

"TRUTH: into the light"

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– Luke 12:1-12

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Luke 12:1-12 *In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is*

hypocrisy. 2 "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 "Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. 4 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! 6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. 11 "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

We live in a day when truth is a rare commodity. From governments, to those who pull the strings of our cultural and social surroundings, it's hard to find anyone who will just straight up tell you the truth and let the chips fall where they may. We're softer now in this generation it seems...less willing and less likely to take a blow to our self-centered egos and our fragile sensibilities. We are `self-entitled` and we think the world owes us something...*maybe everything*, simply because we are here and we are alive. So when truth hurts or even fails to illicit good feelings, I often reject it and reject dishing it out.

We are consumer motivated and we are told what is hip...what to wear, and what music to listen to. Seldom does one break from the pack and blaze his own trail. The high gurus of hollywood and the social priests of fashion and earthly world view tell us what is truth and just as the Bible predicted would come to pass in the last days, men have flocked to have their ears itched like an ecstatic puppy, and we wag our tails in glee. It doesn't matter whether it is really the truth, it only matters that it feels good and it seems to be about the most important thing in our worlds: ME. Truth today is what I say it is. I speak it, and it therefore becomes the truth.

But then along came this man Jesus. He never pandered, He never bowed to the passing fancies of a passing world. He spoke the truth and for some it set them free and for others, it set them on a fire of fury. Therefore both then and now, there was those who wanted to follow Him, and those who wanted to kill Him. But He never flinched. He was the quintessential truth and truth giver...the most righteous of men, and holy deity at the same time.

It seems that the error in all of this begins merely with a whiff of dishonesty...just a hint exaggeration or a stretch of bravado. But Jesus likens this practice to `leaven`, or `yeast`. If you have done any serious baking as I have, you understand what He was saying. The more you grasp the nature and nuances of yeast in bakery, the more you appreciate the picture that Christ is drawing up here. Because the elements of dishonesty...however small in their

genesis, invariably grow like a cancer until it all becomes so deep that no one even remembers the point of origin anymore and there is no longer a baseline of fact in which to measure the current field of play.

The 20 or 30 something crowd were born long after much of our historical linchpins were put in place, let alone would they know why they were there to begin with. Thus with no real basis and grounding for their beliefs...nothing anchored in historical understanding, they are left to be blown about like a tumbleweed in the winds of culture. Our social and cultural paradigms are now built out of ever changing fads and fancies...from our political constructs to our sexual identities, our family dynamics to our relational practices. The bottom line is that without Christ, there was then no foundation and every day it is clearer that there is none today. We have built our house with shifting sand and the wind and waves are destroying us.

But along comes this carpenter's son from a little nothing town who was unafraid to throw down with the big boys. He likened their words and teachings to `yeast`: something which would start small and perhaps would be thought to be harmless or inconsequential but in fact would be something that would spread through one's life and ultimately change one's look, composition, and purpose. This is the roots of our worldview. We see this practically today through the radicalization of young men and women for ISIS, the indoctrination of racial superiority, the bully pulpit of sexual revolution and the adherence to the beckoning of the pied pipers of fashion, music, and the arts.

The tools in that day was the power and control of the intelligentsia, the broader religious machine with their hierarchy and abuse of position and power, the exploitation of the poor and uneducated, along with simple tried and proven aspects of superstition and fear. Today however the weapons of choice are the various social media platforms, the secular public school system, a liberal leaning Hollywood, news outlets with an agenda, and a very skewed scientific community more steeped in politics than measurable facts.

A large crowd of people had gathered around Jesus who were hungry for some real truth. Just like today, so many were flocking to Christ, starving for the black and white of fact...wanting so badly to shake off the nuances and grays of personal opinion, the ever changing social standards, the hypocrisy of the world and the blur of situational ethics. We want a rock to stand on. We want a God that never changes. Because if He *does* change, we cannot count on Him, and we then are relegated to try to find security in the shifting sands of this world, *with* this world. There is one inalienable attribute and qualifying aspect in truth...and that is it **does not change**. God said that He was the "*same yesterday, today and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8): that He "*never changes*." (Numbers 23:19, James 1:17, Malachi 3:6) The key ingredients to such hypocrisy is concealment and masquerade. But God is not hiding the truth from us. What you see is what you get. He knows all things, and there is nothing that He does not know. He may not explain every move He makes to us, but He never said He would.

The great enemy of hypocrisy and untruth is the simple element of time. It may take a while, but sooner or later the light of truth will always shine. Such has been the case throughout history. Discovered crimes long since forgotten, recorded words that came to light or dash cams which present a picture that `speaks a thousand words.` Jesus knew this truth, saying "Your sins will find you out." Last year Reinhold Hanning, a former SS sergeant, was convicted at age 94 on 170,000 counts of accessory to murder for serving as an Auschwitz guard. It all came to light just before he died last month. Then there is the 27 years of searching that finally found the killer of young Jacob Wetterling. As the old X files mantra says "The truth is out there."

What is the motivation of all of this dishonesty? The reasons are many. From want and greed, to fear and a desire to avoid confrontation. We move in such a way to save face or to avoid discomfort. One can easily see that Christ could have avoided a lot of pain, suffering and of course His ultimate murder had He just toned it down and kept out of the fray. One cannot help but remember the famous quote by Edmund Burke "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*"

Jesus herein tackles one of the great reasons for avoidance of truth, and that is fear of bodily harm. No wiggle room is given and no latitude is offered. Jesus tells us plainly that we should not fear those who would do us harm. Ahhh, “easier said than done” we’re thinking no doubt! Yet he *is* calling us forth into a level of faith and commitment that is unprecedented in this world, isn’t He? No apology or special circumstances are offered. It’s not that Christ is naïve as to what He is asking. He tenderly calls the listeners His ‘friends.’ He knows what He is asking is difficult in the flesh, yet must we be reminded that He sent His Holy Spirit to empower us for that which the world would think to be impossible?

Does this mean we should live our lives like a bull in a china shop and burn people to the ground by going out of our way to point out their flaws and shortcomings? After all, it may very well be a fact of truth, so should we say whatever comes to mind without regard to loving tenderness? No. We have no record of Jesus making an appointment with the high priest or the Roman ruler to ‘put them in their place.’ But the Father did provide for circumstances and situations where He ‘put people in Christ’s way’ that acted and spoke in ways that brought issues to the forefront of discussion and occurrence that demanded truth. These were and are “teaching moments.” Yet I find no instruction to lead us to be ‘sin-sniffers.’ We are not Saviors nor are we the embodiment of truth and integrity. We are not the example: Jesus is!

The reason we fall short in this area is that we fear man more than we fear God. We fear what others will think of us or fear we will not be as well liked. Sadly, such is ever so important to most of us because we even yet acquire our value and worth from the esteem and support of others instead of from God. Much of the decline in morality and honor for God and kingdom comes from the fact that we have lost much of our fear of God. The ‘ah’ and respect has been lost in the casualness of the modern church dynamic. We have shunned ‘high church’ thinking with its protocols, rituals and showboat trappings but along with it we seemed to have lost the reverence and humility before an awesome Creator God.

We are a ‘blue jean church’ now, and we wear clothes to church that we honestly wouldn’t wear to work! Am I suggesting we go back to the suit and tie dynamic of my childhood? I hope not. It was pretentious and most often lacked the heart that should be behind such action. But do we even give these issues thought anymore? Do our casual attitudes concerning church, our attendance, our priorities and our interaction carry over into a casual attitude toward our interaction and living before God? Is He now the ‘big daddy’ and our ‘buddy’ rather than our Creator, our Savior, and our judge? He *owns* us you know! We are to be His bond slaves. And He is NOT ok with our often flippant attitudes toward holiness and obedience! Again, we must be reminded that He has not changed, so we must be careful when **we** do.

Always and forever our relationship with God and with man must be driven by love. And even in this fact, we have to remember that man’s love...*earthly love*, is not the standard...it is not the example. We so often fail to manifest the level or dynamic of *His* love because we think He loves us like mankind loves. Yet man’s love is incomplete, often self-serving, and is generally conditional. God’s love is absent of all of these earthly failings, and thus our love for Him and for each other must also be without such added aspects. God’s love is sometimes uncomfortable to receive and uncomfortable to mete out. It does not always ‘feel good’ nor does it always reflect the attributes of support and positive backing of someone’s actions. God’s version of love, according to 1 Corinthians 13, often *suffers*, and *does not seek its own benefit*. It does not *rejoice in sin* but rather *rejoices in truth*. So no, I cannot always support you when you desire to seek some life path or acquire some position or earthly issue. Even if you will like me more if I do, to do so is to love myself, not the love of *you*.

Human love says you never allow pain or even discomfort for the one you love, but that is not the case with God love. Human love mandates understanding but God's does not. Human love is *emotionally* based, while God's love is *factually* and *eternally* based and geared toward one's development and what's best for that individual. The closest *earthly* relationship is that of a parent. But having lost most of that skill over the past few decades, such may be harder to practice than it should be.

The emphasis here is that God has 'got your back.' He knows you and loves you and cares for you on a level that seems like you are the only person on earth! He knows how many hairs are on your head, and that's a difficult task for some of us! The irony of such a truth is that over the past few years I have dealt with many situations where people wanted to negate that fact when it served them in the flesh. For example people that confessed that God knows everything, but then believe that our marriage mates can be chosen off the shelf and love will follow. Well, that's convenient when you want to marry more than you want to marry the one God has chosen for you. And for the record, yes, I believe that God has chosen the *one* for you, and your mate for life is not a can of soup to be selected from the soup isle and that you will "develop a love" for them after purchase. Such a concept is not part of the God I follow. And you don't have a shred of biblical evidence to support a premise to the opposite.

That does not mean that your mate won't take a hike away from God in the future and you will never be given another. But it does mean that, again, God was not surprised or that He didn't know it was going to go down that way. I do not understand why such would be allowed, but God has the whole world in His hands and frankly may have used you to solidify position in another, even allowing pain to occur in the process. But God does not always explain *why*, and if you are demanding such you will surely be disappointed. We refer to Him as "my God" but in fact you belong to **Him** if you are His redemptive child.

Next in this passage, Jesus issues a warning concerning the "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit." Such often causes unneeded fearfulness in children of God, but is often ignored by those who ought to sit up and pay attention. This should be a constant 'litmus test' of our position in Him. Jesus is speaking to those who are redeemed or at least to those who believe themselves to be so. Jesus said, "...and when He (the Holy Spirit) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8); and that "He will testify of Me" (John 15:26). Therefore, when we continue to reject the work the Holy Spirit wants to do *in* us and *with* us ...when we have a continued, settled rejection of what He desires for our lives, then we have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and such simply says that you are not a Christian at all.

Scripture emphatically states that if we love and follow Christ, we will obey Him. Luke 6:46 "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?*" Matthew 7:21 "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" This is the truth, and though it may offend you, I tell you the same because to fail to do so is not love at all. And the reality of your position in this will certainly come to light, albeit it make take some time. But the light will indeed shine on the truth of who we are!

I'm not going to hunt you down to club you over the head with this truth, but if you call me your pastor I will not lie to you and tell you that you are ok if the clear manifest of your life says otherwise. I am not your judge, but I am your brother! And I trust Him to give me the right words at the right time. It is my calling...and yours too, to actually practice love and care and step up to the plate to speak the truth. I will confess Him before you and all men, for to not do so is to plug my ears to the Spirit's leading.