

JUNE 2022

"TRUTH"

**A SURE WORD
FOR TODAY**



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UPDATE

Life can get pretty intense and that is why sometimes we just need to step back, take a deep breath, and find something to smile about. This month I attempt to help you do this by looking at the labels we sometimes put on ourselves.

I am always amused by the youngsters who ride their bicycles around and wear a name badge that says, "Elder." This is hilarious! I once asked one of these kids why he calls himself an elder and he said that he didn't, but his church did.

Now that clears everything up! 🤔

I didn't write this to try and straighten out anyone's theology but rather to have a little fun. Today it seems we have lost the ability to laugh at ourselves without someone getting offended. If you find yourself getting offended, please don't write me a letter. Your letter might offend me and now there will be two of us missing a chance to relax and smile! Love you!!



FEATURE ARTICLE: "What Is Your Ministry?"

WARNING: You are entering the "TRUTH ZONE". You may not like what you read. At times it may make you feel uncomfortable. That is not my goal. My goal is to speak truth that will provide spiritual guidance for you and your family in a time of great spiritual darkness.

You can be sure that what you read here will be TRUTH!

There are some things I don't understand and many curious questions to which I may never find an answer. They are not a big deal and may never really matter, but still, I find myself wondering: Where is the logic in all this? One of those questions involves Ephesians 4:11-12.

Ephesians 4:11-12

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, **for the work of the ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

It seems to me that this scripture is telling us that the ones doing the work of the ministry are the saints. Would you agree? If that is an accurate observation, then why are evangelists, pastors, and teachers called "ministers" when they are not really the ones doing the ministering? I also wonder why so many saints seek to have a "ministry" and feel this means they must become a pastor, evangelist, or teacher. Some take their name and add the word, 'Ministries' to it, but then bill themselves as a 'teacher'. It's all very confusing.

Okay, I know I'm a wack job who is obsessing over trivial matters and semantics, but I ask, in all this might there be at least a fragment of truth? I believe there is. At a young age, I was called by God to be a pastor. It is all I ever wanted to do and because of God's anointing, I was able to enjoy considerable success. Today I have the advantage of being able to look back and view life through the lens of many experiences.

The first church I ever pastored was in Maxwell, Nebraska. Most have never heard of Maxwell because it is a small town of only about 300 people. The church only had 35 people in it and during our time there it only grew to about 50. I find it interesting that 9 years later when we came to Loveland we inherited a church of about 50 people.

However, the growth rate of the church in Loveland was quite different. We were there for 32 years and when we retired church attendance averaged about 3000. It had been an amazing journey of miracle after miracle.

So, what is my point? Believe it or not, I have always felt that I did more true 'ministry' while in Maxwell than in Loveland. The reason I say that is because so much of my time in Loveland was spent behind a desk conducting board meetings, staff meetings, and planning sessions, whereas my time in Maxwell was spent at the lake, at the gas station, at the town hall with my scout troop, or at ball games and community functions. Wherever I went I interacted with people who had never attended my church and let me know that they wanted nothing to do with the preacher. However, it was just a matter of time until those walls came down and when they did, those same folks would greet me with a big smile and say, "Hey preach, what you up to today?"

Eventually, everyone needs spiritual help, and when that time came the first person people looked to was their friend, who just happened to be a pastor. What a joy it was to point them to Jesus as the one who loved them and would carry them through whatever they were facing.

In no way am I trying to diminish the high calling God gives pastors or teachers. I just want you to see that true ministry is not someone standing behind a pulpit for an hour each week. True ministry is showing people on the street who Jesus is by being like Him. I am trying to encourage you to place a high value on the opportunities God gives you to minister to people at the point of their need. Learn to hear His voice and make yourself available to be a vessel through which He can touch the world with His love.

This is the greatest "ministry" you will ever have and the most fulfilling thing you will ever do.



A MINUTE WITH MISS LINDA



“He Remains Faithful!”

I love spring, and what I love most about it are the babies. We love to take their photos and then share them with you. They are incredibly cute

but oh so weak

and vulnerable. Over and over I find myself wondering how any can possibly survive. Immediately after they come into this world they are surrounded by hungry predators who see them as an easy opportunity to feast. Nevertheless, they do survive and the reason is that they have parents who would give their lives to protect them. From personal experience, I can say, "God help you if they should ever view you as a threat to their babies."

In this amazing display of love, I see a spiritual lesson we all need to learn. When someone is 'born again' immediately they have an enemy who is dedicated to opposing them and if possible destroying their newfound faith. The Bible tells us that Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and the tactics he uses are ruthless and savage. As I look back on my own journey of faith I can't help but wonder how any spiritual babies survive.

One of the first tactics Satan uses is condemnation. When someone is born again the

Holy Spirit takes up residence in them and because of this, they now have an inner voice telling them what is right and what is wrong. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we always obeyed that voice? Yes, it would, but that is not how it works. We all experience failures and when we do Satan is quick to try and make us feel like God is so angry that He has forsaken us. **It is a lie!**

We need to learn that like mothers in nature, God will never leave us or forsake us and He will fight for our spiritual protection and survival even when we have disobeyed Him.

Ephesians 2:8 AMP

For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God...

I am reminded of a pair of warblers that built a nest at our house in the mountains. For the last three years, we have enjoyed them and their babies. After the eggs hatch things begin to get very exciting as both mom and dad constantly fly in and out of the nest with bugs for their babies. As the babies grow they get braver and began venturing out on a wood beam where the nest is located. Last year one got too brave and tried a premature flight which ended in a crash landing. He survived but now he was very vulnerable and in serious trouble.

"He Remains Faithful!"
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If not for the commitment of his mother he would have soon perished, but he survived because she devoted extra effort to the one who had made a bad mistake. I ask you, are birds more committed to their young than our God is to you and me? I think not!

John 10:27-28

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Another way Satan tries to destroy our faith is in the area of unanswered prayer. Anyone who has been a Christian for more than one hour knows that God doesn't always give us everything we ask for. When this happens Satan is quick to charge God with unfaithfulness and even try to get us to question God's existence. Or, he plays the condemnation card and tells us that God didn't answer our prayer because we didn't have enough faith.

Unfortunately, many sincere teachers play right into his game plan by telling us that we can have whatever we want if we just have enough faith. As they see it, if our faith is strong enough, God is bound by His Word to do anything we tell Him to do. While this may sound good to a baby Christian, time quickly reveals that it just doesn't work. When this happens some become offended and abandon their confession of faith.

We all need to understand that when it comes to answered prayer, it is all about Him and not us.

2 Timothy 2:13 AMP

If we are faithless, He remains faithful [true to His word and His righteous character], for He cannot deny Himself.

My story of God's faithfulness being stronger than my doubt is one of the most amazing I have ever heard. We had been married for 6 years and I had been unable to get pregnant. I prayed but all I heard God say was, "Trust Me". I was really struggling with this when my dear husband told me God had given him a promise that we would have children, and also a scripture to go with it.

Habakkuk 1:5 King James Version

5 **for I will work a work in your days which you will not believe, though it be told you.**

I must admit that my faith wavered, especially when I viewed the circumstances. I had taken fertility drugs that had caused multiple births in others, yet I remained childless. The doctors had run many tests to see if it was possible for us to have children and had told us it was impossible. **I was convinced that I would never have children.** Then a year later I noticed something strange happening in my body. I went to our doctor and he told me I was 3 months pregnant. **I couldn't believe what he said and told my husband that I wouldn't believe it until I felt something alive in my tummy.** It wasn't long until our son Jay decided to practice his golf swing while still in my belly! That's my story about a faithful God not allowing my doubt to stop Him from doing what He had promised. Did I lie when I told you it was amazing?

We all need to learn that God is as fiercely committed to us as a mother bird is to her babies. He is not looking for an excuse to abandon us or hurt us. In fact, He has promised to never leave us or forsake us, and that promise is based upon His faithfulness and not our performance.

HE REMAINS FAITHFUL!

AND THAT MY FRIENDS IS THE TRUTH

"Why God Allows Evil"

A few months ago Miss Linda wrote an exceptional article entitled, "Where Is God?" In it, she looked at the injustices we see every day and tried to help us accept the fact that God is still in control and His ways are perfect. It was a great article and sparked something in me that I have been thinking about for quite some time.

Throughout history, evil dictators have used their power to bring death and destruction to those who had done them no wrong, and today this same ugly horror story has been repeated right before our eyes. Understandably, this has left many wondering why God doesn't intervene.

This was a question people were wrestling with at the time of Jesus. At that time in history, the face of evil was the Romans. In modern times we have seen the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Castros, the Mao Zedongs, and now Vladimir Putin. In all these horrible chapters of human history, people prayed for deliverance, and yet millions died. As a result, many become confused, some abandon their faith, and many Jews have become atheists. **People say, "If there is a God, why doesn't He stop evil?"**

Just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His followers the answer to that question. The Jewish people of Jesus' day firmly believed the true Messiah would free them from the iron fist of Rome. This belief was non-negotiable and was why they accepted Him as Messiah, but then crucified Him as a blasphemer when He said His kingdom was not of this world.

They laid His lifeless body in a tomb and sealed the entrance with a huge stone. Soldiers were ordered to stand guard so no one could come and steal the body. But, death could not hold Him and three days later He walked out of that tomb carrying the keys of hell and death! For the next 40 days, He

appeared to hundreds of people, proving beyond any doubt that He was the Christ, the anointed one.

Just minutes before he ascended into heaven his followers asked him a question. The question and the answer He gave will explain why the heavens remain silent while wicked men continue to plunder and kill.

Acts 1:6 KJV

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

It's amazing! Even after seeing Him raised from the dead, they couldn't let it go. In their minds, if He was truly the Messiah he had to defeat the Romans and restore the Kingdom of David to Israel. Pay close attention to His answer because it also answers the questions we have today as to why God permits evil to continue.

Acts 1:7 KJV

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Basically, He told them that what they wanted Him to do would only happen when the God-ordained "season" for it had come.

In so many ways we are like the people He spoke to that day. We find it hard to accept that a just God would allow evil to continue. Will He ever step in and put an end to human injustice? **He will, but not until this present "season" comes to an end.** In the meantime, what can we expect life to be like on this planet? Ladies and gentlemen, please buckle your seat belts, the Captain has just turned on the seat belt sign. I say that because of the warning Jesus gave us.

Matthew 24:6-8 KJV

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, **but the end is not yet.**

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

In this season God will not step in and defeat the Romans, the Hitlers, the Putins, or any other evil despot. Therefore, the only way to stop evil will be through great military conflict and history has proven this statement to be correct. The current situation in Ukraine puts an exclamation point on it. Because of this, Jesus said that the end of this season will be marked by a time of trouble such as the world has never seen. The stakes are higher, the weapons are greater, and the evil runs deeper.

Matthew 24:21 KJV

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Daniel 12:1 KJV

1there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.....

I will be the first to admit, this seems very dark and discouraging. However, there is one thing Jesus said in Matthew 24 that I find very encouraging and exciting.

Matthew 24:29-31 KJV

29 **Immediately after the tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven **with power and great glory.**

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Is this talking about the rapture or something totally different, and if so, what? Please note where the elect are when the trumpet sounds to gather them. They are gathered, **"from one end of heaven to the other."** The elect will already be in heaven and for that to be possible the rapture must have already occurred. **When this trumpet sounds it will be summoning the saints to mount up and get ready to ride!**

To help you understand this, here is a simple outline that shows the three comings of Christ.

- a. The first time He came to us.
(As God's gift to the world)
- b. The second time He will come for us.
(The rapture)
- c. **The third time He will come with us.**
(As the King of kings and Lord of lords!)

1 Thessalonians 3:13 KJV

13 To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**

Jude 14 KJV

14**Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.**

When He comes with us it will mark the end of the old season and the start of a glorious new season. This is what that new season will look like.

Isaiah 2:4 KJV

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.