**FAKE NEWS vs FAITHFUL NEWS (#4)**

***Middle C and Jesus Christ***

Did any of you ever read the famous novel written by Lloyd Douglas called The Robe? Back during WW2 (1942) it was the best-selling book in America, next to the Bible. It remained a #1 best-seller for a decade. In 1953 it became an Academy Award winning movie starring Richard Burton. I only mention that to tell you about the author, Lloyd Douglas (but reading the book or watching the movie is worth it, it’s about the robe of Christ that was owned by a Roman soldier, and how it changed his life).

Max Lucado, in his book *Grace For The Moment*, tells the story of Lloyd Douglas when he was in college. He lived in a boarding house where a retired music teacher lived. Each morning he would walk by this teacher’s door and stick his head in and ask the same question, “What’s the good news?” The teacher responded by tapping his tuning fork and saying, “That’s middle C. It was middle C yesterday, it will be middle C tomorrow, and it will be middle C a thousand years from now. The tenor upstairs sings flat. The piano across the hall is out of tune. But, my young friend, that is middle C.”

I love that story. Why? Because middle C is the name to the note that has the pitch value of 261.63 Hz. A piano tuner always starts by striking middle C to see if it hits that pitch value. If it doesn’t he knows it is out of tune. Middle C does not change! And neither does God or Jesus Christ. “*I the Lord do not change*” (Mal. 3:6). “*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever*” (Heb. 13:8). That, my friend, is middle C.

Compare that to the news today. What was taught in history books in my youth is now trashed as wrong. What was believed for centuries about God and the Bible is now debunked as false. Virtually everything we once were taught as true is now turned upside down and pronounced as fake. But friends, take a tuning fork and strike it. That, says Mr. Douglas, is middle C. That, says the compass, is true north. While the world is demanding change and the rewriting of all we believed was true, God (and His Son) never change. With that good news we can engrave R.I.P. on our tombstone!

Do you want to know what this consistent, constant, never-changing God says is true? We have already studied three of them. Today let’s look at the fourth faithful saying:

1. **“*This is a faithful saying, … Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners…*”**
(1 Timothy 1:15)
2. ​*“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.* (I Timothy 3:1)
3. “*This is a faithful saying*: *“… godliness is profitable for all things*” (I Timothy 4:8-9)
4. *This is a faithful saying: For…
If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.
If we deny Him, He also will deny us.
If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*(2 Tim 2:11-13)

Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13 in a rhythm style tone.
“If we… we shall” / “If we… we shall” / “If we… He also” / “If we… He remains”

Most commentaries I consulted believe this was likely a Christian hymn sung in the first century. If you read it in the Greek, or English, it has a unique rhythmic cadence to it. It’s much like our poetic hymns we sing today. Example: “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong…”

Go back and read it again. Chant it as if a hymn, envisioning the assembled saints looking at each other, reminding one another of the commitments they made to Jesus, and Jesus made to them. It’s truly beautiful when seen in that light. I don’t know about you, but it makes me wish I was there singing with them. Sing it:

Verse 1. “*If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him*.”

Verse 2. “*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him*.”

Verse 3. “*If we deny Him, He also will deny us*.”

Verse 4. “*If we are faithless, He remains faithful…*”

This faithful (truthful, accurate) saying reveals beyond doubt that Christianity is a covenant with God based on conditions. The word “***IF***” stands out as the pivotal point we must come to grips with. Whether it is the reward (“*we shall also live … we shall also reign* …”), or the curse (“*He also will … He remains* …”) God can be counted on to keep His part of the deal. He leaves it in our hands to determine the final outcome.

In other words, God, like middle C, is always the good news today, tomorrow, and a thousand years from now!

Think of the ramifications of that faithful saying. Every single human who has lived on earth who “*died with Him*” (i.e. in baptism – Rom. 6:3-8; Col. 3:3), will on the day of resurrection “*live with Him*.” Every saint who “*endured with Him*,” will at Judgment “*reign with Him*.” How many millions will that be? I don’t know, but I want to shake hands and meet every one of them!

Have you died with Him? Are you enduring with Him? If so, welcome to the fellowship of the redeemed. Have you denied Him? Are you now faithless? If so, it is not Christ who moved, it is you. The only reliable, dependable, faithful news we can know in this ever-changing world is the covenant of God, sealed with the blood of Christ.

They sang that beautiful hymn. We sing this one.

Time is filled with swift transition, Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
Build your hopes on things eternal, Hold to God’s unchanging hand.
When your journey is completed, If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory, Your enraptured soul will view.

Until tomorrow… “What’s the good news today?” Middle C(hrist)!

Brotherly love to you.

Rick