

Part 3: The Truth

We live in a time similar to the book of Judges. The very last line of the book provides a theme statement:

“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25)

We are increasingly surrounded by loud voices shouting that truth is relative, that there is more than one way to God, and that people can live how they want with no regard to God’s ways. We must be very careful. Believing in a Book that was written thousands of years ago seems more and more like foolishness to a culture that pridefully believes itself to be so enlightened, so wise, and so great.

Yet, at the same time, the world has most likely never seen a generation as lonely, depressed, unhealthy, distracted, and angry as this. The fruit doesn’t seem to match the boasting. Freedom does not come through doing whatever we think is right; freedom comes through submission to the leadership, care, shepherding, and love of God. Truly **“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).**

Francis spoke about not dropping the baton in this race. These ancient truths as revealed in the Bible have been handed to us at a great cost to many throughout history. There is no greater news that

1) God has spoken to us, 2) He has given us instructions on how to be eternally saved from punishment and 3) we can be in fellowship with Him in a perfect creation forever. What good news! He has revealed it to us! Yet we are in times where people yawn at the Bible, and choose video games, sports, social media, and many other things over these beautiful truths.





1 What does it look like for us to not “drop the baton” in the analogy of the relay race? How do we faithfully receive the Scriptures from previous generations?

2 In our current cultural setting, what ideologies most vigorously push you away from the truth of Scripture? How have you experienced being deterred from picking up the baton and running the race in front of you?

Like we considered in the video, the author of Hebrews wanted to motivate us in a similar way. He lists many people of faith who went before us, highlighting several who made tremendous sacrifices because of the promises of God. Consider his exhortation in chapter 12:1-2:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Think about this passage. When we look back on all the saints who have gone before us, it motivates us to keep going, to endure challenges, to fight against sin, to abide in God when everything around us is calling for our hearts, and to keep trusting in Jesus. Reading biographies of missionaries and other amazing lovers of Jesus can also be very encouraging. Ultimately, we look to Jesus Who is our true Hero, having blazed the trail for us to follow Him on the narrow path.

In the passage, Jesus and the saints serve as the motivation. But sin is the hindrance that must be removed. It operates as a “weight” that “clings so closely” to us. Think about trying to run a race with heavy weights attached to you. We must throw them off if we want to run well.

3 Often the struggle in faithfully running our race with God comes from temptations for our time, energy, passions, affection, etc. What are some of those things that can hinder us? In the past, how have you laid those aside to better run your race?

4 Are there any weights that you currently feel like you need to throw off? How might you go about doing that?

5 How does thinking about faithful brothers and sisters who have gone before us encourage us to keep “running the race” well? Who are some saints who you have received encouragement from?

There are so many amazing things that God has done in this land. Of course, He is at work all over the globe; however, the Biblical history as well as the modern events in this area make it one of the most unique places on earth. We have many Biblical accounts happening in this land as well as it's the place where God in the flesh walked.





In a society that praises and esteems things which are new and innovative, we want to tie ourselves to the ancient ways. Though our culture often esteems the biggest “influencers” as the young, beautiful, and talented people, we agree with the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:18-19a:

“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.”

In a world that has spurned the Word of God as outdated, hateful, and narrow-minded, we fight to keep listening to His voice so that we don’t experience the judgment of Psalm 81:11-12:

“But my people did not listen to My voice; Israel would not submit to Me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.”

6 Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord to help us maintain humble hearts. It’s so easy to drift off, and we need His grace to remain faithful to Him. Also, spend time praising Him for continuing to speak to us through His Word.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Reflection

Action