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"From the Pastor's Desk"

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IT IS TIME TO CELEBRATE TRUTH

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. John 14:1-3

On the first day of April this year, we who love the Lord, will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Why will we celebrate? Because we do believe He died and rose from the dead on the third day, according to the Holy Scriptures. This is the cardinal doctrine of the Church and born again believers around the world believe it is the greatest news which ever came out of a graveyard. But even more, it is the greatest news that has ever been heralded by man.

Among several books that I presently am reading is a book entitled, "***What Got You Here, Won't Get You There.***" I was fascinated by the title and its general contents. Have not yet finished reading it, so I am not yet ready to endorse the book. But the title is fascinating to me because it provokes thought. While the book is advice for successful business leaders who want to take their career to a higher level, the title would be good for a Christian author who wants to help people get to their final destination once they have lived this life. So forgive me for taking advantage of the inspiration from the book.

I think a lot of people have the wrong concept of what got them here, wherever "here" is. But even more lack an understanding of how to get "there," that is, where Christ desire to bring us when we die. Stephen Hawking, the renowned Scientist who recently passed has denied, according to the media, the very existence of Him who has made world and mankind. When a journalist once asked Mr. Hawking point blank if he believed in God, his answer was sad. He said, that he refused to answer such a question. When asked why, he said, "If I say I *believe in God, everyone will immediately claim that I believe in the same God they believe in. So I won't say.*" But then at a later date he stated, "*I'm an atheist.*" Mr. Hawking stated he preferred to place his "*faith in science.*"

Ravi Zacharias said in his book, "*The Real Peace of Atheism,*" "*It is far better to debate a question before settling it than to settle a question before debating it. While the process does not always guarantee an inerrant conclusion, it often protects against vacuous leaps from ignorance to ignorance. Surely the high stakes involved in matters of destiny demand a response that is consistent systematically and meaningful existentially.*" G.K. Chesterton once said that "*Truth, of course, must be stranger than fiction, for we have made fiction to suit ourselves.*"

Many thinking individuals do go through a personal struggle with their faith. The multitude of voices that such people listen to the most will probably determine what they believe. Not because it is truth but rather because of what they prefer to believe. But just because one has drawn a certain conclusion of a matter does not mean that they have come to truth. In fact most people fail to discover the truth because they are ruled more by their preference than what the real truth is.

There is an old saying that a man persuaded against his will is of the same opinion still. So the question is: Do we have a love for the truth? Because the only thing that sets a man truly free is real "Truth". (John 8:32) The problem with atheism is that it does more to destroy science than theology. Because over time so many of the arguments which atheists proposed have fallen by the wayside as new finds decimate old ones. Only the people who are honest will admit that.

PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND TO THE TRUTH

The Apostle Paul stated in his letter to the Corinthians, “*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*” 2 Cor. 4:3,4

What the Apostle is saying is that those whose minds are blinded are they who believe not; and because they believe not their minds continue in darkness and are proper subjects for Satan to work on; and he deepens the darkness, and increases their hardness to the truth. It isn't that they can't believe as much as they won't believe. The hardness of their hearts, the closing of their minds, the refusal to listen to another perspective is what poisons the truth in their hearts and minds.

The people (atheists) who ***I am talking about are not ignorant people***. What got them through school was their intelligence to learn, but it won't get them where Christ wants them to be. What defeats them to believe the Gospel is the attitude of their hearts. Their attitude controls their minds. They are biased in their thinking. Thus they close their minds and hearts to anything that is contrary to what they prefer to believe. Someone has said, that “*An atheist is a man who looks through a telescope and tries to explain what he cannot see*”. Mr. Stephen Hawking said that the law of gravity told him he did not need a God. The Christian Scientist, John Lenox, has responded by asking “*Where did the law of gravity come from?*” You see, the atheist is determined to deny the source of life.

The people whom I have been referring to cannot celebrate life. They cannot celebrate the life of Christ and especially His resurrection because they have chosen to place their faith in other things that will cause them to perish in the end. That is a sad thing to spend such a short a life span as it is....and believe me I know how short it is as I approach 79. I marvel as to how quickly the years have passed

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Jonathan Edwards, whom I have referred to in other writings, played a critical role in shaping the first great spiritual awaking in the 1700s at his church in Northampton, Mass. Especially when he delivered that sermon on “Sinners in the hands of an angry God.” He wrote a book entitled: “The End for which God Created the World.” This inspired many missionaries throughout the 19th century. Such men and women have gone out and enabled communities to be changed for the better. They found people hungry for truth and thus their lives and nations were changed.

Edwards was fascinated by the discoveries of Isaac Newton and other scientists of his age. Before he entered the ministry he wrote on various topics in natural philosophy, including flying spiders, lights, and optics. While he was worried about materialism and faith in reason alone among his contemporaries, he saw the laws of nature as derived from God demonstrating His wisdom and care. Here was a great mind, as Stephen Hawking had, but Edwards has something different; he had a heart tender toward God. Thus he came to the knowledge of truth. Edwards found a reason to celebrate truth and thus God used his influence to help bring about change in people's hearts as a result.

When I reflect upon my earthly father and the influence he had on me I count my blessings. He taught me by example to love God. As a result I ended up not only loving God, but also loving my father also. For I discovered that if I am going to love God I must love what He tells me to love. God tells me to honor my father. Thus my father in his wisdom in teaching me to love God in the end blessed himself because he taught me to love God and in loving God I ended up loving my father as well.

Now those who knew my father know he was easy to love. But what I am saying is the reason the world is in the mess it is in is because that is the component that many parents have failed to do. They have never taught their children to love God....and then wonder why they do not respect them. Why have parents neglected to do this? Is it because the Easter bunny was more important than the resurrection of Jesus Christ? It is time for America to discard the secular market and turn their attention back to the Christ for which this Easter Celebration was designed to commemorate. Amen.