

The Servant



Newsletter for Under-Shepherds and other Servants of God /5523 Newberry Drive/Raleigh, NC 27609

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The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry

The Meeting Place

Our calling is to speak the truth in love. Truth without love can be brutal. Love without truth is futile. We hear believers speak about the "most important meeting." We speak about the "meeting place." The greatest meeting place was Calvary. It was the place the Psalmist sang about in the 85th Psalm. It was the place where "*Mercy and Truth are met together.*" Never was there a more glorious longitude and latitude. It marks the spot of God's richest treasures. Let the pirates keep their gold, give me the riches of God's grace. The Bible clearly marks the spot, and never was there a more beautiful map than this.

A cross is an intersection of two lines. It is where two things join, even if briefly before they go on their way. It is not the wood but the wonder of the cross that staggers us. *Mercy and Truth are met together.* Why, it is nothing less than brilliant. Many men have chased after mercy and countless numbers have sought after truth, but all in vain. Man's godless quest has taken him away in a thousand different directions in search of these precious things. Even if it were possible without God (and it is not) to find one, it would be worthless without the other. But when the two meet, it is nothing short of a miracle, for there is no intersection like it in all the universe. It is the spot where God has stood calling out to every lost soul to come home.

That one sole spot is the portal and the narrow gate that swings open to the boundless grace of God. It is the meeting place and the greeting place, and the feeding place for all who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The Psalmist also sees that truth "*shall spring out of the earth.*" Evil men tried to kill the truth, and Pilate doubted there was such a thing. On the third day (just as He had predicted), the earth shook as if to announce to all the world

that the Truth had risen. "He is not here, for he is risen as he said." The Truth always does what it says it will do. No one can kill the Truth. There is no grave deep enough or stone large enough, or army powerful enough to keep Truth in the tomb forever.

On each Lord's Day morning when the Book of Books is open, may God swing wide the way to all who want to meet Him at his chosen meeting place, the place where *mercy and truth are met together.*

Bringing out the Better Cups

For every good and perfect thing
Beware of the counterfeit
For always hidden is sin's sting
And who bites the lie is bit

A God who's good saves best for last
God's wine gets only better
But when sin's pleasures all are past
How drunken is sin's debtor.

But Christ the Savior drank my cup
And broke sins awful fetter
I to my lips his name lift up
Drink Spirit, not the letter

The Law is good, but cannot save
Or remove the sinner's gall
But God in Love His dear Son gave
On the Cross for me drank all

The lord of lies has too his cup
His wine is mixed with fable
But Christ is every ounce the Truth
And truth sits at his table

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The Truth

The world is broken. Just look around and see for yourself. Everywhere you look in life, things are not working properly. You will see too many broken homes and broken hearts, broken lives and promises. Poverty, hatred and war, sickness and suffering are everywhere. As an engine out of tune may sputter, hesitate, roar, and back fire, so life often lumbers along in this world. Many have tried their hand at fixing it. They have lifted the hood and surveyed the engine. They have often come up with a "quick fix," which has enabled us to keep things going, but the thing is not running as it should. Something is still not "right."

The Book of Romans could as well have been entitled "Righteousness of God." Another way of saying "Righteousness" is to simply say "Right." Righteousness is what is right. Few thinking people would dare to say that things are "right."

Speaking of the message of the church, Paul says that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed." The message of the church involves proclaiming, "what is right, exposing what is "not right," explaining how to "get right," and teaching how to "stay right." The Book of Romans is a Christian's Curriculum of Righteousness.

The world described in the first chapter of Romans is, at best, dysfunctional. It is described with words like vanity, darkened imaginations, corrupt, unclean, dishonor, vile, unseemly, and it goes on and on. Theologically speaking we have gathered up all these ugly things and given them their own genera for the dysfunctional, and called it "sin."

Romans deals with the seriousness of sin, the substance of sin, the source of sin and the solution for sin. Sin has spawned so many offspring which we recognize

as "sins" that we seldom ever get near the queen in the center of the hive. Deep in the middle of the colony, is this "thing," forever pregnant and giving birth to a million little consequences of an original evil. Each of her little offspring has its own painful little stinger and its own appetite for the nectar of sinful human nature.

Romans makes it clear that "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" There was and is only one who had nothing that attracts evil, and that was the Man Christ Jesus. He alone was without a sinful nature and without sin. He, God's Son, came to save us from sin, which like some insidious killer bee, has somehow made every man's heart its hive.

The nature of the killer bee is unpredictable. It is aggressive, ambitious, tenacious, and terrible when disturbed. As the killer bee is slowly coming up from South America and infesting the entire continent, so too *Sin* had its origin in a single awful act in a garden known as Eden. From that original sin, sin has swept across the world and harbored in the hive of every human heart, and we have been stinging one another ever since.

Sin's honey is poison. Although sweet in the mouth, it is bitter in the belly. Eventually it kills all who have ever tasted it. God, on the other hand, has a plan to redeem, repair, and renew every life. Only the Righteousness of God can cleanse our hearts. Only God can save us from the sting of death and replace the ever hungry evil thing lurking somewhere in our center, and replace it with the goodness of his own presence. This is the Gospel. 🍯

A lie now sits upon its nest
where God deserves a throne.
But once one sees that Christ is Best,
Faith makes for Truth a throne

Truth:

Our Bread and Butter

Let God Be True and Every man a liar. (Rom. 3:4). Here Paul simply means that we must believe God even if we are the only one that does. Remember it was pure democracy that decided for Barabbas. The winds of popular opinion are forever shifting. If we stand with what is in vogue today, our faith will be somewhat vague tomorrow.

Some think that in a modern world the church must sweeten the truth "to taste." That is a mistake. If there is a crystal that best identifies with truth it is rather salt than sugar. The church seems to have gotten a sweet tooth and lost its taste for salt. "Let your speech be seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6).

Satan knows that "*stolen waters are sweet*" (Prov. 9:17). There are different kinds of sweetening. The sweet honey made in heaven will brighten the eyes, and give us energy to run for God. The one that's made in hell is more likely to give us spiritual diabetes, make holes in our teeth, and spoil our Lord's supper.

We owe the world the truth. It is not for us to "make it," or "market it," or "manipulate it." We are called to minister it. God knows just how much salt and just how much honey each meal may require. The Gospel is a message of mercy and truth. When we follow his recipe, only then, what we serve is the bread of heaven. 🍯

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."



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