and the life look like in the age to come.

The Way? The way is Love (Jn 14:15,21). The Way of Jesus that He revealed in His life and invited us to is self giving love and forgiveness that is ultimately displayed on a Cross! 'The Way' is not about knowing the right answers to a bible quiz. The Way of Jesus is love and to be blunt, living any other way is just religious drivel. Maybe another way of saying this is that if we are not living from love we relegate ourselves and others to the orphanages of the world...here is a crude definition of orphaned thinking - people are things to be used to get what I need because at the end of the day I am alone. In this mind set things are valued and people are used - which is completely opposite of what we see in Jesus who loves and values all people. Every time we love we reveal the 'age to come'. 1 John 3 says, 'We know we have passed from death to life if we love one another!' Interesting, Jesus says 57 times this exhortation - Love - I am giving you one command - Love. The Way of the Kingdom is Love beloved! It is the primary diagnostic of the heart. So here is a great question as we consider the 'age to come' we have been invited into by Jesus - In what ways did I love today?

The Truth is the Paraclete who tells the truth! Paraclete means Counselor, Advocate, Helper, Comforter and is translated as such in many translations. Each of those words has had great importance for me at different times. Holy Spirit you are my counselor, my helper, my comforter, and my advocate. Coming from my strong Reform background it was more the idea of having a really good attorney in the courtroom of heaven which was such a comfort - that Jesus would be my advocate to plead on my behalf for my weak and broken state. This image of Jesus as my attorney, defending me from God the great judge sadly remained my image of the paraclete for a long time but when I started to examine what Jesus' intercession was all about I realized it wasn't about me! The Truth of the Paraclete is not that He is representing us before God but rather He is representing God before us. How did Jesus say this - vs 16-17, I will ask the Father and He will give you 'another' helper...what? Who was the first? Jesus! The Passion Translation says it like this, "*And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Savior, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like me—and He will never leave you.*" Oh my goodness, there is a thought to ponder.

The Life? I have come that they would have life Jn 10:10. Beloved, life is about union with Him - life with Him now! The Spirit of Truth is revealing life in our union with God - vs 18-20. *In my Father's house there are many dwelling places...* Jesus only uses that word twice - both times in chapter 14. I wonder if you have, like me, always had your imagination captured by a far off dwelling place...Yet in verse 23 He locates that dwelling place, ***We will make our dwelling place with Him...***

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

Beloved every time you and I embody God's life and spirit in the present we are revealing living in and revealing the **life** of the age to come!

Especially for some of us who have come out of strong Pentecostal or charismatic backgrounds we need to hear this - yes, the Spirit of God can come with powerful encounters but let me also clearly state this - the Spirit of Truth is not a 'hat trick' limited to a euphoric moment. The Spirit of Truth is everywhere through our thoughts, our words, and our actions, that look like Jesus. What if we began to demystify John 14? What if eternal life begins now? What if this is about learning to live differently here and now? To live where **The Way** is love, **The Truth** is revealing God's love to us and us to others, and **The Life** is about living in loving communion day to day with God?

After Peri Zahnd fell and broke her arm while leading a trip in Israel, she posted Psalm 91 in her daily blog. One of her fellow travelers asked why she would post a scripture talking about God not letting our foot trip and fall after having a fall. This was her beautiful and profound response.

I do believe in miracles, with all my heart. At the same time, we live in a world subject to the laws of creation. Miracles do occur, but by definition a miracle is out of the ordinary. In this world, when I trip and fall, I most often end up on the ground. I would be reckless and haphazard if I believed that my body was not subject to gravity. I wouldn't be human, I'd be superhuman—just a cartoon caricature.

His mercies are, however, not out of the ordinary and we experience them every day. Sadly, we don't naturally perceive them. Part of our task in this world is to develop the spiritual perception that is an attribute of the fully mature human. To once again walk and talk with God in the garden of his beautiful creation, to learn to remain in constant communion with God, in continual awareness of his goodness and mercies.

Beloved, the way, the truth, and the life leading to the age to come is here. It is now. We don't have to convince God to bring it as He has already given it and it is readily available. The choice for us is to simply lay hold of it. He is love.

Peace and Blessings—Ben and Denise , to hear this message in full go to IHOPFW.COM

Prayer and blessing in response:

Living and gracious God,
through the death and resurrection of Jesus
Christ
you have brought us out to a spacious place
where we are called to live as those
redeemed.

Empower us by your spirit to keep your
commandments,

that we may show forth your love
with gentle word and reverent deed
to all your people. Amen.

(From Vanderbilt Lectionary)

*The world now is too dangerous
and too beautiful for anything but love.
May your eyes be so blessed you see God in
everyone. Your ears, so you hear the cry of
the poor. May your hands be so blessed
that everything you touch is a sacrament.
Your lips, so you speak nothing but the truth
with love. May your feet be so blessed you
run to those who need you. And may your
heart be so opened, so set on fire,
that your love, your love, changes
everything.*

— [Black Rock Prayer Book](#)

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Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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