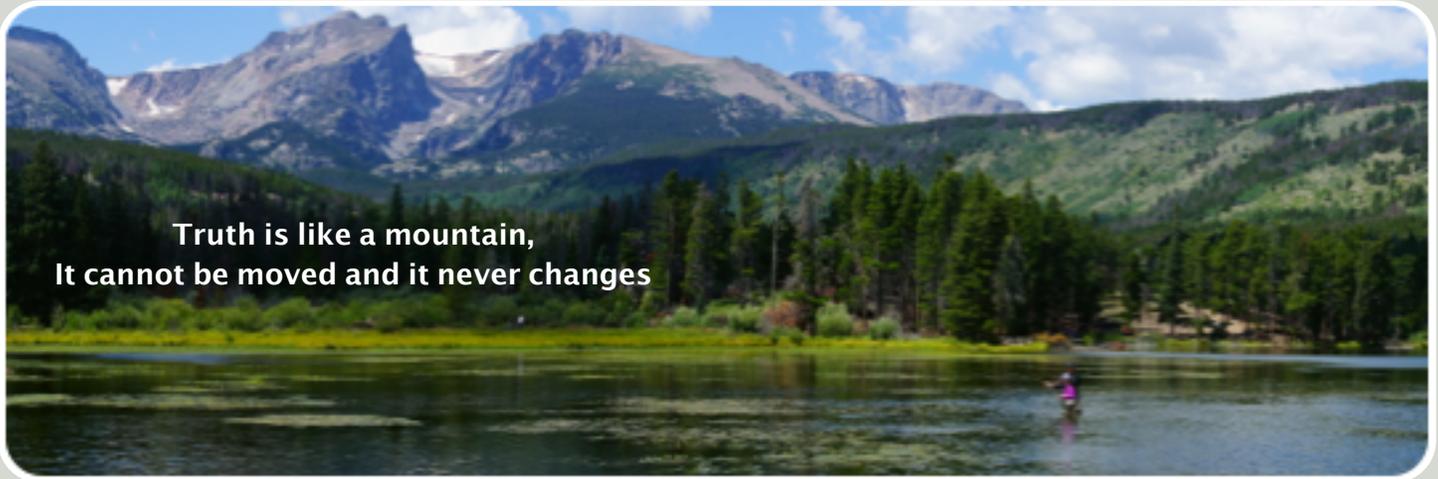


AUGUST 2020

"TRUTH"

**A SURE WORD
FOR TODAY**



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

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UPDATE

We continue to get so many folks writing to tell us how much they like the new audio version of the newsletter. It appears we will be making this a permanent feature. We are so thankful for God's blessing upon the newsletter. The first month we published, we had 14 people view it. Now every month we exceed 2000 views. A special thanks to all who continue to share it with their friends.

We urge you to be sure and check out the Subscribers Gallery. Getting great landscape shots is a huge challenge because everything must come together if a photo is to be truly special. This month we share some of our best landscape photos and pray they will bless your day. Remember, only our subscribers can view them. Subscribe today; it is free!

NEXT MONTH

Next month may be the most important newsletter we have ever published. We will be looking at why church attendance continues to decline. Don't miss it.

FEATURE ARTICLE: "Wisdom From God's Word"

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!

Back in February Miss Linda and I visited a farm in Hawaii that was owned by an upscale restaurant on the island. In 2000 they were experiencing difficulty finding a reliable, consistent source of fresh, organically grown fruits and vegetables, so they purchased eight acres of forested ground with a plan to clear it and create a small farm where they could grow the fruits and vegetables that would eventually be served at their restaurant.

They cleared the land and soon had a sustainable supply of fresh, organically grown produce. In 2002 they opened the farm to tourists who wanted to learn about how things are grown, and then share a meal prepared by a master chef using ingredients mostly grown on the farm. All of this sounded very interesting to us so we booked a breakfast tour.

It was an hour drive to the farm, so we got up very early and headed out. After arriving we were greeted by a friendly young woman who was to be our tour guide for the morning. She started by giving a brief history of the farm and then invited us to join her on a walking tour. We not only learned about what things were growing there, but were also encouraged to taste some of the things we were learning about. All of this was very fun and informative.

However, there was one thing that really caught my attention. Throughout the garden there were rows of plant beds where nothing was growing. I assumed that these were like that because whatever had been there had recently been harvested. Not so. Our guide pointed out that these bedding areas were empty because they had learned through observation that if the beds were never allowed to rest, they would eventually fail to produce. Because of this, every five years they allow a bed to rest for an entire year.

Needless to say, this fascinated me because of my knowledge of scripture. After the tour was finished, I approached the guide and asked her if she knew

what the Bible has to say about the subject of letting the ground rest. She did not, but seemed very interested as I told her what God had commanded His people to do.

Leviticus 25:3-4 New International Version (NIV)

"For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. 4 But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards."

Both of us found this very fascinating. She, because she learned that the Bible confirmed what they had found to be true by experience, and me, because they found it to be true, separate and apart from biblical knowledge or teaching. I always love it when life reveals to us the amazing wisdom contained in God's Word. But wait, there is more!

Do you remember what Jesus had to say about the Sabbath?

Mark 2:27 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

"Jesus finished by saying, 'People were not made for the good of the Sabbath. **The Sabbath was made for the good of people.**'"

In other words, this whole Sabbath thing was designed by God to be a blessing to mankind. This is best illustrated by observing what God went on to say in the next verse in Leviticus 25.

Leviticus 25:6 New Living Translation (NLT)

"But you may eat whatever the land produces on its own during its Sabbath...."

Now we begin to see what God had in mind. He not only wanted the ground to rest, He also wanted His people to be given a year of rest.

“Wisdom From God’s Word”
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

When I look at this, I cannot help but be reminded of this pattern being repeated on a smaller scale earlier in the Bible.

Exodus 23:12 English Standard Version (ESV)

“Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.”

All of this becomes terribly relevant when we look at the pace we all keep in a modern world. We find it almost impossible to slow down, let alone come to a complete stop. In fact, we are so busy that the concept of taking an entire day to rest almost seems to be something from a different time period that can no longer be applied to our lives. This is both tragic and dangerous.

The folks on the farm learned this by seeing their production drop off and realizing that they needed to give their ground a rest. This causes me to wonder how much more productive we would be if we would just do what our Creator told us to do. We have no excuse; we know what God has said and yet we refuse to actually believe it. Because of this our bodies, our minds, and our marriages suffer more than we will ever know.

The farm we visited could have overcome the drop in productivity by pouring all kinds of fertilizers into the soil to stimulate growth. But this unnatural stimulation would have resulted in the amazing taste of their produce being compromised. Likewise, so many today resort to various stimulants to keep them going and productive. These can include drugs, energy drinks, and a whole list of things that include everything except rest. Given enough time, we completely lose sight of what a truly amazing life looks and feels like.

I am not in any way suggesting that you make Sabbath observance a legalistic religious requirement. People who do this will usually demand that this day of rest be kept on Saturday. They cling to the letter of the law while completely forgetting what the Spirit of the law was trying to

provide for us. If you want to rest on Saturday, please do so, but don’t condemn the rest of us who find Sunday to be our day of rest.

I also warn you not to get legalistic to the point that your children begin to rebel against God. Let your children have fun and play on their day of rest. Just make sure you set aside a day when this can happen. Also, I might add, play with them; it pays big dividends!

This is an area where my parents really excelled. We lived in Minnesota and were big into water sports. Mom and dad worked hard, but set aside a day to rest. Church was very important to them, but Sunday afternoon was spent at the lake swimming and water skiing. Then late in the afternoon, my dad would load out the boat in time for us to get home, get changed, and head back to Sunday evening service. He took a lot of heat from the Pharisees but never let that stop him from doing what he knew was best.

Legalism is a sure way to turn your children against God. But accepting that Father God has given us the blueprint for a happy productive life, and then doing our best to follow that blueprint will produce sweet results for us.



This is a photo of the farm we visited. Please note the bed that is covered by a black strip of weed barrier. This is a planting bed that will sit fallow for an entire year.

Never forget, Father knows best!

**AND THAT MY FRIENDS
IS THE TRUTH!**



A MINUTE WITH MISS LINDA



“Holy Spirit We Need You”

For quite some time I have felt prompted by the Lord to write a newsletter article about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In recent years it appears as if the Holy Spirit has

become the hidden person of the Trinity. Most churches say they believe in the “Trinity,” but in spite of that, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is a subject rarely mentioned. This grieves me because I highly value the work of the Holy Spirit in my life.

When I met John, it wasn’t long until we started to share stories about our lives. He told me that when he was 8 years old, Jesus visited him, touched his forehead, and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” He was instantly filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and received a call to pastoral ministry.

My experience with the Holy Spirit may not have been as dramatic, but nevertheless was very real and life-changing. As a child I attended a Swedish Pentecostal Church in New Jersey. Even then I could sense a strong anointing of the Holy Spirit in the services and found myself drawn to what was happening.

Then we moved to upstate New York and attended an Assemblies of God church in Kingston. In many of the services, there were messages in tongues and interpretations given. I knew it was real because my

mother was often used by the Holy Spirit to give a message and interpretation. This happened not only in church, but also in our home. Many times, when we faced dangerous situations, my mom would pray in tongues as the Holy Spirit led her.

Jude 20 King James Version (KJV)

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,”

Later we moved to Minnesota and attended the Assemblies of God Church in Rochester. I was 15 years old at the time and started dating my husband to be. John told me that he had a call of God on his life to be a pastor and my first thought was, “How can this quiet introverted girl ever be a pastor’s wife?” A few months later we attended a youth camp where they emphasized the infilling of the Holy Spirit and encouraged us to seek the Lord at the altars. I had a great desire to be filled with the Spirit, so every night I spent time crying out to the Lord for this gift. I felt closer to the Lord, but I did not receive the gift of speaking in tongues.

However, the first night after I returned home, I was praising the Lord in my bedroom when all of a sudden, I began speaking in tongues. It was so real, and it changed my life. No one could ever convince me that it isn’t real and very precious. To this day, I still pray in tongues as the Holy Spirit gives me utterance. Usually it is intercession in a desperate situation when I need the Lord’s help for myself or others that I love so dearly.

"Holy Spirit We Need You"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The role of the Holy Spirit in our lives is made very clear in the scriptures.

John 14:16 Amplified Bible (AMP)

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another [a]Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor-- Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever..."

In the next verse He is called "The Spirit of Truth." Then in John 16 we are given more detail.

John 16:13 King James Version (KJV)

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:..."

In this time of darkness and deception, it is more important than ever that we learn to be guided by His Spirit. Just because a pastor or teacher says something, does not mean it automatically is truth. We need the Holy Spirit's guidance!

We should also add to this list the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12. I realize that some have abused the gifts of the Spirit, but that does not mean they are no longer valuable or needed today. Some will claim that they ceased to function when the apostles passed away. However, Scripture does not confirm this teaching.

Acts 2:39 Amplified Bible (AMP)

"For the promise [of the Holy Spirit] is **for you and your children** and for all who are far away [including the Gentiles], **as many as the Lord our God calls to Himself.**"

There is also a scripture that perhaps reveals why so many churches today find it necessary to compromise truth in an effort to reach a wicked world. So many seem to feel that the key to evangelism is to present their churches in such a way that the unchurched will be attracted. How foolish! Those who try to invent a church that is attractive to the world have lost sight of the fact that it was the demonstration of the power of the Holy

Spirit that was the tool Paul used to draw men and women to Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 Amplified Bible (AMP)

"And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom [using clever rhetoric], but [they were delivered] in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit [operating through me] and of [His] power [stirring the minds of the listeners and persuading them], 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom and rhetoric of men, but on the power of God."

Can it be that the lack of teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit has produced a powerless church that is failing to stem the tide of wickedness rising in our world? What we need today is not new marketing strategies, but rather a great, end-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Mario Murillo recently published a strong article about the need for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Here are some excerpts from his article:

"Our most desperate need is to get back to the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

"One big reason that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not preached today is because it is the natural enemy of church marketing. When God falls, church culture instantly changes. Human promotion becomes obsolete. An audience morphs into an army. An insatiable hunger for the Word of God replaces sales-pitches."

And to that I add a hearty "Amen." If a pastor needs to change his message in order to market his church, it is because the church has lost the power and presence of the precious Holy Spirit. Nothing draws people like the presence of the Holy Spirit. We are created to live in His presence, and that is why we find true life in the outpouring of His Spirit. We are drawn to a genuine outpouring of the Holy Spirit like moths are drawn to an open flame.

Lord, once again, send the flame of the Holy Spirit to your church.

AND THAT MY FRIENDS IS THE TRUTH

P R O P H E C Y U P D A T E

“Guidance For Troubled Times”

It would be an understatement to say that these are troubled times. I have always believed that times like these present the best opportunity to prove the value of the church because people are looking for guidance and direction and what better place to get it than the church! **That is why I want to give you some insight on the Black Lives Matter movement.**

Every Christian should be grieved when someone is targeted because of their race and this includes all people, not just blacks. We have some dear friends who are Jewish, and they have asked us to not mention their nationality when we are together in a restaurant for fear of what might happen if our conversation is overheard. How sad! Racism, bigotry, and hatred are always wrong without exception, and true Christians should never debate that statement. But there is a far bigger question that we must consider: What should our response be when we see racial bigotry?

Our options range all the way from doing nothing to joining violent protests where people steal, burn, and kill. I will not address either extreme because it should be obvious to every Christian that behavior such as this violates what Christ taught. But what about joining peaceful protests? The pressure to get involved is intense because to not get involved is to run the risk of being labeled a racist. I am sure pastors feel this pressure because the last thing they want is for their church to be labeled in such a way. However, no matter how great the pressure, we all need to stop and consider what our actions may be communicating. What many do not realize is that their protests may unwittingly be promoting something that is diametrically opposed to our Christian faith. What on earth could I possibly be talking about?

I speak specifically about Black Lives Matter. **Many assume that the goal of this organization is limited to eliminating racial injustice, but that is an assumption you should not make.** I offer some information that you need to know. The three founders of the Black Lives Movement are Patrisse Khan-Cullors, an LGBT activist; Alicia Garza, who is now “married” to a white female who identifies as a “transgender male”; and Opal Tometi. **Yes, women who are pro LGBT activists founded this organization.** But the big question is: What does the organization actually stand for?

I will answer that question by giving you two direct quotes from the BLM website.

“We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).”

“We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure...”

(I want to remind you that these are direct quotes from the Black Lives Matter website.)

Also, in a 2015 interview with MSNBC, Khan-Cullors stressed the “**queer identity**” of the Black Lives Matter founders. She said, “Even the hashtag [#BlackLivesMatter] was created by two black queer women, myself and Alicia, and one Nigerian-American woman, Opal Tometi.”

You should also be aware that on February 9, 2016, they announced that they were linking arms with several radical pro-abortion groups.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

I share this because well-meaning Christians need to understand that, like it or not, when they join a “peaceful” BLM protest, they are putting their stamp of approval on everything this organization stands for and this is why you will never see me at a protest where anyone is holding a sign that says Black Lives Matter. I fully realize that this statement may cause me to be labeled as a racist or homophobic, but I am more than willing to take that risk because I have Christian convictions that I am honored to defend. **At its very core, this organization is totally anti-Christian** and I do not care if they or anyone else falsely labels me as a racist. In fact, I would be very upset if they embraced me.

Luke 6:26 Expanded Bible (EXB)

“How terrible [L Woe to you] when everyone says only good things [speaks well] about you,…”

So, what are we as Christians to do? If I only tell you what not to do, then I have really not given you any guidance. So, I shall simply tell you to do what the Bible tells you to do. However, this is where it gets difficult because almost always, what the Bible tells us to do will be contrary to what the world tells us. But we need to remember that the way of the world leads to death, and without doubt, in recent days that statement has been clearly proven to be true. How sad to see the death, destruction, and increased hatred that has unfolded right before our eyes. **I ask you, after all the protests, have we come to a place where racial injustice and hatred is a thing of the past?** We all know the answer to that question and that is why we need to look to the Bible for a solution that works.

Matthew 5:43-44 BRG Bible (BRG)

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;…”

I have always believed that what the Bible tells us to do works, and that is why my response at this time has been to reach out to blacks with an extra

measure of friendliness and kindness whenever I encounter them. If you were to ask me how that is going, my answer would be that sometimes it has been good and at other times, not so good. **This is because hate is a two-way street.** Hate is not limited to whites hating blacks; there are also some blacks that hate whites. However, I cannot allow that to deter me because if I do, I am not a true follower of Christ.

I truly believe that this is all God is asking me to do. **I realize that I cannot singlehandedly change a broken world, but I can make sure I am not a part of its brokenness.** I must never return evil for evil, and I firmly believe that if everyone took that stance, our world would be drastically changed. I can almost hear the objections. Some will say, “That will not work. That is totally unrealistic. It is not that simple.” **I agree, my approach may sound overly simplistic, but has this world tried it?**

I want you to think with me for a minute how different things would have been if all the protesters who robbed, burned, and killed would have extended the love of Jesus to those who had killed a black man. **I ask you, what have their actions accomplished and what have people walking the streets carrying protest signs accomplished?**

Some might counter by saying that because of these protests, new laws are now being proposed and passed that are designed to protect blacks and end police brutality. How naive! To believe that legislation can bring change is complete fantasy! **The problem is not a lack of laws; the problem is the lack of love that resides in the human heart and no law will ever change that.**

Unfortunately, our world has rejected the only one who can change a human heart. His name is Jesus and for the past 2000 years He has been changing the hearts of those who have come to Him and asked Him to change their hearts. Have you allowed Him to change your heart? I will end this with one other scripture that says it all.

Romans 12:21 Amplified Bible (AMP)

“Do not be overcome and conquered by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

AND THAT MY FRIENDS IS THE TRUTH