

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

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SUBJECT: TRUTH - 01/24/2016

Power of Truth

Which was the more serious offense of Ananias and Saphira, withholding some of the money or the dishonest way in which it was done? I think the answer is clear. They could easily have handed over the rest of the money, but they dropped dead when their dishonesty was brought to light. This is a clear example that shows our safety and security is in faithfulness to the truth. No wonder John wrote "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." *****

Trusting Truth

"The spiritual sense of truth must be gained before Truth can be understood." This caused me to think about the First Commandment. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength. This love, without other idols like fear, brings us to trust and back to truth. This keeps us on the "straight and narrow", which keeps us in the now without going down the paths of doubting, what if, and worry. So for me, trying to gain spiritual sense goes back to trusting God's Truth and staying right there. *****

And how right to stay right there since "Truth is always the victor!"*****

Honesty Is Spiritual Power

"Honesty is spiritual power. Dishonesty is human weakness, which forfeits divine help." (*Science and Health* p. 453:16)

After coming to Plainfield, this was one of those "watershed" statements stressed in the teachings of this church that helped me realize how off track I had been living. I had been waffling between Truth

and error, and this had led me down some very bad paths. To think I had forfeited divine help! I must have glossed over that passage many times.

Now I have come to treasure this statement and stand up for what's honest and right, like I've never done before. Which supposed Christian Scientist would want to forfeit divine help? Only one like I had been, who didn't want to truly commit to God's law. Boy, did I put myself through the wringer on that one! Plainfield helped me grow a backbone. And now I can more easily discern dishonesty in others, or to put it another way, "smell a rat". ****

Ananias, with Sapphira, his Wife

The story of Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife (Acts 5:1-12) is a tough one. If we uncover sin in order to bless the corporeal man, as Mrs. Eddy says, they must have learned from the experience after awaking to the fact that they had not died. It's a startling reminder that sin kills the sinner, as Mrs. Eddy also tells us, just not always so immediately. Of course the solution is to cease sinning. *****

Yes, this story of Ananias and Sapphira is a tough one, but it should speak volumes to every Christian today. Ananias and Sapphira weren't ready to serve. They got caught up in the excitement of the times. The new doctrine, the new churches; they saw the healing and the changes, and wanted to be part of it. Yet, their hearts weren't there. They wanted to dabble with Christianity, so they held back just in case it didn't work out for them. They knew the deal. Give all for Christ. They said they would, but they didn't. They lied to God and to Peter and the error destroyed itself. They were in a very hot, rarified spiritual atmosphere in which error was not allowed a foothold! They should have told the truth and admitted they weren't ready.

Think of Gideon's band. The dabblers were not allowed to fight in the battle. Think of the workers

in Mrs. Eddy's home. The dabblers were sent home immediately.

Mrs. Eddy tells us "We are not Christian Scientists until we leave all for Christ." She further warns us: "It is not wise to take a halting and half-way position or to expect to work equally with Spirit and matter, Truth and error." We can't serve two masters! If we try to sit on the fence, with one foot on one side and one on the other, we will get torn in half or fall off. We should not profess that which is not 100% in our hearts. The consequences are not pretty.

Yes, I guess they eventually learned their lesson. But why not learn it here and now? Why not be honest? After all, "Honesty is spiritual power. Dishonesty is human weakness, which forfeits divine help." Our greatest fear should be to forfeit divine help. *****

The Sower And the Seed

The parable of the sower and the seed in this week's lesson is such an important one. I once thought these parables had nothing to do with me – but was I ever wrong! The parable of the sower and the seed is one I think about often. It has certainly helped steady my walk on the "straight and narrow." There are so many ways to be easily flipped off even when one's first intentions are quite sincere and admirable. It is usually unhandled pride, ego, self-justification or just plain laziness that turns people away – and if they only realized, they turn from their highest good! The straight and narrow is not a path of drudgery – it is a path of great joy! *****

Thank you for the word "drudgery". Not a drudgery came to me when I read in the Responsive Reading Psalm 100:2, "Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing." What could be more rewarding for each of us and mankind? *****

Thank you for this. I certainly have found that it is not a path of drudgery. Drudgery was, for me, when I had spent years unknowingly allowing

mortal mind to make thorny ground of me. There is no joy in that! I am so grateful that Truth is consistent, persistent, and unchanging — no matter how animal magnetism would resist, there is no lie that can overcome Truth. What a wonderful God we have! Thank you for this lesson. *****

I opened up the Blue Book p. 169; 'The strong soil in human nature is selfish apathy. The wayside soil is transient laughing vain loving-ease character that never can be relied (on) in time of need. The sun struck mind is one that resists the light if this light demand the relinquishment of all that tends to darken life, dim conscience, and demand other gods. The good soil is the active honest heart. Where this exists there is energy, fidelity, success and reward gained by the individual, not a gift of God but the wages of uprightness and hard work, struggle and victory.' (From article entitled 'Soldier, Seed, and Soil') ****

God's Remedy

Truth is God's remedy for error of every kind and Truth destroys only what is untrue.

I love this statement! You don't have to do this or that, or take that pill or medicine, exercise for hours, or lay in bed feeling sick. You don't have to have a special education or practice it for years. You only have to apply the Truth with your whole heart, understand the Science that God heals, and expect to be healed. It is the remedy for every situation.

The only thing destroyed is what is untrue error, a material belief. And Truth doesn't have any side-effects. *****

That's a good way to think about it. I can remember many times asking for help with a problem, and with the Truth and Love that were given to me by a practitioner, not only was the problem healed, but other things in my life were made better as well. "Truth is an alterative in the entire system, and can make it 'every whit whole.'" (*Science and Health*, p. 371) *****

And to know that this Truth is invincible takes its power to another level; this gives us confidence to rely on something unchangeable. . *****

SUBJECT – LOVE- 01/31/2016

Seeking God

The story I read yesterday at our roundtable discussion sent to us from our friend Jacob in Costa Rica goes perfectly with this week's lesson on Love!

"A man went to a barbershop to get a haircut. The barber said he did not believe in God, because of all the evil and suffering in the world. The client was lost for words, he wanted to say so much, but ...it was overwhelming. When he walked out, outside was a man standing with enormous long tangled Rasta hair. He took the man inside, and said to the barber: "I don't believe in barbers. There are no barbers. Barbers do not exist." The barber answered that he did exist and was a barber. The client told him that it was impossible, because of the horrible long hair of the Rasta man. How could there be barbers, when this man had such long hair, and facial hair also. Ah, said the barber, because they don't come to me. If they come to me, I can cut and shave them. The client answered: EXACTLY!"

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah)
Thank you!

Thank you so much for sharing this, and thank you to Jacob! It is so logical and makes so much sense. We need to find God with our heart — love Truth so much that we cannot be turned aside, no matter what. After all, as it says in the Bible Lesson, the Lord says, "...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." (Jer. 31:3). It's up to me to keep my part of the covenant.

Thank you for this Bible Lesson. *****

Are We Benefited By Praying?"

"Are we benefited by praying? Yes, the desire which goes forth hungering after righteousness is blessed by our Father, and it does not return unto

us void." (*Science and Health*, p. 2)

God does answer every prayer, but sometimes it's not the answer we expect or we want to hear—but it will be the answer that we NEED.

If we humbly continue to work and listen, and are willing to make whatever changes God is requiring (and truly "hungering after righteousness," wanting to be better and of more use to God), we'll find enormous blessings from our prayer! *****

I am finding since coming to Plainfield that I am doing a lot of thanking prayer, and beginning to see that God already knows what I need and is always filling those needs. Do I ever weaken and whine a little? Yes, but it is less frequent, and I am beginning to catch myself. The other thing I have been noticing is that God does many things far in advance of our needs, and exactly what we need is available exactly when we need it. *****

Jesus' explanation about prayer, after giving the disciples his prayer to Our Father, is very encouraging. He gives the illustration of someone going to a friend's house at midnight to ask for three loaves because he has a guest who has just come to his home and he has nothing to offer him. But when the friend says no, as Jesus explains: "I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" and he goes on to urge: 'Ask,... seek, ... knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'" This illustration of persistence is so important in working for and with God to change one's life. *****

I am learning the importance of preventive prayer, or keeping the door to error closed. You hear all kinds of comments on virus and diseases, people around you say they suffer from it, and if you do not build a wall of Truth around your consciousness, you will find yourself a victim of these beliefs. Once you are suffering from the symptoms, it is much harder to dig yourself out, as they can be very aggressive and real.

Why do we get involved with that which Love does not know nor cause? We must feel and think as Love, Truth, as God, with the whole heart and mind. As soon as we think as mortals, we get

involved with the whole of error and unreality.

I like the way Mrs. Eddy says it. It is our Desire which goes forth, not our words. So if my words in prayer are asking for more money, then the desire will be about provision. If I am praying for a new sofa, the desire will be for comfort. Seeing prayer this way always allows me to see God's answers spiritually, never in the material world.

If God is always pouring out his wonderful blessings to me, then I need to get in line to receive them, not pray wishing they were somehow there, because there can never be a time they are apart from me. *****

I liked this: God does answer every prayer, but sometimes it's not the answer we expect or we want to hear—but it will be the answer that we NEED.

I often wouldn't get the answer to my prayer that I wanted, but it always was proved to me that God had a better plan. My desires were limited or not the right thing for me. God's plan is always the answer we need. It always blesses us where human desire sometimes takes us away from God.

I am grateful to have learned here to say, "Not my will, but thine will be done." *****

Desire implies something deep within pouring forth. It is not some superficial request. And yes, if our desire is pure and unselfed (not a human want or demand), God does bless it. And as Joseph has pointed out, the answer always comes as a spiritual blessing meeting a human need. *****

Not long after I first came to the church, I read in *Science and Health*, "Desire is prayer." and that struck me. I figured that meant if my desire was pure, then my prayer was to God. However, if my prayer was selfish, then my prayer was not to God. The thought that I used to actually pray to anyone or anything but God is disturbing. Because of what I have learned these last few years, I now often pray for the right desire, to know my place in His plan, and to learn any lessons I need to learn quickly. It is wonderful to be here, gaining the understanding of how to be useful to God. What a blessing! Thank you! *****

I remember a time back in college when I was with a friend of mine who was having car trouble. A gentleman in the parking lot stopped briefly to offer help and quickly deemed the situation helpless (so to speak). My friend thanked him and let him know that God would help us, to which he replied "God has nothing to do with this". We both replied to him in unison "God has something to do with *everything*." Sure enough, it was only moments before we received the answer to what we needed to do, and in no time, we were on our way!

This situation occurred toward the beginning of my study of Christian Science and I'm so glad that God eventually brought me to Plainfield to gain a better understanding. It's here that I learned that God does have something to do with everything. To me, this means that I am to keep my constant communication with Him, rather than turning to Him only in times of trouble. I'm learning to trust God's will alone, in every single detail of my life, and to talk to Him about anything at any time even if it seems scary, embarrassing, hopeless, silly, etc..

Going to God is the most important step I've learned to take. It's acknowledging His omnipresence and omnipotence, and I'm finding that this does most of the work necessary to receive (or realize) a blessing. My sincere willingness to follow His direction, whether it means speaking up or remaining silent, moving forward or standing still, working something out mentally or taking the necessary human steps, with patience, gratitude, and humility, does the rest.

I'm realizing that "No loss can come from trusting God with our desires." *Science and Health*, p 1:11*****

Are There Miracles?

"Now, as then, these mighty works are not supernatural, but supremely natural." *Science and Health*, p. xi :14 Jesus worked from Mind, God, not matter; thus, all things were, are, and always will be possible. Truth, perfection, is revealed with the removal of sin and disease from the human consciousness. "A miracle fulfils God's law, but does not violate that law." *Science and Health*, 134:31