

MARCH 2017

“TRUTH”

**A SURE WORD
FOR TODAY**



Truth is like a mountain, It cannot
be moved and it never changes

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURE ARTICLE:

“Where Is God?” Part 1
Page 2

A MINUTE WITH MISS LINDA:

“What is Your Calling?”
Page 4

PROPHECY UPDATE:

“How Close Are We To His Return?”
Page 6

WEBSITE UPDATE

This month in our TRUTH Newsletter we are starting a four part series that deals with unanswered prayer. All of us have experienced the frustration of praying with a heart full of faith only to see our prayers go unanswered. Many seem to have the ability to ignore this and just continue following the Lord. However, for some this becomes a huge obstacle to their continued walk of faith. They want answers, and they deserve answers. We urge you to read these articles and then re-read them until they begin to make sense to you. They are Word based and will give you a foundation to stand on that will never fail you.

We also want to draw to your attention to our Message of The Month. This month we are offering Part 1 of a series entitled, “How To Raise Your Children.” Next month we will make the entire series available. Once again, it is all free and made possible by those who give so faithfully. We thank you!

FEATURE ARTICLE: “WHERE IS GOD?” PART 1

WARNING: You are entering the “TRUTH ZONE”. You may not like what you read. It may make you feel uncomfortable. That is not my goal. My goal is to help you and 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!

Back in January, we sat in a restaurant with some friends from the church we attend when in Estes Park on the weekend. Lately we have been spending more of our time in the mountains and have found Summit Church where Michael and Valerie Dascoli are the lead pastors. They are wonderful people who are doing a great job in that community.

As we fellowshiped with these good folks, our friend shared how the day before he had spent five hours with a man who had just lost his wife to cancer. He shared how this man was really struggling with how God could have allowed this to happen. Not only had his wife passed, but she had endured a long and painful time before her passing.

The problem of unanswered prayer has been around for as long as people have been praying. God has told us to pray about everything.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, **pray about everything**. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." **Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

Of course we are to pray about everything! Why wouldn't we? We know God has the power to do anything and everything. We also know God still works miracles today. **The problem is, miracles just don't seem to happen very often.** That is why we get so excited when we hear of a miracle. It is not something that is common. Far too often we pray, only to experience the disappointment of not having our prayers answered. Why is this? **Why would a God who can easily do anything refuse to answer our prayers?** Sometimes, in our desperation, we even try to cut a deal with God in an attempt to get Him to give us what we ask.

Now, I know I have offended some people. (Please read the red print above.) **It makes us feel uncomfortable to admit that many prayers seem to go unanswered.**

I think about the time right after my heart surgery 20 years ago.

It was a time when I almost committed spiritual suicide by becoming very angry with God. How could God have let this happen to me? It seemed so unfair! I had served the Lord with all my heart and had followed Him even when it meant my life could get very difficult. Many times it felt like He was telling me to get out of the safety of the boat and walk on the water. Now this! **It felt to me as if God was a million miles away and I had been abandoned.**

Many can relate to how I felt because they have been there and done that. For some the outcome has not been good. As I have said, to be angry with God or to charge Him with unfaithfulness truly is committing spiritual suicide. It is not good enough for me to just tell you, "Don't do that" or "Just trust the Lord." To the person going through the fire, those words sound like empty religious rhetoric. They want and need something that will help them make some sense of what is happening to them.

A lot of ink has been used trying to explain this. That is what is wonderful about an Internet newsletter. We don't waste any paper or ink, we are saving the planet! I know, that is a lame attempt on my part to get you to lighten up.

But can we be honest? A lot of the answers people have given trying to explain these issues are really quite lame. **Here is one I feel is a total cop-out.** Some have said, "God answers every prayer. He answers some by saying 'no,' He answers others by saying 'yes,' and He answers others by saying 'wait until later.'" Give me a break! **That just won't work for the man who just buried his wife.**

Some of the answers Bible teachers come up with actually create more problems than they solve. A good example would be the answer of the hyper-faith people. For them, every unanswered prayer is the result of a lack of faith. Wow, that is really helpful! Now in addition to trying to figure out why my prayer wasn't answered, I have a boatload of condemnation to deal with.

Sorry, in my world that dog won't hunt!

“ WHERE IS GOD?” Part 1

Continued from Page 2

Another wonderful teaching that most of you may have heard is that **there is sin in your life**. Sin opened you up to sickness, and sin is what is keeping God from healing you. This is one of the most hurtful things anyone can ever say to someone dealing with sickness, disease, or death. It seems to me I remember reading somewhere in a book these words, “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” **Hmmm...maybe it's a miracle that we're not all dead!** What do you say; let's try to find a better answer.

One of the best answers I ever heard came from Oral Roberts. Many years ago he granted an interview with a major news network. The question was asked, “You see a lot of people healed in your crusades. But what about all those who don't get healed?” I shall never forget his answer. He did not make any attempt to hide the fact that many did not get healed. Here is what he said, “I don't know why everyone doesn't get healed, all I know is that the more people I pray for, the more I see healed.” **Sometimes, “I don't know” can be the best answer.**

So there it is. It is one of the great questions of the Christian faith. I admit, better men than I have attempted to answer this question. To come up with something more meaningful may not be an easy task, but I believe with all my heart that because of my own experiences, I may be able to help. I have spent a lifetime searching for an answer. While I am sure I will not answer all the questions you might have, my answers may give you something new to think about. Something you may have never before considered. Let's get started.

I want to start by pointing out that so many of the answers people come up with focus on us. If we would just do this or that, then God would finally be persuaded to act. **For just a moment, could we focus on a sovereign God who makes no mistakes?**

God lives in eternity and therefore His view of everything is different than ours. Eternity is very long, and in comparison, the span of our entire life is very, very short. In fact, even if we live to be a hundred, it is but the blink of an eye compared to eternity.

The actual amount of time we spend experiencing pain, sickness, and death in that short moment we call “life”, is but a nanosecond in that blink of an eye when we compare it to eternity. Yet to us, the trials we face often seem to go on for so long. We cry out, “How long, Lord?” But really, in God's eyes is it long?

“Nevertheless, do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day.” **2 Peter 3:8 (AMP)**

Let me try and put this all in perspective. If you or I were to suffer in pain and agony for a thousand years, in God's eyes it would have only been one short day. **The only way we can understand why God would let it go on and on is if we first understand that in God's eyes, our time of suffering is actually less than the blink of an eye.**

But here is where we get into the meat of what I want to say. The big question is not “how long,” but rather, what is being accomplished in the spirit realm during our time of suffering and pain? **Once again, our view and God's view are probably quite different.** Not only does it seem long to us, but what's worse is that it seems to serve no purpose. It is pointless. It accomplishes nothing. This is one of the reasons we sometimes find ourselves getting filled with anger.

But wait, is that actually how it is? I have already shown you that what we view as long, God views as less than the blink of an eye. **Could it be that what we see as pointless and serving no purpose, God views as valuable and precious because it is accomplishing something amazing that will last for eternity?**

Next month I will attempt to show you what the Word has to say about this. I believe it will bless you. But for now I leave you with a wonderful promise.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (GW)

“So, then, brothers and sisters don't let anyone move you off the foundation of your faith. Always excel in the work you do for the Lord. You know that the hard work you do for the Lord is not pointless.”

To Be Continued
Next Month



A MINUTE WITH MISS LINDA



“What is Your Calling?”

Have you ever stopped to consider what the mission of the church is supposed to be? It seems to me that often the church gets caught up in efforts

that are noble and good while at the same time ignoring what the Bible says our first mission is to be. After the great commission itself, there is one thing Scripture tells us our mission is to be.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, it cannot be made salty again. Salt is useless if it loses its salty taste. It will be thrown out where people will just walk on it. 14 **You are the light that shines for the world to see.** You are like a city built on a hill that cannot be hidden. 15 People don’t hide a lamp under a bowl. They put it on a lamp stand. Then the light shines for everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:13-16 (ERV)

I find it interesting that salt and light, two totally different things, are tied together in these verses. I think this is because when we are salt, we also become a light to the world. **So, what does it mean when it says believers are to be salt and light?**

The “light” part isn’t too hard to understand. When we consider the darkness filling our world today, it is easy to see why Jesus told us to be “The light of the world.” Light drives out darkness so people can clearly see the path they are on and where it is headed.

If we hide our light and conform to the world, if we don’t live out our faith and work toward sharing it, how then can we be “the light of the world?”

The “salt” part is a little more difficult to understand. The best way to really see what Jesus was saying is to consider how the people of His day would have applied it to their lives.

In Bible times they did not have good refrigeration so salt was used to keep fish, meat, and other foods from spoiling. If you look at it this way, it becomes easy to see what Jesus was telling us to do. As Christians who obey God and do His will, we act as a preservative of the human race by slowing down the moral and spiritual decay of the world around us. We are supposed to be an agent of **“preservation”** in a world that is quickly going bad. We are here to slow-up the process of moral decay that will eventually have disastrous consequences on our world.

So there it is, I have made it sound so simple. But is it really that simple? We’ve all heard the saying, **“That’s like pouring salt on a wound.”** I don’t know if you have ever had that experience, but I can assure you, it is not pleasant!

Your first reaction is to pull away and try to get the salt out of the wound as quickly as possible. I think we all would agree, this is not the response we want to get when we try to be salt and light.

I want to try and give you some help in avoiding this kind of reaction to your testimony. We need to be led by the Holy Spirit; otherwise our good intentions will end up being pepper and darkness instead of salt and light. That may sound ridiculous, but so many times we mean well but cause hard feelings and hurt to the people we are trying to influence. I would rather be patient and wait for the prompting of the Holy Spirit than to say and do things not led by the Lord. There are two verses in Colossians that speak to this.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NASB)

"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though **seasoned with salt**, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

A devotional book I read says "**sprinkled with salt**." I like that. When I cook, I don't take all the salt I have in the house and dump it into the dish I am preparing. My husband loves salt, but even he would refuse to eat my over-salted meal. Our friend, Wayne Hilsden, recently posted this: "**Keep your words seasoned with salt, because tomorrow you might have to eat them.**" That is so good!

Perhaps you have heard the saying, "He's a salty old dog." That saying refers to some old guy who is just a bit cantankerous and nasty. He will tell you exactly what he is thinking whether you want to hear it or not. I am quite sure that is not the kind of salty Jesus was telling us to be.

However, we also need to remember that being "salt and light" will take exceptional courage. The words of Jesus explain why this will always be true.

John 3:19-20 (MEV)

"This is the verdict, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,

because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

It has been such a joy to see the courage our grandchildren have as they attempt to be salt and light. Just recently our grandson Jordan shared with us his experience of witnessing to a friend who claims to be an atheist. He asked his Papa for advice on how to share the truth about Jesus with his friend. **I am so proud of all our grandchildren!**

The Word declares the results we will face if we lose our saltiness and don't let our light shine. It tells us we will be considered by the world to be of no value and our beliefs thrown out and trampled under foot.

There was a time when it appeared to me this was happening. But then something wonderful happened. Christians all across America rose up and took an active part in the election, and without a doubt made a huge difference.

Now I truly believe the salt has not lost its saltiness. We are still making a difference in the world today. It's hard to imagine what this world will look like when the Lord takes His bride out of it. I have to believe that as followers of the Lord, we have had an influence in this world for good. We must never allow ourselves to become worthless and think we have no value.

Our prayer should be: **Lord, please help us be the salt and light of the earth that will preserve and shine, to light the dark night for Your glory and praise!**

I want to wrap this up by pointing out two great contrasts the scriptures talk about. The first, which I shared earlier, is **Matthew 5:13**.

"You are like salt for the whole human race. But if salt loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown out and people trample on it."

But now look at the opposite of worthless and of no value.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." **Daniel 12:3 (KJV)**

“ How Close Are We To His Return? “

Prophecy is one of the most fascinating subjects we find in the Bible. So many things prophesied have already been fulfilled with amazing accuracy. This accuracy proves the Bible to be divinely inspired by God Himself.

One example of this would be the writings of the prophet Daniel. His ability to foretell the rise and fall of the four empires of the ancient world is so detailed and accurate that some Bible critics refuse to believe Daniel could have even written it. They claim (with no proof) that someone else had to write a large portion of the book after events spoken of in the book had already happened. They claim it was history and not prophecy. How foolish!

But of all the prophecies in the Bible, the ones most important to this generation have to be those which speak of the return of Jesus Christ to planet earth. Yes, just as the prophets foretold His first coming, so His return has also been prophesied. **Jesus is coming back and when He does, He will take control of the kingdoms of this world.**

Revelation 11:15 (NCV)

"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. And there were loud voices in heaven, saying: 'The power to rule the world now belongs to our Lord and his Christ, and he will rule forever and ever.'"

As we see our world spiral toward a dark abyss, we who are people of faith increasingly find ourselves crying out for Him to return and set up His kingdom. We know this is the only hope for mankind.

This brings us to the most important question we can ask: **How close are we to that great day?** Are there scriptures that tell us what signs to look for? Certainly **Matthew 24** is a portion of scripture that speaks of His return and the signs that will accompany it.

However, none stirs my heart like **Isaiah 11**. This amazing chapter is only 16 verses long, but all 16 verses speak of the coming of Messiah and lists what He will do when He comes.

The things I have already mentioned, plus others, are included in this list. It is all wonderful, but there is one thing on the list that gets me more excited than any other. In verses 11 & 12, Isaiah makes it plain that there is a connection between the Lord's return and the regathering of the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 11:11 (MEV)

"In that day the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people..."

Isaiah 11:12 (NCV)

"God will raise a banner **as a sign** for all nations, He will gather the people of Israel who were forced from their country. He will gather the scattered people of Judah from all parts of the earth."

When we consider the fact that this prophecy began to be fulfilled over 100 years ago, we come to an inescapable conclusion: The return of the Lord as described in this same chapter must be extremely close. These two great events are inseparably linked together. If we are living during the time of the regathering of the Jewish people, then we are also living during the time of the return of the Messiah, Jesus. Read it for yourself.

Yes, there are many other signs given in the Bible that would indicate we are living in the season of Christ's return. But only in Isaiah 11 will you find the connection between the regathering of the Jews to their God-given homeland and the return of Jesus.

**Live Ready...
He is standing at the door!**

And that my friends,
is the "Truth!"