

What is Truth? Part 2

“The Power of Truth”

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By Rev. Timothy B. White

In 1837, Hans Christian Andersen wrote a trilogy of fairy tales, the last of which was entitled “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” This tale has been translated into 100 languages since its publication in the early 19th Century. The tale begins with the arrival of two swindlers claiming to be master weavers into a city ruled by an Emperor. But unfortunately, this Emperor was so obsessed with his passion for new and expensive clothes that he neglected to govern and protect the people effectively.

These two swindlers claimed they could weave clothing of such superior quality that it “remained invisible to those unfit for the office they hold or who were extremely simple in character.” The emperor could not restrain himself and declared that he must have clothing made from such finely crafted cloth. Thus, not surprisingly, the emperor was only too eager to give these men all the money and gold thread they requested without limit.

Two of the Emperor’s best men were sent to check on the progress of these exceptional clothes but were shocked when they could not see anything on the charlatans’ looms. However, they pretended to see what was not there due to the fear that others would think them unfit or a simpleton. The same was true of the emperor when he checked in on the progress shortly before the final day.

Finally, the day arrives, and the “weavers” proceed to dress the emperor in his new clothes – never acknowledging that he could not see any clothing whatsoever – and then parade through town with great pomp to show off his new clothes. Naturally, the townspeople were excited to see these extraordinary clothes, but what they saw was more than they ever wanted to see of their Emperor. However, out of fear of what others might think of them, they also pretended to see what was not there.

And then, it happened. A little boy in the crowd shouted out the Truth that all were too afraid to admit when he said, “But he has nothing at all on!” Then the boy’s father said, “Listen to the voice of the child!” and these words were whispered from one to another until finally, all the people cried out, “But he has nothing at all on!” At that moment, this one little boy’s declaration of the Truth shattered the lie and the fear in everyone’s heart and set them free. Humorously, even though the emperor now realized the Truth, he decides to march on proudly as planned.

I am sure we all can recall experiencing the burden of seeing falsehood and yet feeling the pressure to keep quiet, keep the peace, or appease a person or group. The resulting internal

struggle and silent anxiety one experiences are anything but freedom. Moreover, living life with lies is burdensome and wearying to the heart, mind, and soul. However, there is a way out.

The Truth is the way out. Jesus tells his disciples this very thing when he tells them that by living by his teachings, they would “know the Truth and the Truth will set [them] free” (John 8:31-32 NIV). Likewise, King Solomon, the wisest man on earth, knew the priceless nature of Truth when he called upon all to “Buy the truth and do not sell it...” (Prov. 23:23 NIV).

There will always be those who reject the Truth, but you do not have to become like them. As I quoted last month, “You may find yourselves living in a nation filled with lies, but the lies do not have to live in you” (A. Solzhenitsyn). He called upon his fellow countrymen to “Value nothing more than Truth” in that same message.

As I stated last month, Truth is not something we create, it must be discovered, and then we must align ourselves with it. Where is Truth to be found? In Scripture, God is called the “God of Truth” (Ps. 31:5; Isa. 65:16); the Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of Truth” (John 16:13), and Jesus declares that he IS the Truth (John 14:6) and that “everyone on the side of Truth listens to [him]” (John 18:37). In Jesus’ last prayer with his disciples, he declares that God’s [written] “Word is Truth” (John 17:17).

Many have stated that our nation’s greatness, prosperity, and endurance are fundamentally due to our Judeo-Christian founding principles (God’s Truth). The connection seems reasonable. Thus, we observe that the Truth, once embraced by society and made sacred in its governance, has the power to establish and preserve a people or nation.

When people dare to stand upon what they know is right and good, the lie can no longer control their conduct or conversation. As the Truth shapes an individual’s conduct and determines their values, it builds character and gives the wisdom needed to guide them through the issues of life. Finally, when someone lives, loves, and speaks from the place of the Truth, that person experiences inward freedom, liberty, and joy of greater worth than anything this world can offer.

So, live in the Truth, and you will find the freedom to become the person God created you to be – unintimidated and free from the bondage to those who live by lies. Furthermore, as you do so, your life, words, and values can have the same effect on others as the words of that little boy had upon the intimidated townspeople that one day. So, I encourage you to love the Truth and let it set you free for your sake and for those who are waiting for someone to stand up – and that someone may just be you.