

Science Teacher: 'The Only Way to Truth Is Through God's Word'

Though retired from his career as a science teacher, a passion still burns deep inside Neill Russell. His desire is for every person on earth to know the truth—the truth that can only be found in one place.

This idea stands behind , a website that explains the “scientific truth behind creation.” It’s truth, Russell says, that is not being taught in our nation’s schools and must be heard by the younger generations if we’re to have any kind of godly future.

Russell is so sure his truth will change lives that he is giving away a copy of his book, *Genesis One: The Scientific Truth Behind Creation*, to the first 100 people who respond to this podcast. As one of the first 100 responders, you can receive a free copy of the book by either calling 410-827-5582 or emailing Russell at neillgrussell@.

“The only way that we can have truth is through God’s Word,” Russell told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “I read this about a month ago: There was a survey that went out, and when it came back, it was discovered that 2% of Millennials, now American adults who are 18 to 35 and eligible to vote, have a biblical worldview.

“With the election only three weeks away, my goal as a teacher is to teach the truth,” he said. “I’m a grandparent, and I’m sure a lot of grandparents like me are listening to this. We can make a big difference in the outcome of this election if we get the word out to our loved ones who are not hearing the truth. ...

“Genesis 1 is the foundation of our faith,” Russell said. “It’s not being taught, and it’s not being preached. ... It’s the same reason I can’t watch the news today. It’s called lies. We live in two realms: a natural realm and a spiritual realm. The Bible says that the spiritual realm, until Jesus comes back, is controlled by the devil, and he is a liar.

“If you don’t believe the first sentence of the Bible, then you’re not going to believe the rest of the book either,” he said. “So when we’re going through COVID and all of these things that are going on out there, and we have fear, it’s because we don’t have a foundation with that first sentence that God will take care of us.”

Listen to this entire podcast to hear more truth from Neill Russell. {eoa}

Why God Is Seeking More Jeremiahs in This Tumultuous Time

The prophet Jeremiah was a kingdom voice whom many, in his day, wanted to silence because he spoke God’s truth. Pastor and author Mark Biltz says in today’s defiant world, God is looking for those who will speak with the same boldness as Jeremiah and not worry about the consequences.

Jeremiah’s powerful words in the Old Testament still have impact today, Biltz says. And they will encourage you to persevere in your faith despite cultural shifts and pressures, much as Jeremiah did.

“I believe Jeremiah was a prophet for his day, and in our day, we need to hear what the word of the Lord is for us,” Biltz tells Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “By studying Jeremiah’s heart, we know he was known as the ‘weeping prophet.’ And there are many reasons why. But perhaps the greatest reason was how he reflected that God was weeping.

“Jeremiah took on God’s heartbeat, just as any parent would do when they have a wayward child or husband or wife,” Biltz says. I believe the book of Jeremiah demonstrates not only the chaos of our day in his day, but I believe it’s God’s heartbreak over the condition of the body of Messiah of today. God told Jeremiah that people love to praise the Lord, but they refuse to do what he says.”

“God wants to have Himself a bride who is prepared for the wedding,” Biltz adds. “So, for me, this guy had a strong desire to show the people the heart of God, which is still the same today.”

For more about how Jeremiah’s words speak to God’s people today, listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

Can Believers Love God and Enjoy the World?

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all

that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world and its desires are passing away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17, MEV).

This passage of Scripture is challenging to both Christians and non-Christians. At first glance, we possibly surmise that God does not love this world.

Of course, that isn't true.

Steve DeWitt described it this way: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The desire of the “flesh” here is not physical flesh but the corrupted, sinful nature of man.

The Scripture is not referring to the physical world. We know that God created a world that is good.

“God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen. 1:31a).

Our key text is also not referring to the human world. God loves the world.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The Scripture is referring to the system by which the world operates. The Scripture is clear that the world is under the influence of the evil one.

That is not to say that all human acts are immoral. There is good in the world and good in people.

But good and God are not theologically equal.

Despite what people believe, there are unbelievers with strong

character and strong morals. There are also wonderful people who are not Christians.

Just because a person is wonderful never means they are a Christian. The Scripture is clear: good people do not have an open the door to heaven.

Jesus is the door to heaven, and the Scripture says Jesus is the only door. The only people that enter heaven are those who believe in Christ and confess Jesus as Lord.

That is not just my personal opinion. It is clear in the Scripture.

“here is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31, NKJV).

“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9, MEV).

Many see the world as immoral, sinful and worldly. The world system is viewed through three strands—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

These three strands encompass the totality of depravity in humans. This depravity is in everyone. No humans are intrinsically good. The Scripture declares all humans are lost and in need of God.

Knowing that humans are not good does not mean we have no value. It means we need God’s love to discover the true meaning of good. God is good.

God’s goodness comes clear when we live in devotion to God and serve others.

Jesus laid His life down for others and lived His life pleasing God.

The Contrast

The contrast of the passage is interesting. The love of the world versus the love of the Father.

God reserves the right for the “created” to worship the creator.

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’” (Matt. 22:37).

God’s command for us to love Him does not mean that God is a dictator. We must realize that God knows what is best for His children. Things go best for us when we worship, serve and love the Father.

When we accept Christ, we receive the Father. When we receive the Father, we welcome the love for the Father. When loving God is first, then loving the world is not an issue.

To love the Father means loving everything that comes from Him. To love the world means living for this world and finding our source of joy and satisfaction on earth. If we love the world, our lives follow the desires of the world.

The surest way to not love this world is to make sure you know God and His ways.

We cannot serve two masters.

“No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other” (Matt. 6:24a).

Christians do live in this world, but we must resist the world’s influence to live through us.

Christians battle lust, pride and eyes of temptation, just like everyone else.

The “lust of the flesh” is desire centered in your natural body. Being a Christian does not remove the temptations of this life. Having Christ in our lives gives us self control over our temptations.

Paul instructs us in Romans 13:11-14 (NKJV) to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.”

The second phrase, “lust of the eyes,” means to desire things we see. This temptation started with Adam and Eve.

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasing to the eyes and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6, MEV).

The third phrase, “the pride of life,” describes Eve’s desire to be wise. This temptation for Eve and Adam was discovering something meaningful other than God. It was the start of searching for self-significance.

“Everything we desire to have, to enjoy, or to pride ourselves upon, this is the ‘pride of life.’ Everything from sensual pleasure and self-indulgence to self-conceit; the ungodly gratification of fleshly appetites, of mental self-satisfaction, of egotistic arrogance; this is the pride of life. All false views of pleasure; wrong views of possession; false beliefs of superiority; this is the pride of life,” David Allen said.

When a person becomes a Christ follower, they become a new creation with new desires. The old, selfish, sinful nature is put to death, and God regenerates our soul.

This regeneration of our soul shifts our internal desires. Before being saved, we chased after soul-ish desires, and we

craved prominence and pleasure.

“And He made you alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the [a]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Eph. 2:1-5, NKJV).

After being saved, we become alive to God and dead to the desires of this world.

Does that mean we shouldn't enjoy the things of this world? No. But we must never allow earthly desires to control our passions or steal our allegiance away from God.

Our obsessions and pursuits reveal where our love is focused.

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15, MEV).

Jesus did not separate love and obedience.

Lastly, loving the Father means doing His will. We cannot say we love God and live life for ourselves. {eoa}

Thomas McDaniels is a pastor, writer and the guy behind . He has written for and currently is a contributing writer for Fox News. He is also the founder of and the Longview Dream Center in Longview, Texas. Thomas can be found on social media, Instagram and Twitter.

This article first appeared at .

Why God Wants to Deliver You From Your Own Egypt

This past weekend, we began celebrating *Sukkot*, also known in English as “Tabernacles.” *Sukkot* is an eight-day harvest that is a joyful party by commandment.

That’s correct—G-D actually commanded His people to have a party to celebrate the harvest. This harvest celebration was also commanded to be celebrated while living in a sukkah (a temporary booth). The reason for the living in a sukkah is so that no matter who blessed our harvest, we should always remember that, at one time, the people of G-D, Israel, were slaves in Egypt, delivered by G-D, and then spent 40 years in the wilderness because they lacked the faith to enter into the land of promise: Israel.

This year, as in most years, people from our synagogue family camp in tents, or *Sukkot*, in the open area behind our synagogue building. We cook stew over an open fire and spend time fellowshiping with each other. The children play, songs are sung, parents take turns yelling at their children and then take turns yelling at each other for yelling at the children.

It is like a huge family reunion and is honestly one of the most enjoyable weeks every year. After all, we are commanded to have a celebration of joy.

While *Sukkot* is by design a celebration, it is also by design a time of reflection. As I sat around the fire this weekend, I thought about three different groups of people. These three groups were represented in the wilderness.

The first group of people were those who were doing all they could to walk in faith. They were not perfect, but they were trying as hard as they could to follow the fire and the cloud of smoke and listen and obey the voice of G-D. The second group were those people whose hearts were back in Egypt. No matter what happened, their response was "back in Egypt ...". The third group were those who were living among the people of Israel and didn't want to go back to Egypt, but rather they wanted to bring Egypt along with them and make it a part of their new life.

As we celebrate an appointed time such as *Sukkot*, I believe that we should all take some time to search our hearts to find out which one of these three groups represent how we are living. Are we part of the group that, while knowing we are not yet perfect, are moving toward perfection day by day? Are we striving to hear G-D's voice and walk according to His Word? Or, are we a part of the second group who, even though we walked away from our personal Egypt physically, we never disconnected spiritually, and deep within our hearts we desire to be back in our own Egypt?

Or maybe we are a part of the third group, the group that left Egypt physically, but rather than leaving Egypt behind, we have continued to carry our Egypt along with us, trying to somehow fit Egypt inside Israel (a group that wants the blessing of Israel, wants to fellowship with Israel, and even wants the G-D of Israel, as long as they are allowed to continue to live like an Egyptian)?

During the season of *Sukkot*, I pray that each of us will take stock of where we are and of which of these groups we are a part. If after deep introspection and honest personal reflection, you find yourself a part of the first group, praise G-D! Please pray for those in groups 2 and 3. If, after prayer, you find yourself in either groups two or three, please understand that you are on the precipice of what was written in Hebrew 6:4-6 (TLV):

“For it is impossible for those who once were enlightened—having tasted of the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Ruach ha-Kodesh, and having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the olam ha-ba , and then having fallen away—to renew again to repentance, since they are again crucifying Ben-Elohim for themselves and publicly disgracing Him.”

The people described in these verses above are just like those in groups 2 or 3. Each one has been delivered from their Egypt and is on their own wilderness journey. They have seen and experienced the power of G-D personally. They know better, yet for whatever reason, choose to live in ways that fall short of the complete deliverance from Egypt/sin that G-D has promised us.

These people forget the real reason we live in sukkot on *Sukkot*. They have somehow lost connection to the truth that the only reason we can truly celebrate G-D’s blessings with joy is because G-D has completely delivered us from our own Egypt.

It is my sincere prayer that if you are living your life in either group 2 or group 3 as described above (either heading back toward your Egypt or dragging your Egypt with you while trying to live within Israel), that you will reach out to G-D in prayer and repentance and then reach out to the people who love you for prayer and encouragement. {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is the author of *Overcoming Fearlessness, What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?*, *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer*, *Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.

Prophetic Warning: Spirit of Betrayal Loosed in the Earth

Be warned. The Holy Spirit told me the spirit of betrayal has been loosed in the earth. This spirit is crafty and can only stab you in the back after it has walked beside you long enough to earn your trust.

This shouldn't surprise us. Jesus spoke of an end-times reality that we're seeing right now. He said, "Many will betray one another" (see Matt. 24:10).

The spirit of betrayal, like many other spirits, works through people. It's hard to discern until it manifests—and it's almost always a blindside. If we saw betrayal's schemes before they manifested, we would get out of the pathway of its double-edged sword and avoid a bloody back.

The spirit of betrayal is more subtle than you think. Betrayal has to seduce you before it can stab you. Betrayal is treacherous. Someone operating in this spirit will tell your secrets for personal gain, abandon you in a time of need, work craftily to take what's yours right under your nose and otherwise demonstrate who they really are at a critical time.

Et Tu Brute?

As a student of Latin in high school, we learned how Brutus betrayed Roman dictator Julius Caesar. Brutus was the ruler's close friend, yet took part in a coup to assassinate him. When Julius recognized Brutus as one of the assailing parties, he said, "Et tu Brute?" which means, "You, too, Brutus?" At least that's the account of the historical event from Shakespeare.

The British playwright may have been drawing some imagery from the life of Jesus, as Christ faced a similar episode. Luke 22 gives the familiar account, but don't gloss over this Garden of Gethsemane event too quickly or you'll miss the point:

“And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:47-48, NKJV)

Another gospel puts it this way: “While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.’ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Jesus replied, ‘Do what you came for, friend.’” (Matt. 26:47-50, NIV).

What do we do about it? [Click here](#) to read the rest of this article. {eoa}

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How to Keep Your Eyes Open for a Miracle Every Day

Like anyone else, Pastor Angela Donadio knows that everyday life can wear a person down. And the roughest challenges in life can come when you least expect them.

But, then, Donadio also knows that God, in His goodness, can astound His children with miracles daily. Just when you crave a few precious moments to step away from your busy schedule and stress, God can provide you with the reprieve you so desperately need.

Her book, *Astounded*, offers 52 devotionals to help you to learn how God can use even the worst of circumstances to bring out the best in our lives, including the time when Donadio was involved in a terrible car accident that left her with severe

injuries.

“Sometimes, life pulls out in front of us when we least expect it,” Donadio told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Some days, real life is more outrageous than fiction. Especially in this year, you almost couldn’t even write this script.

“But, I believe, sometimes every day moments are God-intended miracles. So, my book is a collection of raw personal stories. ... They are just a reprieve that I think, especially women, are craving, to step away from their schedule. I would have said prior to 2020 that we are living over-scheduled lives. But what I’m sensing now is that we’re living over-taxed because we are over-taxed by all of this uncertainty.

“We’ve had so much demanded of us. So, I want this to be a reprieve. There are 52 devotions filled with heartfelt stories and humor. ... I don’t just want people to read it and just go, well, that was a great story. I want them to look at how they can view their own life, their own circumstances and how to keep your eyes peeled for the miracle—whether it’s in mundane moments or even if it’s in really messy moments.”

For the rest of Donadio’s incredible story, listen to the rest of this podcast. {eoa}

Joseph Mattera: 10 Reasons I Am Critical of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) has been placed front and center of the contemporary debate related to what proponents attribute to systemic racism. However, the past several months have uncovered that CRT has virtually nothing to do with the original protests related to the death of George Floyd.

Although I am a proponent of police reform, it has become increasingly clear that the objectives of those espousing CRT advocate a dangerous worldview that is antithetical to the Christian gospel.

CRT utilizes Marxist ideas that incite class warfare by dividing people along the lines of the oppressor and the oppressed. People are judged by the color of their skin as it relates to such things as class distinction, sex and gender identity. For example, they regularly attempt to shame people into guilt based on skin pigmentation by utilizing broad-brush labels such as “white privilege.” This stands in opposition to the civil rights ideals of Martin Luther King Jr., whose goal was that people would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Their semi-gnostic views also refer to those enlightened by “intersectionality” as “woke.” These “woke” ones, they purport, are those who understand the hidden institutional power structures that oppress various segments of society because of their sexual identity, fluid genderism, nontraditional family structure, race, radical feminism and views regarding social justice and income equality (a clear Marxist construct).

Despite the above, many Evangelical pastors and Christians

have embraced the full tenets of revolutionary organizations that, if unopposed, will not only fully deconstruct the . but also the “faith which was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 1:3, NASB).”

I am attempting to collapse the major beliefs of CRT by illustrating ten contrasts it has with biblical Christianity. I hope it will jar ignorant, complicit believers who are asleep at the wheel into seeing that the vestiges of their faith are being torn down in Western culture.

The following are ten reasons I oppose CRT:

1. CRT pits people against each other based on skin color. New Testament passages like Ephesians 2:14-18 teaches us that Jesus destroyed the enmity between Jew and Gentile (and by implication, all ethnic peoples) and made believers “one new man” who are restored to the image of God (Col. 3:10; Gen. 1:28).

2. CRT categorizes the human race based on skin color and economic status. Scripture teaches that in Christ, there is neither Jew, Gentile, slave, nor free, but we are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

3. CRT attempts to create a utopian society through a Marxist view of external change. Biblical passages such as John 3:3-8 teaches us that a person has to be transformed from the inside out (irrespective of their environment) if they are to experience true peace and salvation.

4. CRT shames Caucasian people because of their “white privilege.” In their view, this means that a racial or sexual minority of some kind is assumed to be a victim of oppression. The oppressed have fought against their privileged oppressors that make their life cozier at the expense of their persecuted neighbors. However, Romans 8:28-39 teaches that all believers, irrespective of their particular ethnicity, are not to view themselves as victims but “as more than conquerors through

Christ.”

Furthermore, Acts 17:26, 27 teaches that God has made the whole human race of one blood (from Adam and Eve), and determined the times, season and location of their habitation so they would find God. This goes along with Genesis 10 which illustrates that God determined where nations of peoples would cultivate their own particular culture. This means that whatever situation ethnic people find themselves, it should be for the greater purpose of seeking God and finding Him.

All skin tones and ethnicities will eventually gather around the throne of God and reflect the glory and beauty of God (Rev. 7:9). Here, Caucasian people will neither be favored nor shamed according to their skin but judged according to their works (2 Cor. 5:10).

Also, this view does not consider that not all white people are privileged, and not all Black people are underprivileged based on their economic background and upbringing. I have been in many neighborhoods where some Caucasians were referred to as “white trash.” Also, there are more white people on welfare in this nation than people of color.

In conclusion to this point, if what proponents of CRT mean by “white privilege” is that in certain communities a Caucasian will more likely get “the benefit of the doubt” over and against young Black men (who tend to be pulled over while driving more frequently by the police and are more likely to be suspected of committing a crime), then I will concede this point with qualifications. To be fair, in some instances, police have to target certain ethnic people based on the description of the perpetrator given during a 911 call or based upon the likely ethnic demographic in certain communities.

However, as you dive into the ideology of CRT, you realize they mean much more than whites getting the benefit of the

doubt, as my other points illustrate. In my opinion, their goal is to use “whiteness” as a rallying cry and excuse for overturning the nation through a Marxist-type revolution.

5. CRT defines humans purely as material beings. Biblical passages like Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 show the uniqueness of humanity compared to the rest of creation. Thus, our race, sexual orientation or gender identity are not our primary defining characteristics but are mere projections of our supra-natural essence and ontological being.

6. CRT proponents seem to take no responsibility for individual effort or merit. They teach that every result related to power, wealth and wellbeing are never the result of individual actions but only structural, systemic injustices in society. Biblically, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Galatians 6:7-8 and the whole book of Proverbs and beyond, illustrate that CRT violates the principles related to the biblical laws of sowing and reaping.

7. CRT attempts to deconstruct the traditional role the nuclear family, faith, individual ethics and sexual behavior have in framing individuals, families and communities. Genesis 1:27-28, Exodus 20:3-17, Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Psalms 78, Psalms 127, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians:6:1-3 and more illustrate the significant role the nuclear family and sexual ethics have as it relates to the well being of family and society.

8. CRT claims that everyone is blinded by class-consciousness and social location. They teach that only those who embrace intersectionality are truly “woke.” This is opposed to biblical passages such as 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-3 and Ephesians 4:17-19, which teach that humankind is blinded by their demonically-influenced and sinful rebellion against God.

9. CRT, like Marxism, teaches that all pathologies can be fixed by revamping social policy and societal constructs.

Passages like Genesis 6:5-8, Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 14, Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 all point to the fact that sin is the root cause of all evil, including racism. Hence, even if it were possible to create laws that fully eradicated all systemic disparity and discrimination, racism will still exist in individual human hearts that are not transformed by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-7). (Of course, Scriptures like the book of Esther, also show the importance of God's covenant people working to change societal laws to protect an ethnic people).

10. CRT proponents have set up their movement as a sort of "collective savior." The bible teaches that only the kingdom reign of the Lord Jesus Christ will inaugurate global systemic justice (Ps. 72; Isa. 11:1-4, 9:6-7, 61:1-4). {eoa}

Pastor: How You Can Silence the Lies and Deception of Your Past

Pastor and author Chip Ingram says many people, including Christ-followers, tend to look at themselves with "warped mirrors." In other words, they believe the lies of the enemy that have led to guilt, fear, insecurity and spiritual stagnation.

These deceptions inevitably keep people stuck, and they struggle with the same issues and habits for years. But Ingram

says according to the first three chapters of Ephesians, God does not endorse that mentality. He wants believers to see themselves as the person He sees.

“We all acknowledge that, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, a new creature. The old things pass away, and behold, all things are becoming new,” Ingram told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “And who is that new person? God sees us as regenerated and justified in Christ and loved.

“It reminds me of a story of a friend who was sort of left out, an orphan when he was 8 years old,” Ingram said. “All of his buddies he grew up with were orphans, and he ended up watching all these kids walk out the door, so he felt rejected. He eventually got adopted by a great Christian family. And in the first few weeks, he slept on the floor and took food from the refrigerator and would hide it in the closet, because that’s what he did at the orphanage.

“He was legally adopted and he had parents who loved him,” he said. “He had a warm bed and all the food he wanted and nice clothes. But he lived like an orphan because he was so used to being an orphan. I think that’s kind of a parable of many Christian lives.

“God has given us all that we need,” Ingram said. “He has clothed us in his righteousness, filled us with His Spirit and says we’re so valuable because we’ve been redeemed. Yet we can feel worthless and insignificant. In Christ, we don’t need to feel that way.”

For more about your identity in Christ and how to break free from the enemy’s lies, listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

RT Kendall: When Holy Spirit Vindicates You

Do you know what it is like to be unvindicated? This means that your reputation is under a cloud. You would love to have your name cleared, to have both your friends and your enemies see you as having been falsely accused or misunderstood.

This was the position in which the Israelites found themselves after they crossed the Jordan on dry land. So God ordered Joshua to circumcise all the men who had been born since they left Egypt 40 years before (Josh. 5:5). It was a sign of the covenant, going back to Abraham (Gen. 17:9-11). Circumcision showed that they were unashamedly the people of God. When the circumcising was finished, the Lord told Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Josh. 5:9b, ESV).

The word "reproach" means "shame." It means to bear a stigma; to be discredited, dishonored or disgraced. It refers to the way you are perceived or how you think you are perceived. It is embarrassing because it punctures your pride.

Sadly, Christians today are not very respected. They are often laughed at, mocked, put down, seen as mostly ignorant and not held in high esteem. This is in contrast to the way Christians in the earliest church were regarded: "None" of the unbelievers "dare join them [that is, Christians], but the people held them in high esteem" (Acts 5:13).

I believe that because of the lack of respect, many in the church today have an inferiority complex. We know we are not esteemed. It hurts. No one fears God; no one fears the church. The world thumbs their noses at us and we look like helpless infants. We are like the Israelites before the "reproach of

Egypt” was rolled away from them.

We need to be reminded that our enemy, the devil, is resistible: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7b); “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith” (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

One purpose of the roar of a lion is to scare other animals off. The effect of a satanic attack is often to scare us and make us think we are defeated when we are not; to make us think we have given in when we haven’t. As John said, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4b).

A part of the “reproach of Egypt” is the way we perceive ourselves. It is traceable to the way we are perceived. We know that the world laughs at us and does not respect us.

But we must resist listening to the mocking of the world; it is the same as listening to the devil. Don’t believe the devil. The devil is a liar (John 8:44). And yet, as William Perkins (1558-1602) put it, “Don’t believe the devil, even when he tells the truth!” The devil will not only quote Scripture but also point to what the world says about us. The purpose is to intimidate us and demoralize us.

God does not want us to have the reproach of Egypt; but there is a reproach that He does want us to have, namely, bearing a stigma for the glory of Christ’s name. This is a reproach that we should welcome. It is an internal vindication, vindication by the Spirit.

Jesus was “vindicated by the Spirit” (1 Tim. 3:16). It was an internal indication—what He had in His heart—the total approval of the Father. This approval was noted at His baptism: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17b). It was manifested again when He was transfigured before the disciples: “This is my beloved Son,

with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matt. 17:5b).

Jesus never was vindicated externally. The Pharisees did not believe in Him. The 5,000 who followed him after He fed them with the loaves and fish dwindled to the 12 (John 6:66-67). Herod did not vindicate him. Neither did Pilate. The Jews demanded His crucifixion. His vindication came from the Father by the Spirit.

Even after He was resurrected, there was no external vindication. Did he go to Herod's or Pilate's house on Easter morning and say, "Surprise!?" Certainly not. He could have, but His vindication would continue to be internal, that is, what was revealed by the Holy Spirit.

To this very day, He is still being vindicated by the Spirit. It continued at Pentecost when 3,000 were converted. This was by the Spirit. When you and I were converted, it was the work of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44). We did not see Him face to face. His external vindication will come one day when, after His second coming, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

In the meantime, you and I must get our vindication as Jesus did. Although He was given the Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34), you and I have a "measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). We must not look to people for approval. We get our vindication internally—as Jesus did. It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to seek only the approval of God (John 5:44).

That means we let our critics pick us to pieces. We let them call us fools. We let them say things that make us look stupid. The essence of the stigma is a feeling of being embarrassed. And yet if we truly—truly—embrace the reproach for the name of Christ, we will be like Peter and John. They rejoiced over the inestimable privilege of suffering "dishonor

for the name" (Acts 5:41).

How can we do this? Answer: because we know we have the truth. And truth is the best vindication against slander.

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