

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

November 2009

The Truth That Sets Us Free



John 2 highlights Christ's first miracle. Wouldn't you expect it to be something earthshaking?

So what did Jesus do for an opener? He turned water into wine. Why? So the hosts could be saved embarrassment and the people could laugh, dance, and enjoy the wedding feast. What He did was no great declaration of truth. It was just a thoughtful act of grace.

In contrast, the very next scene shows Jesus making a whip, turning over tables, and driving merchants out of the temple courts, shouting, "How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

Jesus was consumed with His Father's righteous standards. He wouldn't tolerate disregard for holiness and truth. The grace of the wedding feast still in the air, what He did in the

temple courtyards was a striking affirmation of truth.

Like two suns that revolve around each other to form a binary star, truth and grace are equal, essential, and inseparable. One may momentarily eclipse the other, but soon its twin emerges over the horizon to take its rightful place alongside.

In John 1, we're told Jesus came full of grace and truth. In John 2, we're given a demonstration of grace followed by a demonstration of truth. They are juxtaposed, startlingly paradoxical. Yet encompassed in the person of Jesus, they are entirely consistent.

The ancient, historical Jesus came full of grace and truth. The modern mythological Jesus comes full of tolerance and relativism. Even in the church truth is sometimes buried under subjectivism and cowardice, while grace is lost in a sea of permissiveness and indifference.

Without truth, we lack courage to speak and convictions to speak about.

Without grace, we lack compassion to meet people's deepest needs. ...

The Christian life is not based on avoiding the truth but on hearing and submitting to it. The greatest kindness we can offer each other is the truth.

We've been schooled that it's inappropriate to say anything negative. Being a good witness once meant faithfully representing Christ, even when it meant being unpopular. Now it means "making people like us."

We've redefined *Christlike* to mean "nice."

By that definition, Christ wasn't always Christlike. He confronted people with sin, raised His voice, threw tables, and called people snakes, blind hypocrites, and white-washed tombs. If we don't talk about sin and hell because we want to be nice, we're trying to be nicer than Jesus, who spoke a great deal about both.

[Taken from *The Grace and Truth Paradox* by Randy Alcorn]

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Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve...

by Bill Johnson

Will we ever see the peaceful, prosperous America that many of us have known? If I were a betting man, I'd weigh solidly on the answer, "No."

We, like the Israelites, have squandered our great heritage. We have taken God for granted. Having been richly blessed year after year, we expected that no matter what we did - whether we worshipped Him or whether we turned out backs upon Him - made no difference. We were, after all, America - the land of the Free. The home of the brave.

Though I wasn't raised in a Christian household, we did go to church on occasion. I know that in the 1940s and '50s and well into the '60s very few businesses were open on Sundays. The Lord's Day was honored even if many people didn't have a clue why businesses were largely closed on Sunday.

Little by little though that all began to change in the late '70s and '80s. Chain

stores came into town. Fast food restaurants like McDonald's and Burger King bought property and set up shop. Department stores began to get a foot hold.

In my community I recall quite well that a chain department store became the first in the community to open their doors for business on Sundays. There were letters to the editor in our local newspaper from Christians concerned about the diminishment of the Lord's Day. These kinds of letters came over a several week period of time. There weren't a lot of them, but there was some controversy.

Many naysayers probably thought "Life moves on."

So the Lord's Day little by little became like every other day. The church was largely silent regarding setting the day apart for rest and for His glory and honor.

I know, I'm treading in some turbulent waters. Very few honor the Lord's Day anymore in America. And, that's the point.

Do you remember when you would see people bow

their heads and pray before a meal at local restaurants? What a rarity that is today!

Sports teams practicing and playing games on Sundays, placing more emphasis on our children developing as athletes than as Christian men and women equipped to live for Him in our everyday world as pilgrims in a foreign land.

Are these kinds of patterns reflective of a people, of a nation, that has lost its first love? I think the answer is clear.

I understand that it is possible to go through the motions in service - to have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof as the Bible says (II Timothy 3:5). Where that has occurred or is occurring, shame on us! God will not honor that.

Nonetheless, I am merely saying that when a people substitute other things for Him, God will let that people go their own way. Isn't that what we see today? [Romans 1]

May we be bold enough to let God examine our hearts and show us what we need to see, do and be!

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