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## SOMETHING DIFFERENT COMES MY WAY

I have been running into something a bit different since moving to this new town that I live in. When I lived in Bozeman, it seemed easier to talk to people about Jesus, God, the Kingdom message and all the rest of the subjects about those subjects. While living in Bozeman, I seemed to run into people who wanted to be taught differently. They may have had their thoughts and opinions and maybe even settled in their ways yet there seem to be something there that allowed for civilized discussions. It didn't happen all the time, there were times when I did run into people who were not sure of their doctrines and not wanting to change and they did negatively regard me. With my Christian blog, I found myself with a huge group of people who were open to the word of God and wanted to be taught His truth and his Gospel message. They were very excited to learn. So what I'm saying is I have dealt with all sorts of people over my 40 years as a Christian, a variety of people in a variety of situations yet none of them have perplexed me as much as the people whom I'm dealing with today in this place where I now live. It may be because as I jokingly say there are 12 churches here and 6 bars. We seem to have one very enthusiastic group but small enough that I will not call it a megachurch. But they are quite a lively group and the more chairs they fill are how they judge the growth. That church has quite a reputation. The others in town are your usual run-of-the-mill denominational churches. I have talked to quite a few people and the reaction to me has been quite different than I have encountered in the past. I am used to being treated negatively or being looked at with annoyance, and I can deal with that. But I have been encountering hostility lately in many new forms and I am finding that very hard to deal with. Why the hostility? Why that slammed doors? Why not a crack of openness for friendly discussions?

So I endeavored to think about this and have been for quite some time and I've come up with this: TRUTH. What is the truth? Where does it from? Can it be found? Can we know the truth? These may seem like silly questions when you first think about it but in reality, it is necessary to stop and think about that for a minute. Because, that is the foundation or should be, from what we know and then approach people with confidence. Now you would think that this is what we are doing. I say us but I mean I. I thought that was what I was doing. I started to feel like I was slipping into a dangerous area of wanting to be a negotiator, people pleaser, nice person, allowing openness to everyone's thoughts without standing

on my own truth, and I was not liking these feelings. I began to be really convicted that God wanted me/us to get to the bottom of this dilemma. So I have been praying about it and studying and thinking about just what is the truth and especially what is God's truth.

There are several verses in the Scripture about proclaiming the gospel with all boldness:

Acts 4:29 "and now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that your bondservants may speak your word with all confidence."

Acts 9:28 "and Paul was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly the name of the Lord."

Acts 13:46 "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly."

Acts 18:26 "and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to Paul the way of God more accurately."

Acts 19:8 "and Paul entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for 3 months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God."

Acts 28:31 "preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness unhindered."

The other half of the problem that I see, in the battle to share the truth with people, besides my own inadequacies described above is that sometimes the feelings of confusion can come in and say to us that maybe we are not really qualified as we think we are to be sharing God's truth with others. Confusion, because you have been trying for some time and it hasn't worked out and that in turn creates feelings of doubt. Doubting that you are capable. You may start to wonder if you even know what you're talking about after a certain point. (Maybe because of the stares or the blank looks they give you!) This can lead to feelings of uncertainty. If you are not watchful, this can lead to apathy. Doubting is a very evil tool of Satan as is getting to a point where you're not caring as much.

Since I was struggling with all these negative thoughts and feelings and finding myself more compromising than I normally am I set out to rediscover just what the word of God was saying about the word "TRUTH."

The first thing I did was to remind myself that God is God and that He is the creator of this world. I remembered David's Psalm 19: 1-6

“The heavens declare the glory of God;

the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words;

no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice[b] goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.”

He created all things and because He did, that must mean that He created truth. God is the truth. All truth starts with God. When you choose to deny that there isn't a divine deity, God, then you also end up choosing that there is no truth. Reality is what it is because God declared it so and made it so. Therefore, God is the author, the source, the determiner, the ultimate standard and final judge of all truth. One writer that I read gave this definition:

"Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God. Truth is the self-expression of God." jm

Truth means nothing apart from God. Truth cannot be explained, recognize, understood or defined without God as the source. God alone is eternal, self-existent, and He alone is the Creator. God is the truth – that's it – it's that simple – it's straight to the point. If God is the Creator, He created truth, He is truth, and He gave that truth to Jesus who gave us the message of truth and He gave it to his apostles and we still have that same message of God's truth today and we have the Holy Spirit within us to remind us about that same message of God's truth.

John 1:17 "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Let's look at some other Scriptures:

2 Thessalonians 2:10 Paul is talking about Satan and verse 10 says "with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved."

John 8:32 Jesus speaking to the 12, "you will know the truth, and the truth was set you free."

Proverbs 23:23 Solomon said, "buy the truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding."

1st Timothy 3:15 Paul writing to Timothy says, "I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

Just a few Scriptures of many, on truth, these written by Paul, Jesus, and Solomon.

We all know that there were many martyrs in the days of old. Some were even the Apostles. We all know the story of Michael Servetus martyrdom. They all died for "The Truth." They would not renounce Christ and the message he brought and they all died for it. They stood for the truth of God's word.

2 Timothy 3:12 "Indeed, all those who desire to live Godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

2 Timothy 4:1-4 Paul says to Timothy, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his Kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."

In this Scripture, we see we must fight for doctrinal truth. Some people just want their ears tickled. In the world today people don't seem to take "spiritual truth" seriously. We need to be bold about telling God's truth. We need to be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have.

1 Peter 3:15 "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

God gave us our minds to perceive truth and to comprehend right from wrong. God has wired into us how to choose right from wrong, love over hate, greed over giving, and humbleness over pride, etc. God has also given us a conscience.

Not only did God give us our minds to perceive and comprehend but he also gave

us evidence to see Him. We are never left alone by ourselves to figure things out for ourselves. God has given us all the things that we need to know Him and His word.

God clearly made himself known to us through creation and nature.

Romans 1:19 "Since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

The starting point for getting a fundamental concept of truth has to start with acknowledging that there is a God. Faithful Christians know the truth. And they believe it with their whole heart. They have faithful obedience to God's truth and show faithful obedience when they know with everything they are that they have been forgiven of their sins. They understand the sacrifice of Jesus. They know the love the Father has for all of us because He sent His only son for us. Jesus our sacrificial lamb.

Our individual ideas of God's truth can change by our constant growing day by day, by prayer and by our study. We all start with the milk of the word until we gain the ability to eat meat as Peter said.

1st Peter 2:2 "Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 Paul said, "Brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual man, but as to men flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed even now you are not yet able, and you are still fleshly."

Truth itself doesn't change we may change our way of thinking by our growth in the study of the word but we never try to redefine that truth or I should say God's truth. A warning in Romans chapter 2:8 "those who are self-seeking reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."

In the final judgment, there will be those who rejected whatever truth was available to them. God is just, He is righteous, and He will hold unbelievers and believers alike responsible for obedience to his clear revelation which is

unrefutable proof that God exists and that He is truth. Reality is created and truth is defined by God. That makes what is true, – true for everyone. Regardless of our opinions, our feelings or our preferences.

This is where Satan and the principalities of darkness will attack us. In our feelings and our opinions and our pride because we have a habit of wanting to be right. God versus Satan. To say something in the Bible is not clear and to say something in the Bible that is understood is really just a "mystery" has been a major point of contention in our churches and our own personal stories of reaching out to others. We are now living in a world of more than 37,000 churches all with varying opinions. Some with attendees that God clearly says are living in sin. I am not picking on any particular group but we now have a church that allows gay people, people living together without marriage, abusive persons mistreating families, claiming to be Christians yet living in sin. Let's just call it what it is... It is sin! Others do not attend church because they don't like the conflict. This should not be. Again, it is a spiritual war between Satan and God. It is a war on speaking the truth of God's word. It's beginning to be a battle that we need to stand up to and do what the Scripture says and say it with all boldness and love, standing for God's truth.

I believe this is a spiritual battle because I've read Ephesians...

Ephesians 6:10-20

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of people comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of TRUTH buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

What was, in the garden with Eve, is the same today. The word of God is very clear. There is no ambiguity, no question of who is in charge, no question that God can be clearly seen in nature or in the creation itself. Truth also includes historical facts. We have history to show us actual information that there was Jesus, he was born, that he died on the cross, that he rose from the dead, and we have evidence of Noah and the flood. We also have evidence of the creation itself, we have historical facts about the Jewish people. This is the 21st century we definitely have vast amounts of historical information regarding places and times in our history about all of this and it is under the umbrella of truth.

If truth is the Umbrella and under that we have historical proof, and we have God revealed to us in various ways, i.e., nature, if we have the word of God revealed to us and we have the message passed on to us through Jesus and then to the 12 and written down for us . . . With all that evidence of historical truth, how can we say that there is no God? Can we not see that He exists and that He is the truth? Everything that is written has to be said from that perspective. God is real, and God is the truth – end of the subject!

Don't we have a responsibility, a duty to uphold truth against man speculations, hypotheses or their opinions? Aren't we supposed to bring every thought captive to Christ? I believe we are definitely in a battle for truth not just in the world but among our own Christian community.

We know the information about Eve in Genesis 3. In the beginning in the garden, Satan questioned God's truth. That's where it all began. " Did God say?" Those words will forever be implanted in my brain... Did God say? What Satan is doing here, the greatest evil of all, is that Satan is contradicting what God has just told Adam and Eve. Satan then gives an alternative version of the truth. And lastly, Satan mixes the truth with lies. Contradiction, distorting the truth, alternating the truth, mixing God's Truth/word up into a war of words... What do you get in the end? A BIG FAT LIE! God is TRUTH, He spoke, that should have been the end of it!

Satan is the god of this world. Satan is the father of lies. At first, Satan contradicts God's truth. When that doesn't work, he gives an alternative version of the truth, and he doesn't give up too easily for the last thing he does he mixes lies with contradictions and just like that, he has distorted the entire truth of God's word.

Total dishonesty and we are still dealing with it, not just in our world but in our

Christian world. Today's Christian churches seem to want a friendly atmosphere, open acceptance of everyone, tolerance of opposing ideas and they seem to want charitable dialogue.

The idea of "Can't we all be friends" and be "Friends of God" at the same time will never work for the Christian community!

James 4: 4 "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

Evangelism as a movement historically stood for biblical doctrine. Biblical truth was not pliable to them. They were committed to the purity of the gospel. William Tyndale was one of the 1st ones to speak of, "evangelical truth." The word evangelical derives from the Greek word gospel. The gospel at the time was treated as the core and foundation of truth. At that time, evangelicals did not elevate good works over sound doctrine. They insisted good works were the fruit of faith and not a substitute for faith.

In today's Christian world, this is not always true. Now it seems it's more about acceptance of all regardless of God's truth and that is sin. Living together, being gay, abortion, being abusive to your family, etc. is not acceptable behavior! It is SIN, let us just call it what it really is...sin! In the Christian churches today it's like let's just all be friendly and have acceptance for everyone. With more tolerance for sin rather than confronting sin is setting a horrible example for our world. No wonder there is so much confusion about God and Jesus. No wonder people seem to be content as pew warmers. Where is the challenge to grow, to do better? Where is God's truth in our Christian community today? Where are the TRUTH seekers?

How will Christians learn the truth of God's word? How will the Christian communities learn the responsibility of how God expects us to live so we can be with him forever when he returns...this really hurts my heart to think about. What about the baby Christians or even those who don't know the Bible or have a background in a church setting. How then are we supposed to be effective to them to grow them up in the truth of God's word? There can be no spiritual transformation. And, that makes it wrong on so many levels. We are responsible for one another. Jesus' great commission was very clear on that:

Matthew 28: 16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The mega-churches of today are more interested in packing seats, selling books, entertainment, and filling their coffers. With so many thousands of people in attendance who gets one on one spiritual care? You could really hide in a megachurch. Your personal responsibility to God, your accountability to God can go unchecked. You could just continue to play the 'church' game and be entertained for an hour. That is horribly sad!

Speaking up and expressing yourself, your thoughts, your opinions and ideas is a good thing. God did give us our brains to think and just not check at the door. Yet I don't understand why when it comes to the clear, understandable message of God we enter into so many theories, ideas, concepts, twisting the scriptures so that they don't even resemble anything God ever said. In my head, I do understand the 3rd and 4th century and how it happened yet at the same time I am so totally bewildered at why a person cannot sit down with their bible and in their own quiet space actually read what God said and that Jesus agreed with. The 12 apostles agreed with it also and left us with the words so clearly! I just don't get that. In my head, yes. In my heart, no way! I always think of it as Jesus giving us this perfect Rubik's cube with all the colors in place. But along came satan with all his lies, infiltrating the minds of men, who took that cube and completely mixed all the colors up. Praise be to God, when Jesus comes he will straighten that all up and every knee will bow! Just like Philippians 2: 10-11 tells us. There will be no atheists in Hell!

I think this is part of the reason why it's difficult to talk to people about God's kingdom message. It seems like they are locked into their "churches" or "Christian community" I wonder if it seems comfortable to them? My Christian community doesn't always feel comfortable to me. I think that we do a good job of challenging each other to share God's truth, to be obedient to God's truth, to love better each day, to give more each day and I believe our hope is anchored in knowing factual information that Jesus will return and we will spend eternity with Him in the new

Kingdom. It's been frustrating to me that people don't have a hunger or a drivenness to know God's true word and the words that Jesus said and the Apostles said and wrote for us. The Christian communities today do not even open their Bibles. This is astounding to me!

It is a shame! It is an insult to God who created us to have fellowship with Him! It is an insult to Jesus and to the debt he gave on the cross for us and for our salvation. It is an insult to all the martyrs who have died for the truth of God's word.

The more this happens, the longer it goes on, the consequences are that Christians seem less and less willing to fight for the truth. People are in spiritual warfare and that is worse than actual combat. Remember this is not flesh and blood war it is a spiritual war.

Satan is a liar and he is the god of this world as I said before, plain and simple, he can confuse what we know into a confused soup if we allow it. We must always be ready. We must always be aware of. We are truth seekers. We are true believers and we are called, sanctified and preserved in him. I don't believe in once saved always saved and I believe we can be misled.

Hebrew's 6:4-6 "It is impossible for those who had once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance crucifying the son of God all over again and subjecting him to the public's grace."

I said in the beginning of this conversation with you that I felt I was starting to compromise in the name of "getting along." Struggling with feelings of wanting to please people and to let people have their opinions while at the same time expressing my own with what I considered to be too much gentleness. After studying this I now understand that I must be bold. Compromise is not an option. People-pleasing in the name of Jesus' love for one another is not an option. I can speak truth boldly and in love without compromising. I must, you must or God's truth, the truth that Jesus came and He died for must be kept alive. Compromise, people-pleasing, wanting to get along to get along, those are my negative hangups which I must overcome.

In the battle for truth or if you want to call it a war for truth, there is no place for

those attitudes. I think that's what the book of Jude was trying to say. You can also take a look at the book of 2nd John. John used the word truth 5 times and in the 3rd book of John, John uses the word truth 6 times in 14 verses. I believe we are supposed to be preaching the word of God's truth and in all boldness. It is a matter of spiritual life or spiritual death for everyone.

We can't win souls for Christ by being nice, nonchalant, agreeable or fun-loving people. We have to stop being people pleasers in the name of harmony!

Now let's not go out immediately and do the opposite of all of this and cause all sorts of divisiveness or divisions. Let's not go out like storm troopers. That is not Christ's way. I also wrestle with the black and white of God's truth. God says the truth about how we should live, how we should act towards one another. The misconceptions about 'once saved always saved' and 'grace only' and many other twisted scriptures should not stop us from kindly leading others to find their way to the truth of God's word. It is a balance that calls for boldness and love. As Peter said, "God wants all men to come to repentance." That should be our goal, being a light to lead them out of the darkness.

TRUTH IS NOT:

A campaign to fix someone's religious creed.

It is not a battle of wits over the theological fine points.

It is not an argument for sports.

It is not a debate to show you're smarter than someone else.

It's not a battle of academics.

It's not arguing about ideologies.

And it's definitely not a game.

We must use mature wisdom and careful discernment. We must, more importantly, be in constant prayer always. We must pray to seek God's wisdom and God's will. We must do God's will not our own in all things. We are called to be "seed planters."

I like to think of myself as a seed planter. I do not have the power to grow plants. I do not have the power to control people. I have no illusions about these things. But I can plant a seed, that I can do!

1st Corinthians 6:5-9 "After all, who is Apollo's? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants. You believe the good news. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I

planted the seeds in your hearts, and Apollo's watered it, but it was our God made it grow. It is not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. The one who plants and the one who waters works together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. For we are both Gods' workers. And you are God's field."

#### IN CONCLUSION:

- 1 – Know there is a God
- 2 – God is the creator
- 3 – God is the truth
- 4 – We had this truth passed on to us
- 5 – Speak boldly.
- 6 – Don't Compromise Your Truth, just don't!

1st Peter 1:3-9 "Praises be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. And all this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trial. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and you are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

SO...What have I come away with from all of this?

There is only 1 Truth...God's.

One Word...God's

Doctrinal truth is not subject to peoples opinions, thoughts or ideas or interpretations.

God's truth is very clear and uncomplicated.

I want to stop hovering between 2 worlds...nice, people pleasing and being bold and honest.

I am going to trust more and totally stand on what I have read, studied, & prayed about.

I will be bold!